

SOUTHLAND CHURCH

THE BOOK OF  
**NUMBERS**

*14 Day Devotional*



**foundations**  
daily devotional

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**DAY 1****INTRODUCTION**

Numbers, along with Leviticus and Deuteronomy, are not the most popular books of the Bible – at least not today. But there was a time when the Pentateuch was very important (the Pentateuch is the name given to the first five books of the Bible, also known as The Law). In fact, in 2 Kings we read the response of King Josiah when the scrolls from the book of the Lord were found:

<sup>8</sup> And Hilkiyah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. <sup>9</sup> And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and <sup>10</sup> ... told the king, “Hilkiyah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. <sup>11</sup> When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup> And the king commanded Hilkiyah the priest ... <sup>13</sup> “Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.” <sup>14</sup> So Hilkiyah ... went to Huldah the prophetess ... [and] ... talked with her. <sup>15</sup> And she said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: ‘Tell the man who sent you to me, <sup>16</sup> Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. <sup>17</sup> Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. <sup>18</sup> But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, <sup>19</sup> because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place.’” And they brought back word to the king.

<sup>23</sup> Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. <sup>2</sup> And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant. 2 Kings 22:8-23:3

Could you imagine sitting through a reading of the entire first five books of the Bible? Yet look at the fruit! Josiah was *devastated* when he realized how far they had fallen from the standards God had for His people.

As they read through numbers, they heard about stories of rebellion and saw that there were serious consequences from God when His people chose to rebel against Him. That’s exactly what we should gain from these books. Moses isn’t the actual author of Numbers, he is merely the man God chose to write down what He spoke. **God** is the true Author of

Moses, and we see over 80 times in Numbers “God spoke to Moses!” God wanted us to read these accounts! 1 Corinthians 10 Paul says, “*Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.*” (ESV) We are to learn from these examples of what we *are* to do as well as what we are *not* to do.

Let us delve deeper into this particular book, and perhaps we can avoid falling into the same sinful patterns that the majority of the Israelites seemed bent on committing.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Spend some time in prayer dedicating this book to God. If you have any hesitations about the book of Numbers, tell Him exactly what they are. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak freely to you throughout your Bible reading. Ask for Him to unlock the Scriptures for you.
2. Ask Jesus to speak to you through a word, thought or picture about what He would like to establish in you or show you with the book of Numbers.
3. Write down anything you know about this book. Are you familiar with any passages of Scripture from Numbers? Do you know any of the stories that are found within?

## DAY 2

 **READ:** Numbers 1-3

*These are the chosen leaders of the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the clans of Israel.* Numbers 1:16 (NLT)

I don’t know exactly how the Israelites conducted themselves in Egypt when it came to matters pertaining to their tribes. I don’t even know if prior to the great Exodus there was even any real unity among them. In regards to matters of leadership and authority, they were slaves under the control of Pharaoh and his commanding officials. But now that they were free, there needed to be a chain of command established and new leaders chosen, appointed and assigned various tasks.

Humans were not meant to govern themselves without the wisdom and authority from God. The principle of leadership and authority was designed by God Himself (Rom 13:1) and He wanted to make it clear to the Israelites that even though He had rescued them from a wicked ruler, there was still going to be a chain of command – one chosen and appointed by Him. This new way of governing and leading people was going to be on His terms. The Israelites needed to know that God was not abandoning the idea of authority when He delivered them, but rather the opposite. He would show them what it meant to have righteous rulers, and the blessings that came when they were submitted to governing authority figures.

As stated in the introduction, God is the actual Author of the Bible, so when we read the lists of genealogies or names, we do so because God chose to include those names in Scripture. In chapters one through three, there are many names written down. The first chapter contains the list of leaders who are to assist Moses and Aaron with the task of taking the census, the second chapter is dedicated to the specific detailing of how the 12 tribes are to set up and take down camp, and chapter three goes into the Levitical clans with their appointed headship, and their various assignments.

<sup>1</sup> Pawson, David, and Andy Peck. "Numbers." *Unlocking the Bible*. London: Marshall Pickering, 2000. 1343. Print.

We see that the way God was establishing order among His people was by appointing different levels of leadership and authority. Each group of people would be held accountable and disciplined accordingly in regards to their obedience or disobedience, respect or contempt for these figures.

This was not a chaotic camp! God is a God of peace and order (1Co 14:33) and having an organized system of the way things were to run made sure for a peaceful and successful environment within this new Nation.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Who are some of the appointed leaders or authority figures in your life? Write them down.
2. Prayerfully go over the list and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight any leaders that you are not currently obeying or submitting to. Confess as necessary.
3. Pick one of the leaders that came to your mind for the first question. Write down character traits that you appreciate in this person, and how you think that equips them to be a good leader.
4. Spend some time in prayer for this person, asking God to strengthen, protect and bless this leader.

