

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 12.8%

Weekly Readings will cover: Numbers 1 through Numbers 7

Sunday: Numbers 1

Monday: Numbers 2

Tuesday: Numbers 3

Wednesday: Numbers 4

Thursday: Numbers 5

Friday: Numbers 6

Saturday: Numbers 7

Current # of email addresses in the group: 580

We start into a new book today, the book of Numbers. For those who were not able to catch up at our last break, this would be a good place to jump back in and rejoin. I hope you each have a great week of studying God's Word!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 25

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 148 - SUNDAY: May 7th

Numbers 1

Daily Deep Dive:

INTRODUCTION to the book of NUMBERS:

The book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch. The Hebrew title of the book is "in the wilderness", which makes sense because it covers the period of desert wandering prior to the death of Moses and prior to the people entering the Promise Land. The English title of "Numbers" is a reflection of the two census takings in chapters 1 & 26. While the book of Leviticus that we just finished focused on the contrast between clean & unclean, the book of Numbers contrasts God's faithfulness with Israel's faithlessness. God is faithful to His

covenant promises and Israel continues to grow into a numerous people, while Israel grumbles, rebels, even refusing to enter the Promise land. Moses is certainly an author of the book, but priests may have contributed as well.

When the tribes encamped, the arrangement was:

Northside: Asher, Dan & Naphtali

Westside: Manasseh, Ephraim & Benjamin

Eastside: Issachar, Judah & Zebulun

Southside: Simeon, Reuben, & Gad

Tribe of Levi encircled the Tabernacle (Numbers 1:53) as a protective layer around God's Holy presence.

The UCG reading plan states: "Numbers doesn't sound like an interesting name for a book of the Bible. But don't let that fool you. The name of the book, translated from its title in the Greek Septuagint, comes from the first counting or numbering of Israel, which takes place 13 months after the Exodus from Egypt. "Take a census of all the congregation of all the children of Israel" (verse 2). Yet Numbers is not filled with endless genealogies, as one might expect. Quite the contrary, it contains a great deal of interesting information on the people of Israel as God leads them out into the "wilderness," i.e., a wild, uninhabited land. Indeed, the Hebrew name for the book is *Bemidbar*, taken from the first words in the book, translated into English as "In the Wilderness." Herein they are taught principles, lessons and even doctrine. Moreover, the book of Numbers reports on many of God's miraculous acts that are mentioned nowhere else. Furthermore, it is filled with many parallels, pictures, or symbolic representations of Jesus Christ. The priesthood and tabernacle service anticipates His ministry.

The focus is on the wilderness because previous revelations of the Lord had been given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Book of Numbers covers

the remaining 39 years of the 40-year history of the Israelites in the wilderness. Only 11 of the tribes of Israel were numbered—a total of 603,550 men who were able to go to war. The numbering, or census, was conducted by tribal leaders, each head of the house of his father's tribe. Because of their tabernacle duties, the Levites were not included in this numbering for battle (verse 47). The Levites were instructed to make camp near and around the tabernacle, and all others were to keep their distance on pain of death.” [END]

Verse 3 – We will reference this scripture as we dissect later verses in our study. It’s useful for determining the approximate ages of individuals (for example David when he killed Goliath). A number of commentaries also bring out that older men, who were not “able to go to war” would have been excluded although no hard-set age is indicated in this scripture.

Verse 5 – It’s always best when God selects leaders to serve as He sees the heart. These men were appointed by God to help Moses with this large task.

Verse 18 – John Gill’s commentary states: “the people declared their pedigrees, of what tribe, family, and house they were, who their parents, when born, and so, of course, how old they were; Jarchi interprets it, they brought the books of their genealogies, and witnesses to confirm the birth of everyone of them, to show their genealogy according to their tribe; nor is it at all unlikely that every family and house, or master thereof, kept a register of those born to him in it, whereby their age could be ascertained as well as pedigree:” It continues: “that is, every tribe gave an account of the families in it, every family what houses were in it, and every house what number of males were in it, and of what age; and such were numbered who were twenty years old and upward.” [END]

Verses 20 – 46:

Reuben: 46,500

Simeon: 59,300

Gad: 45,650

Judah: 74,600

Issachar: 54,400

Zebulun: 57,400

Ephraim: 40,500

Manasseh: 32,200

Benjamin: 35,400

Dan: 62,700

Asher: 41,500

Naphtali: 53,400

All of these tribes totaling to: 603,550

The largest two tribes of the brothers by a pretty large margin (not counting Levi) were Judah (74,600) & Joseph (72,700).

