

A LOOK AT THE BOOK NUMBERS

Distance from Egypt to Israel?

How long did it take?

Why 40 years for an 11 day journey?

Deut. 1:2-3, 26, 29-32

GENESIS--Book of BEGINNINGS

WHERE did ISRAEL COME from?

EXODUS--BIRTH of the nation

HOW did God form His people into a nation?

REDEMPTION of God's people 1-13

REVELATION to God's people 13-40

a) The Law 19-24

b) The Tabernacle 25-40

Three lessons for Israel:

1) God CONTROLLED HISTORY to make them into a nation

2) God BOUGHT them and brought them out of bondage

3) God expects His people to SUBMIT TO HIS AUTHORITY over us, to:

-Recognize our DEBT

-Recognize our DEPENDENCE

-Submit to His AUTHORITY

LEVITICUS--Expands the law given in Exodus

Explains How God's people OUGHT TO LIVE IN ORDER TO CONTINUE IN FELLOWSHIP

WITH HIM: "*Be holy for I am holy!*"

Presents means of restoration to fellowship

Way of Access to God 1-10

Walk before God 11-27

NUMBERS

Picks up the history of Israel where Exodus left off

Israel is still at Sinai where God has just revealed Himself to His people.

They were to be His people and He would be their God and dwell in their midst

The law was the standard of conduct for a redeemed people in the midst of a pagan world--
they were to be different

The tabernacle was given so He could dwell in their midst and they could worship Him

Now God was ready to lead them into the land He had promised to their fathers

Due to their **UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE**, the entrance into the land was delayed forty years--
-while that generation died.

Numbers tells THE STORY of their FAILURE and THE RESULTING DELAY in the wilderness.

It concludes at the banks of the Jordan River, 40 years later, preparing again to enter the land.

PURPOSE

To reveal the serious CONSEQUENCES of UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE among God's people.

They should have trusted and obeyed Him

Their failure caused serious negative consequences:

- => fellowship with God broken
- => entrance to land delayed 40 years
- => that generation died (exc. Joshua & Caleb)--they didn't enter land

To reveal God's FAITHFULNESS

Their failure did not cut them off from God

They were punished--even to death--but the promises were still fulfilled

God protected them in the wilderness

God provided all they needed

God still guided and defended them

God brought them back to the land

THEME

Though God MUST PUNISH His people for their UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE, He continues to LOVE them and to demonstrate His FAITHFULNESS to them.

God's blessing is the result of obedience.

The consequences of disobedience are always serious.

ORGANIZATION --3 parts--reveals theme

1. PREPARATION TO enter CANAAN 1-14 -Movement toward the land

Movement from Sinai to Canaan

Preparations made

Doubt and disobedience

2. POSTPONEMENT IN wilderness 15-19

40 years wandering

Consequences of rebellion

Continued faithfulness of God

3. Movement TOWARD land RENEWED 20-36

Restoration of the people

Renewed preparation for possessing land

Parallels between 1 and 3 are obvious--emphasized by the CENSUS

I. Movement TOWARD land 1-14

A. PREPARATION 1-10

Before Israel could travel from Sinai to the land God had promised them (1-14), various kinds of preparation were necessary (1-10)

1. ORGANIZATIONAL PREPARATION 1-4

First they had to organize the nation for what lie ahead.

Such a large number could not be mobilized without efficient organization.

- a) MILITARY ORGANIZATION 1 -- CENSUS
- b) CAMP ORGANIZATION by TRIBES 2
- c) ORGANIZATION of THE LEVITES for spiritual ministry 3-4
Substitutes for the firstborn (3:39-45)

2. SPIRITUAL PREPARATION 5-6

- Unclean separated from the camp
- Procedure for confession and restitution
- Other procedures established

Spiritual preparations made so ISRAEL MIGHT Be A DISTINCT people WHO would GLORIFY God to those around them by their DISTINCT LIFESTYLE.

3. RELIGIOUS PREPARATION 7-9:14

- Dedication of the tabernacle planned
 - Offerings
 - Tabernacle set up
 - Levites dedicated
 - Passover celebrated

4. TRAVEL PREPARATIONS 9:15-10:10

- DIRECTION by THE CLOUD and THE PILLAR 9:15-23
- Announcement by the trumpets
- EVERYTHING WAS ready--just AS God had COMMANDED

B. Journey from SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA 10:11-12:15

At last the preparations are complete and the people are ready to move on to the land.

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE JOURNEY 10:11-10:36

- As the order is given the people move out
 - The cloud moves
 - The people follow

2. DISPUTES IN THE CAMP 11:1-12:15

The people hardly begin the journey when their problems start.

a) COMPLAINT ABOUT THE HARDSHIPS 11:1-3

Judgment by fire from heaven

b) COMPLAINT ABOUT THE FOOD 11:4-35

God provides quail
sends a plague--many died

c) JEALOUSY of MIRIAM and AARON 12:1-15

God judges them
They submit to His authority

PROBLEM of UNGRATEFULNESS

C. REBELLION AND JUDGMENT 12:16-14:45

- 1. The mission of the twelve 12:16-13:33

2. The mistake of the people 14:1-10
3. The anger of Jehovah 14:11-12
4. The pleading of Moses 14:13-19
5. The judgment of Jehovah 14:20-38
6. The defeat of the people 14:39-45 -Too late to turn back! (Cp. Heb. 6)

II. POSTPONEMENT IN THE WILDERNESS 15:1-19:22

A. THE OBSERVANCE OF THE OFFERINGS 15:1-31

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE 15:32-41

C. THE CONFIRMATION OF DIVINE AUTHORITY 16:1-18:32

1. The authority of Moses 16:1-50
2. The authority of Aaron 17-18

D. THE SIN OFFERING OF THE RED HEIFER 19:1-10

E. THE DANGER OF EXPOSURE TO THE DEAD 19:11-22

III. MOVEMENT TOWARD LAND RENEWED 20-36

A. JOURNEY FROM KADESH-BARNEA TO PLAINS OF MOAB 20-22:1

B. PREPARATORY EVENTS IN THE PLAINS OF MOAB 22:2-36:13

1. Political preparation 22:2-24:25
2. Spiritual preparation 25
3. Organizational preparation 26-27
4. Religious preparation 28-30
5. Historical preparation 31-33
6. Legal preparation 34-36:12
7. Conclusion 36:13

Sad part of the story

- all the PREPARATIONS are REPEATED in 25-36
- what could have been a brief, simple journey became a long, tragic experience because of UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE.

Nevertheless God REMAINS FAITHFUL

He promised to bring them to the land

He has protected them

He has provided all they need for 40 years

Finally, at the end of the book, by His grace, they are at the door ready to enter the land, when

He gives the command

Though they've traveled a long ways for many days, there was no progress for *forty years!*

What should WE LEARN from THE EXAMPLE of ISRAEL?

1 Cor. 10:1-13 --We need to learn from their example

UNBELIEF and DISOBEDIENCE are still A TRAP

They will stop us from enjoying God's plan for us

They will break our fellowship with God

God IS still FAITHFUL

When we don't trust Him-- HE REMAINS FAITHFUL

When we disobey--

He still provides for our needs and protects us
He waits for us to return
He will use discipline to bring us back to him
It is better to LEARN from ISRAEL'S EXAMPLE and to TRUST Him and OBEY Him daily !