## DAY 3

 **READ:** Numbers 4-6

*“If any of the people, either men or women, take the special vow of a Nazirite, setting themselves apart to the LORD in a special way, <sup>3</sup> they must give up wine and other alcoholic drinks. They must not use vinegar made from wine or from other alcoholic drinks, they must not drink fresh grape juice, and they must not eat grapes or raisins. <sup>4</sup> As long as they are bound by their Nazirite vow, they are not allowed to eat or drink anything that comes from a grapevine—not even the grape seeds or skins... <sup>21</sup> “This is the ritual law of the Nazirites, who vow to bring these offerings to the LORD. They may also bring additional offerings if they can afford it. And they must be careful to do whatever they vowed when they set themselves apart as Nazirites.”* Numbers 6:1-4, 21 (NLT)

Chapters four through six cover several different topics (Levitical duties, camp cleanliness, marital faithfulness, the Nazirite vows and closes with a famous benediction) but the focus for today’s devotional will be on the Nazirite vows and laws. To choose to life the life of a Nazirite, one would have to carefully count the cost. This wasn’t a small sacrifice and there were regulations on what was both permitted and prohibited in regards to their food consumption, hair style and association with matters pertaining to death. It is interesting to take note that regardless of the requirements laid out for the Nazirites, there were people who were willing to make this sacrifice. This was not a vow forced on any one, but rather a vow people chose to make on their own, wanting to set themselves apart unto the Lord (Num 6:2).

No one chooses to make a sacrifice for a cause they do not believe in, God included. This is true even if the ultimate sacrifice means dying in order that others may reap where they have not sown. Here are two really good definitions of the word ‘sacrifice’:

1. *The act of giving up something that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else or to help someone<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> As defined by mirriam-webster.com

2. *The surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim*<sup>3</sup>

There is joy in the sacrifice. When we give something up to the Lord, although often painful and hard, we will always get something of greater value in return, even if that doesn't always look like we think it ought to. People who *wanted* to give themselves over to the Lord were given laws (such as the laws for Nazarites) showing them what it would cost to be set apart for Him. Scripture only tells us of the requirements for sacrifice. There is no written account showing what blessings followed those who took this vow upon themselves. I image the blessings were great because our Lord loves when people sacrifice good things so they can enter into a deeper and more intimate relationship with Him. After all, spending time with Him and being in His presence is one of the greatest blessings of all.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. What sort of thoughts or feelings do you get when you hear the word 'sacrifice'? Ask Jesus to reveal any hidden fears you may have in regards to this word, and the impact these fears are having in your life. Confess anything if necessary, receive His forgiveness and allow Him to minister peace into your being.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind sacrifices you have made for Him, and the rewards and blessings that followed.
3. Meditate on the sacrifice Jesus gave for us – His life. Write down a list of all the things you can come up with that *He* was willing to sacrifice so that *we* could enter into relationship again with God and gain eternal life with Him. What are the fruits of His sacrifice that He is reaping, and what are the benefits that you are personally reaping? How can you finish a list like this off with anything other than thanksgiving and worship?

## DAY 4

 **READ:** Numbers 7-9

*"Of all the people of Israel, the Levites are reserved for me. I have claimed them for myself in place of all the firstborn sons of the Israelites; I have taken the Levites as their substitutes. <sup>17</sup>For all the firstborn males among the people of Israel are mine, both of people and of animals. I set them apart for myself on the day I struck down all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. <sup>18</sup>Yes, I have claimed the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons of Israel. <sup>19</sup>And of all the Israelites, I have assigned the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They will serve in the Tabernacle on behalf of the Israelites and make sacrifices to purify the people so no plague will strike them when they approach the sanctuary."* Numbers 8:16-19 (NLT)

Even though God had chosen the Levites to be the tribe that would minister in the Tabernacle, there was still the issue of sinful people being close to a Holy God. Regardless of the Levites being chosen, they needed to draw near to God, having been fully consecrated and cleansed. Serious effort needed to be put into the process and preparation to meet with God, for He was holy and awesome. Back in the book of Exodus we read the account of the Lord revealing Himself at Mount Sinai, and what the instructions they were to follow in order to present themselves before Him:

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you." Moses told the LORD what the people had said. <sup>10</sup>Then the LORD told Moses, "Go down and pre-*

<sup>3</sup> As defined by dictionary.com

*pare the people for my arrival. Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothing. <sup>11</sup>Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch. <sup>12</sup>Mark off a boundary all around the mountain. Warn the people, 'Be careful! Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put to death. <sup>13</sup>No hand may touch the person or animal that crosses the boundary; instead, stone them or shoot them with arrows. They must be put to death.' However, when the ram's horn sounds a long blast, then the people may go up on the mountain." <sup>14</sup>So Moses went down to the people. He consecrated them for worship, and they washed their clothes. <sup>15</sup>He told them, "Get ready for the third day, and until then abstain from having sexual intercourse." <sup>16</sup>On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled. <sup>17</sup>Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup>All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently. <sup>19</sup>As the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his reply. <sup>20</sup>The LORD came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed the mountain. <sup>21</sup>Then the LORD told Moses, "Go back down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries to see the LORD, or they will die. <sup>22</sup>Even the priests who regularly come near to the LORD must purify themselves so that the LORD does not break out and destroy them." – Exodus 19:9-24 (NLT)*

Meeting with God wasn't an ordinary event! People had to be sanctified, purified, and cleansed! They were to abstain from certain things, even good things! There were even orders to kill anyone who breached the boundaries that were set out by God!

