

Bible Challenge 2018

Week 6: February 4-10

Outline:

Numbers 1-2: The Census and the Camp in the Wilderness
Numbers 3-4: The Duties of the Levites
Numbers 5: Purity Laws
Numbers 6: The Nazirites and Aaron's Blessing
Numbers 7-8: Offerings for the Tabernacle and Levitical Guidelines
Numbers 9: Passover in the Wilderness
Numbers 10: The Departure from Sinai
Numbers 11: Complaining about Food and Ordaining Elders
Numbers 12: Miriam's Complaint
Numbers 13-14: The Fearful Spies and God's Judgment to Wander for 40 Years
Numbers 15: Laws regarding sacrifice and not Profaning the Sabbath
Numbers 16: Korah's Rebellion
Numbers 17: Aaron's Staff Buds
Numbers 18-19: Rules for Levites and Purity
Numbers 20: Miriam's and Aaron's Deaths, Moses' sin, and Edom
Numbers 21: The Destruction of Arad, Sihon, and Og, plus the Fiery Serpents
Numbers 22-24: Balak summons Balaam
Numbers 25: Balak following Balaam's advice
Numbers 26: A Second Census
Numbers 27: Zelophehad's Daughters given Land and Joshua Named Successor
Numbers 28-30: Offerings and Vows
Numbers 31-32: Destruction of Midian and the Settling of Gilead
Numbers 33: The Journey Remembered
Numbers 34-35: The Division of the Land and Cities of Refuge
Numbers 36: Final Instructions in the Plains of Moab

In the Hebrew Bible, the book of Numbers is very appropriately titled, "In the Wilderness," and that is exactly what this book is about. It covers the history of the people from the point that they were ready to leave Mount Sinai to the point where they arrive on the plains of Moab, just across the Jordan river from the city of Jericho. The narrative of these forty years is broken up by various applications of the Law of God and the complaining of the people...and so, things weren't that much different than they are in the church today. We know so much more of God's redemptive plan, but we act just as badly.

The Census and the Camp in the Wilderness

Often we get weary of reading censuses like this. But, instead of thinking of these just as lists of hard to pronounce names, think of them as the early rosters of the church. In Christian history it has been the tradition of the church for members to sign on the dotted line and to have their names recorded as a member of a particular church. This is considered a public witness of where one's allegiance lies and it has its roots back in this practice here of keeping track of the census of the people.

Levites, Purity, and Nazirites

The Duties of the Levites as well as the purification rituals are pretty straight-forward. What may not be as familiar to you is the language that surrounds the Nazirites — holy men in Israel — who were set apart from the rest of the peoples.

Offerings and a Passover

Here we find ourselves in the second year of their wanderings, we see them practicing the Passover before they move on from Sinai. As we have noted before, this was the most important single event in the life of the Israelites and thus we see it being practiced. Sadly, this does not continue as a regular practice amongst the peoples.

Complaints

Given the number of complaints that are raised, it seemed

best to group them together. There were complaints because people wanted meat, not just manna. Miriam wanted the same amount of authority as her brother (and Aaron sided with Miriam here). Korah and his group also wanted to share the authority with Moses, also raising the question as to why Aaron got to be the High Priest. And then there are the cowardly spies who were afraid to trust God and enter the Promised Land.

In the end, the complaints all stem from one area: an unwillingness to rely on God — to rely on his food, his protection, and his choice of leaders. Again, things have changed very little over the generations. The sad thing is that each of these complaints brought judgment upon the people as a whole...you would think that the people would learn from their lack of faith...you would think that we would have learned, too.

Balak Summons Balaam

One of the most well known accounts in the book of Numbers is that of Balaam and his talking donkey. This is just one more miracle that brings with it condemnation of those who do not follow God. Do understand, Balaam is a pagan prophet, not a believing one, yet God uses him to bless his own people (even though Balaam's purpose was to bring a curse against them). What should be noted is that while Balaam goes away at the end of chapter 24, he is credited with teaching Balak how to make Israel stumble (Revelation 2:14), which are the sad events of Numbers 25. In this case, the daughters of Moab presented themselves to the sons of Israel and sin was born.

Zelophehad's Daughters

Often people complain that the Bible treated women as if they were property of their husband. Yet, that could not be any further from the truth. And, the account of these five ladies is a testimony to that reality. Their father had no sons and thus they were left without a division of the land (at least at face value). Moses recognizes the inequity of doing so, so he awards these ladies the land due their father, giving them a place in the land and preserving their heritage for future generations.