Day 149 - MONDAY: May 8th

Numbers 2

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin with the UCG reading plan for this chapter: "In chapter 2 we find the organization of the tribes of Israel. God made it clear to Moses that every Israelite was personally responsible for pitching his camp with his tribe. There was a recognizable standard—akin to the national flags of more modern times—that bore the emblem or ensign of each tribe and marked the area of encampment. A leader was chosen for each tribe, the same man who had been charged with taking the tribe's census.

In the center of all the camps were the Levites, surrounded by the 12 other tribes. The 12 tribes were sorted into four main assemblies. First in the order of procession of this great body of people was Judah on the east with Issachar and Zebulun. On the south side of the camp, Reuben

was accompanied by Simeon and Gad. The tribe of Ephraim was in the west with the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin. Dan took the northernmost camp with Asher and Naphtali. Not only did all Israel camp in this fashion, they traveled in this order, all 603,550 men with their wives and children, in addition to the Levites in the center of the formation with the tabernacle.

The four main standards surrounding the tabernacle, those of Ephraim, Judah, Reuben and Dan, probably carried the emblems of a bull, a lion, a man and an eagle respectively. This is fascinating when we discover that these are the respective faces of the four living creatures surrounding God's throne in heaven (Revelation 4:7)—and that cherubim have all these faces (Ezekiel 1:10).” [END]

Verse 2 – This verse says everyone should “camp/pitch” by his own “standard.” This word for “standard” means “a flag – banner, standard” (Strong's). Once they were within the area of their own “standard”, they were to be organized by being by the “ensign” of their father’s house. The word “ensign” means “sign, signal, a distinguishing mark, banner”.

In the rest of this chapter, notice how orderly God commands everything to be. God was specific in where He wanted each tribe and in what order He wanted them to break camp and travel. The Apostle Paul would later teach the congregation in Corinth to “let all things be done decently and in order.” This is a lesson for all of us as we serve at church or have responsibilities pertaining to the people of God.

Day 150 - TUESDAY: May 9th

Numbers 3

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for today: “Though God had chosen the family of Aaron to serve as the priesthood of Israel, He had also earlier mentioned that the firstborn of all the tribes of Israel were to be His—and therefore directly in His service, evidently to support the work of Aaron's family in caring for the tabernacle and instructing the people in God's ways. But the incident with the golden calf demonstrated the general unworthiness of the people as a whole. Yet at that time, the tribe of Levi, to which Moses and Aaron belonged, stood with Moses "on the Lord's side" (Exodus 32:26). And this stand for God was apparently part of the reason that God determined to choose the entire tribe of Levi as His direct servants. They were to, in this sense, replace the firstborn (verses 11-13).

As we have already read, the tribe of Levi was to encamp around the Tabernacle, take care of it and administer all the sacrifices and rites (Numbers 1:50-53). The Aaronic priesthood was a subset of the general Levitical priesthood—albeit the *leading* subset. Aaron and his sons were to be the priests, while the *rest* of the Levites were divided into family groups to serve in the physical areas, such as setting up and taking down the tabernacle and as ushers, porters, teachers, scribes, musicians, officers, and judges, etc. (see 1 Chronicles 23).

It is interesting to note in Numbers 3 the different method of numbering used to count the Levites. Whereas the count for the rest of the Israelites was according to men 20 years and up, the Levites were counted even as male infants one month old—and still the Levites were the smallest of all the tribes at only 22,000 men and boys (verse 39). So small, in fact, that there weren't enough Levites to redeem merely the firstborn males a month and older of the other Israelite tribes (verses 40-43). Therefore, the Israelites of other tribes had to make up the difference in money (verse 49).” [END]

Verse 4 – We covered this situation back in Leviticus 10.