Sadly, over the years, awe and respect for God have become dull. What used to be seen as uncommon is now all too common. There are many who view meeting with God as a task, burden or just another ordinary event. Reading their Bible and spending time in prayer is pushed back in the list of important things, and when they do finally meet with Him, little thought could be put into preparing their hearts to meet with God Almighty.

It is with this mindset that when we read commands to kill someone who breach a boundary we start to ask *why*... That seems harsh. If they even touch the base of the mountain they are to be killed? And not only is that unholy person supposed to be killed, but no one is to touch them in the process of their execution! More than ever we live in a generation that questions God and the boundaries given by Him. What used to be holy and awesome is now seen in the world and by some professed believers as "oppressive."

How far we have come from the days of Old!

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Looking over the process that the Levites went through to become consecrated to the Lord, what can you learn about the Holiness of God from these passages of Scripture?
2. While we no longer need to go through the sanctification rituals that the Israelites had, we are still instructed throughout Scripture to check ourselves before we partake into something holy. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 1 Corinthians 11:28-32. Both these Scriptures are commands to search ourselves before offering or partaking in a holy event.
3. Do you check your heart before coming into the presence of God? Or do you give little thought about the condition of your heart before approaching Him?

4. Have you begun treating your times with God as common? Have you lost the value of what it means to have Him living inside of you? When you have your alone time with God are you prone to give into distractions? Confess anything He shows you and ask Him for specific steps to help you focus and regain your awe for Him.

## DAY 5

 **READ:** Numbers 10-12

*Then the foreign rabble who were traveling with the Israelites began to crave the good things of Egypt. And the people of Israel also began to complain. "Oh, for some meat!" they exclaimed. <sup>5</sup>"We remember the fish we used to eat for free in Egypt. And we had all the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic we wanted. <sup>6</sup>But now our appetites are, gone. All we ever see is this manna!"* Numbers 11:4-6 (NLT)

Humans have a unique ability to seemingly remember only key aspects of a situation when they see fit. The Israelites are the perfect example of this ability. In Numbers 11:4-6 we see that the when the foreigners started complaining, the Israelites, rather than telling them to 'shut-up' and remind everyone (themselves included) what God had delivered them from, chose to rather dwell on all the good food they used to eat in Egypt. They seemed to forget that they ate that all that wonderful food as slaves with fresh wounds from whips across their backs. But I suppose that since the wounds were now scars they could now only feel the discomfort of their current physical condition and started to crave the few comforts of their old life. Crazy, right? Any outsider would clearly see that the current small discomforts far outweighed the 400 plus years they spent enslaved in Egypt and the hardships that went along with it!

Consider a new believer fresh out of an unhealthy romantic relationship; the only fruit of which was sin, brokenness and destruction. Consider how her life might change with God's forgiveness and incredible deliverance from sexual bondage. And not only that! What about the blessing of a godly community, a great church family, and friendships that bear godly fruit. This could certainly be seen as deliverance from a life of enslavement to sin into a much greater land! Isn't it possible however, as time passed by that the new believer might start to feel the discomfort of the sacrifices required of a Christian and become downright miserable with the fact that she are still single. Might she start to recall all the "fun" she used to have when she was more "free" to do her own thing? Perhaps she remembers the parties, the dancing, the relationships and how her ex used to buy me roses and sushi and on and on. Isn't it possibly that the more she focuses on the roses and sushi the more she forgot about the tears, the pain and despair that were a result of all those 'fun' nights?

Do you know a story like this?

I truly don't know why we get like that. You would think that we would never forget how awful our own personal Egypt used to be, but we do. Thankfully God is incredibly patient with us and when we see the error of our ways and repent, we are forgiven. The good news is that as we mature in Him, the Truth becomes rooted deeper and deeper in our hearts and eventually no matter how tough this life becomes, or if we're not getting what we want, we come to realize and know that God is ALWAYS better than the alternative – wishing you were still dwelling back in your own personal 'Egypt.'



## JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Have you ever been tempted to return to your own personal Egypt because it appealed to you when you were experiencing some discomforts of this new life? Or have you ever actually returned? Perhaps there is something that God delivered you from only for you to go back to it again leaving you feel hopelessly trapped. The good news is that we serve a good God, who rescues us when we call out to Him. Spent some time prayerfully reflecting on your journey through thanksgiving, confession, and praise.
2. Write down one or two (or several) situations that you are feeling some discomfort in. Ask God to show you the good He is working on your behalf in those situations.
3. Remembrance and thanksgiving for what God has all done for us is a weapon to overcome the sin of complaining. Spend some time using both those weapons right now to strengthen you for the time when the temptation to complain arises.

## DAY 6

 **READ:** Numbers 13-15

*But as surely as I live, and as surely as the earth is filled with the LORD's glory, <sup>22</sup>not one of these people will ever enter that land. They have all seen my glorious presence and the miraculous signs I performed both in Egypt and in the wilderness, but again and again they have tested me by refusing to listen to my voice. <sup>23</sup>They will never even see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have treated me with contempt will ever see it. <sup>24</sup>But my servant Caleb has a different attitude than the others have. He has remained loyal to me, so I will bring him into the land he explored. His descendants will possess their full share of that land.* Numbers 14:20-24 (NLT)

Only two people out of the promised 2 million actually made it into the Promised Land<sup>4</sup>. If you do the math, that's only .0001% of the population! How incredibly sad and tragic! We need to be *very* clear on this fact: this was NOT what God wanted! When He brought the Israelites out of Egypt, His intention was to bring them ALL in the Promised Land (Ex 3:7-8). In fact, God first made this promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:8 ... *"I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants."* (NLT) God never lies, but He can modify His plans when we refuse to obey, and that's exactly what He did with the Israelites. Because they refused to trust God to hand over their enemies to them, they doubted His power (which is mind-boggling if you consider the fact that these were the very people who witnessed the plagues God unleashed in Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea) and again wanted to return to Egypt and have Pharaoh rule over them rather than God.

Also, as opposed to listening and believing that God was able to fulfill His promise, they chose to believe a bad report from ten men (even though there were two men who insisted that the Lord was on their side) and therefore were denied access into the Promised Land. Because of this sin, the Israelites spent 40 years wandering in the desert until every single one of the people listed in the first census had died off, minus Caleb and Joshua. So what should have only been an 11 day journey ended up taking 13, 780 days to complete<sup>5</sup> all due to them doubting God.

<sup>4</sup> Pawson, D., & Peck, A. (2003). *Numbers*. In *Unlocking the Bible* (p. 157). Great Britain: HarperCollins.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Write down any miracles that you have experienced or witnessed in your life. If none come to mind, pray and ask God to bring an event to your mind where He was calling the shots, and you experienced the supernatural. If you don't remember the emotions or feelings attached to that moment, ask God to bring them to mind again. What was so amazing about this experience? Was it an answer to a prayer? A mountain being moved? Deliverance or freedom? Healing? Spend some time praising God for this.
2. Is there something that God has promised you that you haven't received yet? Has He promised healing even though the doctors are telling you there is no hope? Marriage when you have been single for years without the sign of any love interest? A baby but you aren't able to conceive? Deliverance from a bondage? Anything else? If so, how are you handling the wait? Do you trust that God is able to deliver on His promise or do you trust the bad reports from others, wanting to give in to what seems like a hopeless situation? Spend some time conversing with the Lord about this. Confess anything if necessary.
3. Perhaps God is telling you that now is the time to move forward and go and 'take the land' He has promised you. Spend some time listening in prayer and asking God if there is any step you need to take to move forward towards your own Promised Land.
4. Do you know of anyone who is waiting to receive their Promised Land and has become discouraged along the way? Ask the Lord if there is anything specific He wants to you pray and spend some time interceding on behalf of this person, that they will choose to continue to trust the Lord.

**DAY 7****READ:** Numbers 16-17

When Moses heard what they were saying, he fell face down on the ground. <sup>5</sup> Then he said to Korah and his followers, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show us who belongs to him and who is holy. The LORD will allow only those whom he selects to enter his own presence. <sup>6</sup> Korah, you and all your followers must prepare your incense burners. <sup>7</sup> Light fires in them tomorrow, and burn incense before the LORD. Then we will see whom the LORD chooses as his holy one. You Levites are the ones who have gone too far!" <sup>8</sup> Then Moses spoke again to Korah: "Now listen, you Levites! <sup>9</sup> Does it seem insignificant to you that the God of Israel has chosen you from among all the community of Israel to be near him so you can serve in the LORD's Tabernacle and stand before the people to minister to them? <sup>10</sup> Korah, he has already given this special ministry to you and your fellow Levites. Are you now demanding the priesthood as well? <sup>11</sup> The LORD is the one you and your followers are really revolting against! For who is Aaron that you are complaining about him?" Numbers 16:4-11 (NLT)

This is not good! Korah had stirred up a rebellion that resulted in over 250 people revolting against Moses' and Aaron's leadership. But Moses made it known that they were actually revolting against the Lord Himself. This is always the case when one chooses to rebel against any figure of authority regardless of the leader being a believer or not.