Verse 7 – John Gill’s commentary states: “not within it, neither in the holy place, nor in the most holy place, where they might not enter, to do any service peculiar thereunto, but at the door of the tabernacle, and in the court of it, and in the rooms and chambers in it: and do the service of the tabernacle; not to offer sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering, which stood in the court, and much less to burn incense on the altar of incense, and to trim the lamps, and set on the shewbread in the holy place; and still less to enter into the most holy place, and do there what was to be done on the day of atonement; but to do all that is before observed, and to bring the people's offerings to the priest, and to assist in slaying them; and to keep all profane and polluted persons out of it, the tabernacle, as we find in later times; they were porters at it, and some of them were singers in it, and had the care of various things belonging to it: see 1Ch 9:14.” [END]

Verse 9 – Here is another example where in Hebrew a word is used twice in a row to demonstrate that the word is amplified. Here the entire tribe of Levi was “given given” unto Aaron. This means they were completely, wholly, entirely given.

Verse 12 – John Gill’s commentary states: “he made an exchange of those for the Levites; upon the destruction of the firstborn of Egypt, and saving the firstborn of Israel, he claimed the latter as his own in a special sense, and now he gave up his right to them, and instead thereof took the Levites; nor could the people of Israel reasonably object to this, nor be uneasy at it, but rather be pleased with it; since hereby they were not only freed from the charge of redeeming their firstborn, but since they were the Lord's, he might have appointed them to be servants to the priests; and every Israelite would choose rather, no doubt, to part with a tribe for this service than to have their firstborn sons employed in it; and there were none so fit as the tribe of Levi, not only because it was a small tribe, but because the priests were

of this tribe, to whom they were to minister; and therefore as there was a connection between them, the Levites would readily serve them:” [END]

Verse 43 – Verse 39 records that the Levites had 22,000 males over a month old. Here of all the remaining tribes of Israel, their firstborn males over a month old added up to 22,273 (273 more than the Levites).

Day 151 - WEDNESDAY: May 10th

Numbers 4

Daily Deep Dive:

We will again begin with the UCG reading plan: “Who was Kohath? In this chapter we see a lot of him. When Jacob (Israel) traveled down into Egypt with his sons and grandsons, Kohath, the son of Levi, was among them—along with his brothers Gershon and Merari. God had promised Jacob that in Egypt He would make of him a great nation (Genesis 46:3, 11). And with the passage of time, Kohath’s family grew large in Egypt, as did the families of his brothers. Now, while the descendants of Gershon and Merari are given different Levitical responsibilities, the Lord gives the charge of the ark, the table of showbread, the menorah, the altars, the veil, the utensils of the sanctuary, the screen and all the work related to them to the sons of Kohath (3:30-31). In reading through this section of Scripture, we again see some of the artful creations and beautiful objects associated with the service of the tabernacle: the blue and purple coverings, the badger skins, the golden instruments and the golden menorah must have been magnificent to behold. Yet most of the sons of Kohath, though they were responsible for carrying these things, were not allowed to actually touch them or look upon them (verse 15; 1 Chronicles 13:9). Only one group of Kohathites was allowed to do that—the family of Aaron! Yes, the priests were descendants of Kohath. Perhaps this is even one of the reasons that the Kohathites were given charge of the sacred articles.

The age range of those in this service to be counted in the census was 30 to 50 years of age, a span of 20 years. The taking down, transporting and setting up of the tabernacle was difficult work. It demanded concentration and precision. Part of the reason for starting their official duties at 30 years of age, then, seems to be that the work of this office took not just strength but, more importantly, training and maturity. Interestingly, God later selected this age for certain ministerial careers to commence. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ both began their ministries at around this same age." [END]

I didn't see anything additional that needed to be broken down from these verses as I believe they read clearly after this introduction.