Let me illustrate with a story. For two years "Dan" struggled with a serious issue of self-harm. This was a completely new struggle for him, and for his life he couldn't understand WHY he was now dealing with this as a Christian whereas before, as an unbeliever it wasn't an issue for him. In fact he never even understood how some people could resort to physically hurting themselves because he just didn't have that desire at all. As this struggle

progressed Dan sought out help. He confessed his struggle to wise godly people who prayed through this bondage with him. This lasted for two years before he was finally set free after one particular personal ministry session.

During the session the person leading asked Jesus to show Dan where this bondage all started, where this sin was able to enter his life. Jesus immediately answered and his jaw dropped at what God showed him. Dan was shocked. In fact he wrote about it later in his journal.

*"Yesterday I had a personal ministry appointment. I mentioned what another pastor had suggested I pray through 'transfer of spirits.' The whole time I am thinking in my head "there's nothing left to deal with!" (Well really it was the enemy putting thoughts into my mind). But that was far from the truth! We had never dealt with the entry point before, so we asked God what it was. I'm never rebelling again. Never. Not gonna use my phone while driving. Nor at work. Anyway, the entry point was when I went on Facebook when we were specifically told we weren't allowed to go on that site at work. "Small rebellion" ... BIG consequences. The Bible says that 'rebellion is as witchcraft' 1 Samuel 15:23. I was blown away by the fact that this was the entry point. So I confessed it as sin, and cast it away."*

The issue was that for Dan, breaking the 'small' rule that his employer had laid out for him didn't seem significant at the time. Unfortunately Dan justified his actions at the time by the fact that everyone else was doing the same thing, and that even though he was a believer and knew he was supposed to listen to his bosses, it wasn't such a big deal. Besides, no one was home at the time, and his bosses were even adamant unbelievers. Sigh...

God makes no distinction between rebelling against authority and disobeying Him. God is very clear on His stance of obeying authority figures and makes it known time and time again throughout Scripture. Take Romans 13:1-2 (NLT) for example ... *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. <sup>2</sup> So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.* "Dan" experienced first-hand the consequences laid on me by disobeying his employer. When he rebelled God's hand of protection lifted off of him and a spirit was able to grab hold of his life and thus began a two year struggle with self-harm. However, he both warned and encouraged from both Korah and Dan's mistakes. Even though both of them rebelled, they experienced very different results. When faced with the realization of his actions, Dan repented and was forgiven and set free from the bondage. Korah however did *not* repent, but sadly, rather chose to harden his heart when Moses rebuked him and continued to stir up the community of Israel against Moses and Aaron, which ultimately resulted in his death. Same sin of rebellion, two very different endings. Praise God that He forgives us when we repent!

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Ask God if there are any authority figures in your life that you are currently rebelling against (God, government, parents, workplace, ministry area, teachers, etc.). Confess anything He shows you.
2. After you have confessed, ask Jesus if there is any area in your life that has been affected by your rebellion. Write down what He shows you. If this is something that you are able to work through on your own, then do so. However, if this is a big issue in your life or you are unsure how to deal with it, perhaps booking a personal ministry appointment with the church or meeting with your cell leader would be a better solution.
3. Spend some time praising and thanking God for disciplining us when we sin, giving us opportunities to repent, and forgiving us when we do!

**DAY 8** **READ:** Numbers 18-20

*“Yes, I am giving you all these holy offerings that the people of Israel bring to the LORD. They are for you and your sons and daughters, to be eaten as your permanent share. This is an eternal and unbreakable covenant between the LORD and you, and it also applies to your descendants.”*<sup>20</sup> *And the LORD said to Aaron, “You priests will receive no allotment of land or share of property among the people of Israel. I am your share and your allotment.*<sup>21</sup> *As for the tribe of Levi, your relatives, I will compensate them for their service in the Tabernacle. Instead of an allotment of land, I will give them the tithes from the entire land of Israel.”* Numbers 18:19-21 (NLT)

The Levites were the only Israelite tribe to receive no allotment of land from the Lord. God’s reasoning behind this was that He Himself was their inheritance, and they belonged to Him. In addition, they also received portions of the tithes people presented to the Lord. This was one way that the Lord provided for the needs of the Levites while they served in the temple.

This is how most churches function today. All church staff are supported by the tithes that the congregation gives. Part of our duty as a church body is to tithe regularly not only so that our church can run missions and reach the lost, but also to support those who are actually serving us, the congregation. Our Pastors do a *lot* for us that we don’t see. Hundreds of hours go into the different resources produced by many staff here at our church. They pray for us, intercede for us, fast for us, serve us, meet with us, help us, and love us! They too serve on top of their regular work week! We have an amazing staff at this church and God uses us His people to support those whom He has called to serve.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Spend some time in thanksgiving for the staff at our church and for their servant hearts.
2. If you are currently serving in any areas of ministry within the church, pray for the staff who oversees this area. If you don’t know who that particular pastor is, pray for the staff team as a whole! Pray for wisdom, guidance, protection, strength, health, their families, and however else you feel led to pray for them.
3. Do you tithe? If you don’t ask the Lord to give you the self-discipline to start. If you do, ask God if you are giving the amount He wants and to the ministries He wants.

**DAY 9** **READ:** Numbers 21-23

*That night God came to Balaam and asked him, “Who are these men visiting you?”*<sup>10</sup> *Balaam said to God, “Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent me this message: ‘Look, a vast horde of people has arrived from Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come and curse these people for me. Then perhaps I will be able to stand up to them and drive them from the land.’”*<sup>12</sup> *But God told Balaam, “Do not go with them. You are not to curse these people, for they have been blessed!”* Numbers 22:9-12 (NLT)

Balaam was not a prophet of God. In fact he was a wicked, wicked man. He was into divination (Jos 13:22), though he did truly hear from God from time to time (Nu 22-24). He was a devious sell-out (2 Pe 2:15 and Jude 1:11) who masterminded a plot to cause

the Israelites to fall into sin (see Numbers 31:16, and put that verse together with Rev 2:14), and the New Testament repeatedly holds him up as an example of wickedness and treachery. If you read through the account of Balaam, you see that Balaam even knows God’s *actual* name: Yahweh (whenever you read LORD and all the letters are uppercase, the translation means Yahweh). Which means that Balaam must have known something about this particular group of people. So essentially Balaam was saying: “Yahweh, there is this group of men here, who have asked me to go with them, so that I can curse Your people. Would that be all right with You?”<sup>6</sup>

Balaam was either crazy, or intent on evil. Perhaps even both. He seemed pretty intent on getting the reward money from Balak since he tried to curse them, but every time he opened his mouth he pronounced a blessing instead. Placing a curse on those who are blessed and protected by God is an impossible feat!

While I was working as a Teacher’s Assistant, one of the students I was helping decided that he was going to put a curse on me. So he said out loud “I put a curse on you. When you leave school today you are going to trip and break your ankle.” I instantly felt this terror come over me as he said “and curses are real, so that’s actually going to happen.” I came against that fear aloud when I responded to him “Well I’m a child of God so your curse has no hold on me.” He then said, “We’ll see about that.” As the end of the day drew nearer I have to admit I was very worried about slipping on either a stone or some ice when I exited the building. As the bell ended and I made my way towards to front of the building I prayed and asked God that I wouldn’t fear the curse because I knew curses had no power over me, and that I wouldn’t even think about the curse while I was walking outside. I kid you not, I completely forgot about that curse until I was safely inside my vehicle. I had not tripped and broken my ankle. I wanted to drive around and find that kid and say “SEE! See what happens when you are under God’s protection. Take your curse and shove it!” But I didn’t because he was a student and that would have been unprofessional...

I find it rather frightening and sad that this young boy had obviously dabbled with curses before, and knew that there was real power behind placing a spoken curse over someone. He just obviously didn’t know that the children of the Light are completely immune to the powers of darkness.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. What stands out to you as you read these two chapters about Balaam and his intent to try and curse Israel?
2. Fun fact: The Angel of the Lord’s Army is actually Jesus. We see throughout Scripture that there seems to be three different types of angels. The first type are actually God’s heavenly angelic beings, and they do not accept worship from humans (Rev 19:10, 22:8-9) in fact, the Bible tells us that the worship of angels is a sin (Col 2:18). The second type are also seen in Revelation and are actually the pastors or messengers (‘angels’) of the churches in Revelation (Rev 1:20). The Third is actually Jesus Himself, and Angel of the Lord’s Army seems to be another one of His titles. This Angel will receive worship from a human, and often the description of Jesus in the Old Testament lines up with the description of Him from Revelation 1:14-16.
3. Knowing that the Angel of the Lord is actually Jesus Himself, how does this now play into your insight into this story?
4. What can you tell about Jesus’ passion towards His people from this story? Do you think He has that same passion for His people (*all* His people, not just the Jews) today?

**DAY 10** **READ:** Numbers 24-25

*Just then one of the Israelite men brought a Midianite woman into his tent, right before the eyes of Moses and all the people, as everyone was weeping at the entrance of the Tabernacle.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>7</sup> When Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest saw this, he jumped up and left the assembly. He took a spear<sup>8</sup> and rushed after the man into his tent. Phinehas thrust the spear all the way through the man's body and into the woman's stomach. So the plague against the Israelites was stopped,<sup>9</sup> but not before 24,000 people had died. Numbers 25:6-9 (NLT)*

Balak was growing increasingly frustrated with Balaam's blessings over the Israelites, and Balaam realized that if he was every going to make it big and get that money, He needed to get the Israelites out from under the protection of God. He knew something about the spiritual side of things that apparently the Israelites didn't: protection from Yahweh comes along with complete submission to Him.