Day 152 - THURSDAY: May 11th

Numbers 5

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for this day which does an excellent job of explaining a difficult set of scriptures: "The offering of jealousy can seem to be one of the strangest offerings in all the Bible, offered by a jealous husband who suspects his wife of infidelity. Stranger yet, perhaps, is the awful ritual the wife is required to undergo. But there is a purpose to everything God commands. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes, "This text can be read as an exceptionally harsh judgment on an unfaithful wife [or even a faithful one!]. But there is a sense in which this law ameliorated the harsh realities for a woman in this time period. A woman could be divorced in the ancient world on the mere suspicion of unfaithfulness [thus leaving her destitute]. Without the limitations of laws such as this, a woman might even have been murdered by a jealous husband just on the suspicion of unfaithfulness. Here at least there was an opportunity for the woman to prove her innocence before an enraged husband" (note on Numbers 5:11-31).

Still, to some this whole proceeding might conjure up images of witch trials from medieval to colonial times, in which women were dunked in water to see if they drowned. A survivor was considered a witch and burned at the stake, leaving drowning as the only proof of innocence. Yet there are major differences here. For one, the faithful wife did not die but was exonerated in childbirth, and her unjustly jealous husband made to look the fool for his unfounded accusation.

Yet there is another, even more important difference. Whereas God never commanded and had no part in the completely absurd witch trials just described, He directly commanded and was an integral part of the trial of jealousy. Notice: "Bitter water that brings a curse was not a 'magic potion,' nor was there some hidden ingredient in the water. The addition of dust from the floor of the tabernacle to a vessel of holy water and the scrapings from the bill of indictment (verse 23) were signs of a *spiritual reality*. Holy water and dust from the holy place symbolized that *God* was the One who determined the innocence or guilt of the woman who had come before the priest" (note on 5:18)—not freak happenstance or the reasoning of ignorant people." [END]

Verse 7 – We covered the trespass offering details in Leviticus 5.

Verse 12 – This verse states, "if any man's wife goes astray..." This is the first time in the Bible this Hebrew word for "goes astray" is used. This word means to "deviate from duty" (Strongs) or "to turn aside, go aside" (BDB).

This word is only found here in Numbers 5 (verses 12, 19, 20 & 29) and two places in Proverbs. In Proverbs 4:15 it is used for turning away from some evil in general and in Proverbs 7:25 for turning away from an adulteress. However, here in Numbers it is used for turning off of the right path and way (one of remaining faithful to a husband) and turning toward sin. So we see we can "turn aside" to do evil, or "turn aside" from evil to obey God. Here in Numbers 5:12, it says she turns

aside and “behaves unfaithfully” to him. The Hebrew words for “behaves unfaithfully” are the same words translated “commits a trespass” back in Leviticus 5:15 & 6:12. At that time I shared that Ellicott’s commentary states: “It literally denotes to cover, then to act covertly, to be faithless, especially in matters of a sacred covenant made either with God (Leviticus 26:40; Numbers 31:16; Deuteronomy 32:51, &c.), or between husband and wife (Numbers 5:12; Numbers 5:27).”

Verse 13 – This verse tells us in what way the wife turns aside and commits a trespass (acts unfaithfully). It says “a man lies with her carnally”. “Carnally” is two Hebrew words that in Leviticus 15:16-18 is translated as “emission of semen” and would literally be translated “seed of lying down”.

Verse 14 – This verse now introduces that when this “spirit of jealousy” comes on a husband, it’s possible it’s true that the wife has “defiled” herself or it’s possible that it is not true and she has not “defiled” herself.

Verse 15 – Here there is an “offering of jealousy” to figure out whether the matter is true or not. It also calls it an “offering of remembering”. This is the same word most often translated as “memorial” (compare Exodus 12:14 regarding Passover). This offering was discussed up above in the UCG reading plan so I won’t again cover the details here.

Verse 18 – Regarding “uncovering her head”, John Gill’s commentary states: “as a token of her immodesty and non-subjection to her husband, and that she might be seen by all, to cause shame in her”.

Verse 19 – If she is innocent of adultery, she shall be “free” from the curse. This word for free is most commonly translated “unpunished, guiltless, innocent”.

Verse 25 – This grain offering is taken from the woman, and is waved (presented) before God, and His portion is consumed on His altar.

Verse 31 - Jewish historian Josephus details that this curse caused the woman to die if guilty (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 3, Chapter 11, Section 6). Therefore the husband would be guiltless (free) from any sin regarding her death.

Day 153 - FRIDAY: May 12th

Numbers 6

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is what the UCG reading plan states regarding the Nazarite vow: “We usually think only of men as Nazirites, as John the Baptist apparently was (compare Luke 1:15). But, surprisingly, women too could take the vow of a Nazirite (Numbers 6:2). However, in the case of the woman, her husband or father could disallow the vow and God would not hold her to it (Numbers 30:5). Nazirites neither drank wine or strong drink, and stayed away from grapes altogether for the duration of the vow. They were to let their hair grow long, and bring special offerings to the tabernacle. The vow was for a set time, at the end of which they were to be purified for seven days (compare Numbers 6:9; Acts 21:27), cut their hair and burn it, and partake of certain offerings, including unleavened bread and oil. When the vow was fulfilled they could, once again, drink wine and eat grapes. The vow was usually voluntarily taken for the purpose of making a special request of God, to give thanks to God, or to dedicate themselves to some other such purpose. There are biblical examples of the vow being a lifelong one (Judges 13:5). A vow was often made in thanksgiving to God; it was not something to replace weakness of character in the sense of someone needing the vow and its visibility to others in order to be kept in line with God's way.

Incidentally, we should not confuse the words Nazirite and Nazarene. The word Nazirite comes from the root *nazir*, meaning to "separate" or "keep away from," while Nazarene denotes a resident of Nazareth. Confusing the words, some have argued that Jesus Christ was under a Nazirite vow, and they employ this reasoning to argue for Him having had long hair. But Jesus was not a Nazirite, for He drank wine (Matthew 11:18-19) and on at least one occasion touched a dead body (Luke 8:51-54). And thus, He would not have had long hair (compare 1 Corinthians 11:14). The apostle Paul actually did take a Nazirite vow, not cutting his hair until the vow's completion (Acts 18:18). And he later paid for and shared in the purification rites of four others completing a Nazirite vow (Acts 21:23-27).

Interestingly, since "Nazirite" means "separated one," Christ and all Christians are Nazirites in a spiritual sense—our lives being consecrated to God. The Nazirite vow is one of a number of Old Testament actions or rites that can be viewed as parallels to the Christian's commitment to God at baptism." [END]

Verse 3 – The Nazirite vow represented the entire surrender of oneself to God. In some regards it was more restrictive than the rules of the priest. We see clearly that priests were to avoid alcohol while serving in the tabernacle (Leviticus 10:9), but here we see that someone taking on a Nazirite vow was to avoid alcohol the entire time of the vow. God went beyond even alcohol but restricted anything dealing with a grape (including raisins and juice). Here is what the Ellicott's commentary states: "The prohibition to eat any of the produce of the vine, even of that which was not intoxicating, seems designed to denote the entire consecration of the Nazirite to the Divine service".

Verse 5 – They were not to cut their hair which verse 7 tells us was to be a sign that they were separated to God during this time. Any man

having long hair would immediately be recognized as being under the Nazarite vow.

Verses 6 & 7 – As mentioned above, in some regards, the Nazarite vow was more restrictive than the rules for the priest. Here again, in Leviticus 21 the priests were allowed to bury their mother, father, children, brother, or virgin sister, but here, like the High Priest (Leviticus 21:11), the Nazarite was to stay away from all dead bodies. As we saw in Leviticus, death and decay made one unclean and the Nazarite was to avoid any dead body as they were dedicated to God as Holy.

Verse 11 – In this dedicated state, defilement was sin and required a sin offering, a trespass offering, and a burnt offering.

Verse 12 – Regarding “the days before shall be lost”, John Gill’s commentary states: “which were before the pollution, how near soever the time of Nazariteship being at an end was, whether his vow was for thirty days, or a hundred, or a whole year; be it what it will, and the pollution happened on the last of those days, all were lost; he was obliged to begin again, and go through the whole time he at first vowed; and this was the case if he drank the least quantity of wine, or shaved ever so little of the hair of his head, or was any ways polluted by the dead; and this severity, as it may seem, was used to make him cautious that he broke not his vow by any means” [END].