Yesterday I shared a personal story of how I was protected when a student tried to curse me. Some people would say that it was merely a coincidence that I forgot about what that student said, but would they say the same thing about Balaam's curses? Did they carry actual spiritual weight? It would seem odd if they didn't; why then would God bother to turn them into blessings? Why then would kings pay money for wicked men like Balaam to curse their enemies?

People don't like thinking about curses for the same reason that they don't like to think of the blessing of obedience, there is sacrifice involved. There is a sacrifice to be made in obedience, but there is also a sacrifice to be made if we believe in curses. The Bible is clear that there is a direct correlation between curses and blessings. In fact if we choose to live outside of obedience and submission to God and His delegated leaders, then we expose ourselves to the dangers of the enemy! God wouldn't allow Balaam's curses to be spoken, but when it came to the free choice of the Israelites to rebel against God, in other words to choose to live under a "curse" of disobedience, there were severe consequences. What Balaam could not accomplish for Balak, the Israelites accomplished for him.

What a tragic turn of events. You already saw what happened to me when "Dan" decided to rebel against his boss and log onto that site for a 'quick-peek,' and we see the tragic consequences that the Israelites suffer because of their sexual fornication and spiritual idolatry. The principle of protection against curses is simple: No curse can assault you while you're submitted to the Man on the throne.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. What have you learned thus far about the importance of submission and obedience to both authority figures and God Himself through this particular story and the previous stories within the book of Numbers?
2. Why do you think God values submission and obedience so much?
3. How does this contrast to how we see the world teach and value authority?
4. Re-read and meditate on Numbers 25:6-9. What stands out to you about these passages?

**DAY 11** **READ:** Numbers 26-28

*Then Moses said to the LORD,<sup>16</sup> "O LORD, you are the God who gives breath to all creatures. Please appoint a new man as leader for the community.<sup>17</sup> Give them someone who will guide them wherever they go and will lead them into battle, so the community of the LORD will not be like sheep without a shepherd."<sup>18</sup> The LORD replied, "Take Joshua son of Nun, who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him.<sup>19</sup> Present him to Eleazar the priest before the whole community, and publicly commission him to lead the people.<sup>20</sup> Transfer some of your authority to him so the whole community of Israel will obey him.<sup>21</sup> When direction from the LORD is needed, Joshua will stand before Eleazar the priest, who will use the Urim—one of the sacred lots cast before the LORD—to determine his will. This is how Joshua and the rest of the community of Israel will determine everything they should do." Numbers 27:15-21 (NLT)*

Moses, along with 1,999,998 other Israelites were not going to enter the Promised Land. Because of his rebellion, Moses was going to die along with all the other rebellious Israelites in the desert and a new leader needed to be appointed (Nu 20:12). God picked Joshua to succeed Moses, and Moses was given the instructions to publicly commission him to lead the Israelites. By doing this in public God again showed the rest of Israel who He was placing in charge. God appointed a leader of godly character to oversee and lead His people into the Promised Land.

We can take some comfort from the fact that Moses was disciplined by God, and that all of Israel was aware of this. If God had allowed Moses to get away with his rebellion, it would have given the message to the rest of Israel that leaders did not have to obey God. This would have perhaps given *even more reason* to question and rebel against His commands. We can take heart that as sheep, our shepherds here at church are subjected to discipline and judgement just like any other person. Leaders do not get special treatment, in fact they are judged *more severely* than the regular 'john doe' (Jas 3:1).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Think about Moses as a leader. Write out the different strengths he displayed throughout the time that he led the people of Israel. What were some of his weaknesses? After you have written out as many traits as you can, look them over. Ask the Lord to highlight any of these traits that are in you.
2. Ask the Lord to highlight one of the character traits that you have been growing in the past little while. Ask Him to show you how you have been growing in this.
3. Pray and ask the Lord to continue to grow you in good character so that you can influence those around you.

**DAY 12** **READ:** Numbers 29-31

*Then the LORD said to Moses,<sup>2</sup> "On behalf of the people of Israel, take revenge on the Midianites for leading them into idolatry. After that, you will die and join your ancestors."<sup>3</sup> So Moses said to the people, "Choose some men, and arm them to fight the LORD's war of revenge against Midian.<sup>4</sup> ... <sup>7</sup> They attacked Midian as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they killed all the men.<sup>8</sup> All five of the Midianite kings—Evi,*

*Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—died in the battle. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword.* Numbers 31:1-7 (NLT)

Balaam may have received his wages from Balak, but in the end he died for his actions. Wickedness never prevails, and the Bible makes the fact clear in Romans 6:23 (NLT) *“for the wages of sin is death...”* Yes, we all die because *“...all have sinned...”* (Romans 3:23, ESV) but Balaam along with the rest of the Midianites need not have died in this way; in God’s judgement. Remember that Moses fled to Midian after he killed the Egyptian, and while he was there he married the daughter of Jethro, a Priest of Midian. Jethro eventually followed Yahweh.

Jesus always gives us opportunities to repent, and we see this happening in the story when He appeared to Balaam. Is it possible that God gave Balaam multiple opportunities to repent (because that *is* His nature) but Balaam was intent on getting his money? Regardless, Balaam didn’t repent and chose to rather incite the Israelites to sin (Nu 31:16, Rev 2:14) and as a result he died.

Fortunately for us we can learn from this to take the opportunities God in His mercy presents us with. Thank God we serve a merciful God who wants all to turn from their sin!

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Do you personally know of anyone whose sin has caught up to them and has brought them to ruin? Unfortunately there are still many people today who know of the Lord and still refuse to continue in rebellion and even *purse* wickedness. Did you grieve on behalf of this person? What did you learn about the holiness of God?
2. Do you currently know of anyone who is pursuing wickedness? Perhaps they are not following the Lord, or know of Him but just don’t want to submit to Him. Spend some time in intercession for this person that they would rather repent than perish.
3. Pray for the body of Christ as a whole. Pray that we would be quick to turn from our sins when confronted with them.

## DAY 13

*The tribes of Reuben and Gad owned vast numbers of livestock. So when they saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were ideally suited for their flocks and herds, <sup>2</sup> they came to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the other leaders of the community. They said, <sup>3</sup> “Notice the towns of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah, Nebo, and Beon. <sup>4</sup> The LORD has conquered this whole area for the community of Israel, and it is ideally suited for all our livestock. <sup>5</sup> If we have found favor with you, please let us have this land as our property instead of giving us land across the Jordan River.... <sup>19</sup> But we do not claim any of the land on the other side of the Jordan. We would rather live here on the east side and accept this as our grant of land.”* Numbers 32:1-5, 19

 **READ:** Numbers 32-34

My heart aches whenever I read verse 19. I never understood why the tribes of Reuben and Gad chose to settle rather than enter the land that God had for them. The land appealed to them and saw that the land was suited for their *present* needs. Scripture doesn’t actually insert the word present, I did. I did this because that’s how humans work. We see something that is good (the land was good and attractive after all) and automatically associate that with our current needs. God may have something better for us, but we would rather just settle. You want to know the scary thing (perhaps to some this

may not seem so scary)?! God actually allows them to settle! We have free will, and God will not force us into following Him. So in the end the two tribes settle for second best.

Every time I read this account, my heart breaks and I pray “Lord! Let this never be said of me!” I want the absolute *best* that God has for me, no matter how long that takes, or what the road looks like. In the end what the infinite God has in store for me will always be better than what my finite mind can come up with. Let us be a people who will choose to not settle, but rather go and take the land God has for us!

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask the Lord to bring to mind an area that you are either tempted to settle in, or have already settled. Confess anything He shows you and repent as necessary.
2. Do you know of anyone around you who looks like they are getting ready to settle rather than keep going? Spend some time interceding on behalf of this person.
3. Pray for the body of Christ. We are living in a time where God is literally calling the Canadian Church to ‘go and take the land.’ Ask God how you can pray His will into being in regards to Church Renewal.

## DAY 14

 **READ:** Numbers 35-36

*“You must not defile the land where you live, for I live there myself. I am the LORD, who lives among the people of Israel.”* Numbers 35:34 (NLT)

If you observe different religious temples and sites around the world they reflect highly on the god or gods that religion is dedicated too. While there may be some shrines and temples that give off the appearance of being beautiful, the beings that dwell in that place are *not*. Where evil gods are served, unseen evil beings reside there as well. God hates the worship of idols because of the *real* spiritual forces attached to those statues/symbols, and they have absolutely no problem with defiling anyone.

The Israelites were not to be like that. The God they served wanted a land that was blessed, was holy, that was clean. The picture of the land was also a picture of the God whom they served, but the people needed to make sure that they did their part in keeping the land clean. He gave them instructions again that would keep them from defiling the land because He was living among them. Murder was prohibited, and protection would be offered for those who did accidentally kill someone. There was going to be a proper way to conduct trials and punishment. They would have to adhere to God’s way of government if they wanted Him to live among them.

### JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Now that you have finished reading Numbers, what in your opinion does the book teach us about God?
2. What does this book teach us about the relationships between God and people?
3. Review your introduction to Numbers questions. How does your knowledge of the book of Numbers now compare to your knowledge beforehand?

## The Book of Numbers

Only three months after God's miraculous deliverance of the Israelite's enslavement in Egypt, and facing their first real hardships in the dessert, the Israelites are ready to turn around and go back. Safe to say that the book of Numbers is basically a manual on everything that we SHOULDN'T do as believers. Paul is still talking about their foolishness in his letters (1 Cor 10, ESV)! It is for this reason we should take a closer look at this particular book to find these examples, and learn how we can safely avoid falling into the same sinful patterns the Israelites fell into.

### **Numbers 6:24-26** (NLT)

*"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."*