Verse 14 – At the conclusion of the vow, the Nazarite presents a series of offerings: Sin, Burnt, Grain, Drink & Peace offerings. We’ve looked at these in detail in Leviticus.

Verse 18 – The hair now shaved off, is burned under the peace offering because it was the sign of the Nazarite’s vow. Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “The hair was permitted to grow for this purpose; and as the Nazarite was a kind of sacrifice, offered to God through the

whole term of his nazarate or separation, and no human flesh or blood could be offered on the altar of the Lord, he offered his hair at the conclusion of his separation, as a sacrifice - that hair which was the token of his complete subjection to the Lord, and which was now considered as the Lord's property." [END]

Verse 21 – John Gill's commentary states: "the above offerings were what he was obliged unto by the law of God, even though a poor man; but, besides these, it was expected of a man of substance, that he would voluntarily of himself offer more, according to his ability and the length of the time of his Nazariteship" [END].

Verses 22 through 27: The UCG reading plan states: ""In 1979 the Israeli archaeologist Gabriel Barkay was excavating some ancient burial caves overlooking the Hinnom Valley, just to the south-west of the Old City of Jerusalem, when to his surprise he found one that was undisturbed. It contained the bones of at least ninety-five people, some with pottery, arrowheads, pieces of gold and silver jewellery buried alongside them. But Barkay's most spectacular find in this cave was a pair of small cylindrical scrolls made of pure silver. Although insignificant-looking when first found, the largest no more than 4 inches long, they were both found to bear eighteen lines of Palaeo-Hebrew script when unrolled, including the words:

"May Yahweh bless you and keep you

"May Yahweh cause his face to shine upon you and grant you peace.

"As palaeographic specialists are generally agreed, the date when these words were incised on the scrolls can be no later than the 7th century BC, i.e. the time of [the prophet] Jeremiah. Since they are none other than the 'priestly blessing' of Numbers 6:24-26, still used in both Jewish

and Christian liturgies, they are by far the oldest portion of Biblical text yet discovered" (Ian Wilson, *The Bible Is History*, 1999, p. 173).

This discovery was a major blow to those scholars and other Bible critics who claim that the books of Moses were actually not written until the Hellenistic period in the third century B.C." [END]

Day 154 - SATURDAY: May 13th

Numbers 7

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll once again begin with the UCG reading plan for this day: "In Exodus 40 we read of the dedication of the tabernacle on the first day of the first month and the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle. The first day of the first month, spoken of here as the day Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, is a significant day, as there are other historical occurrences of this date mentioned in Scripture: when Hezekiah cleaned up the temple and restored it (2 Chronicles 29:17); the day Ezra left Babylon (Ezra 7:9); and the day Ezra had the returned captives put away their foreign wives (Ezra 10:17). And after Jesus Christ returns, we will witness the cleansing of the sanctuary once again on this first day of the first month (Ezekiel 45:18).

In Numbers 7 we also read some of the details of the tremendous offerings of the leaders of Israel that were brought on that day to the temple to dedicate the altar in the day when it was anointed (verse 84). In chapter 1 we saw that the census was conducted by these leaders, each head of the house of his father's tribe. Now we see their offerings, literally by the wagonloads, of precious gifts brought to the tabernacle. Note, however, that the sons of Kohath had no wagons, as the holy things of the sanctuary, such as the Ark of the Covenant, were to be carried by poles on their shoulders (verse 9). The order of the names of the leaders, with their offerings, varies from chapter 1, yet they are the same men. The leaders of Israel brought their offerings "before the

Lord"—yet actually presenting them to Moses, who gave them to the Levites (verses 3, 5)." [END]

Verse 17 – What a feast! All who were clean of all of Israel were able to partake in the peace offerings. On day one, we see two oxen, five rams, five goats, and five lambs offered and feasted on. This pattern is repeated each day for a total of 12 days adding up to the total in verse 89 of 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 goats and 60 lambs. Wow!