The Settling of Gilead

Gilead is located on the east side of the River Jordan, thus this settling of land is not such that it is prior to the river crossing. Israel is camped outside of the Land and is waiting to enter, yet Gad and Reuben, being large tribes, request that this be their inherited land. At first, Moses is reluctant to grant the request, but does so when the tribes agree to send their armies along with the rest of the people who are invading. With this agreement made, it becomes clear to the reader that we are closing in on the point where Israel is about to cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land.

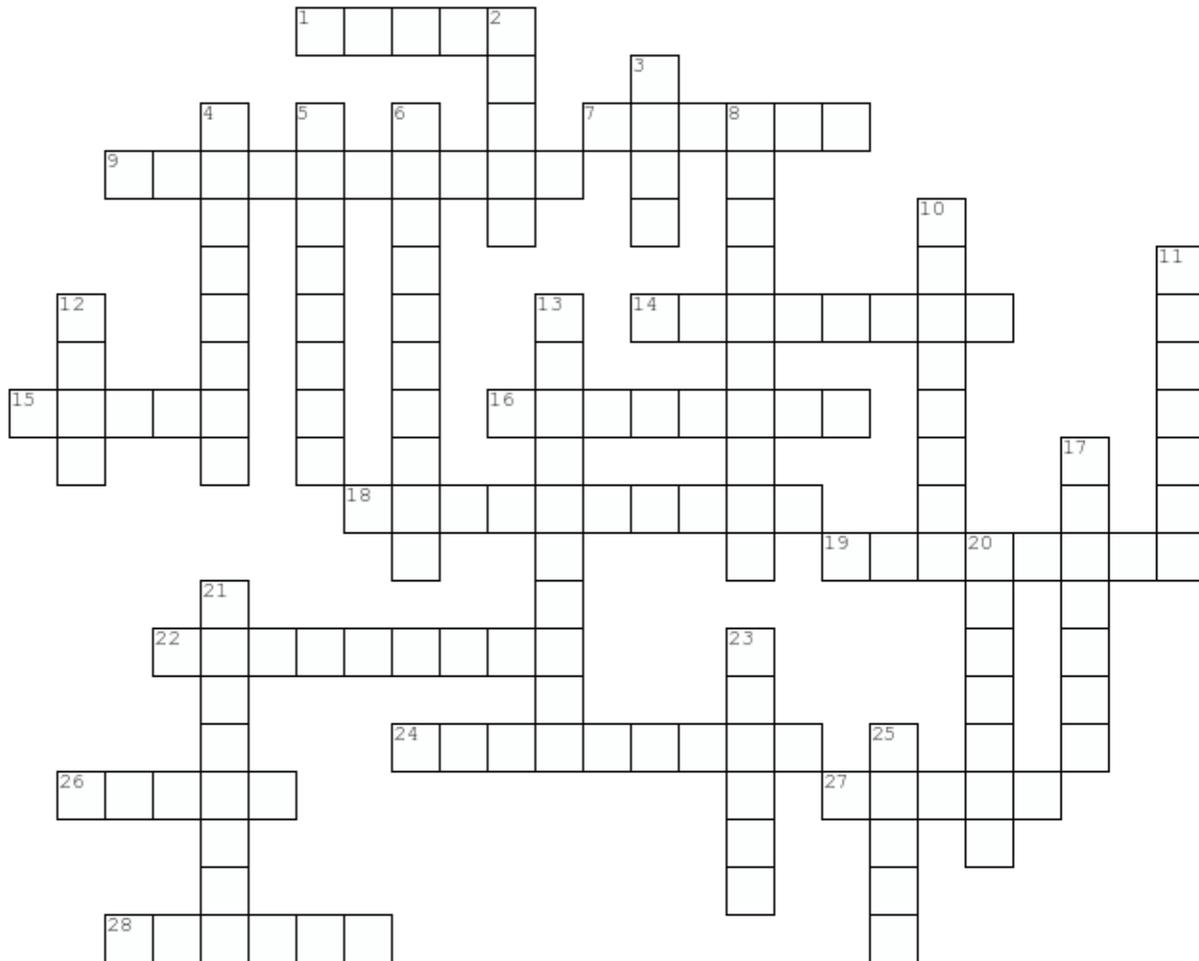
The Journey Remembered

When the people of God remember the deeds of God, we stay faithful. When we forget the provision of God, we fall into sin. This cycle can be seen over and over in the scriptures and over and over within our own lives. Thus, how important it is to the people to have these events summarized for us. Remember too, that this is no longer the generation that experienced many of these deliverances, for those who crossed the Red Sea died off in the forty years of wandering (apart from Joshua, Caleb, and Moses).

Cities of Refuge

In Numbers 35, we are introduced to the idea of Cities of Refuge. The idea is that if you accidentally murdered someone, you could flee to one of these cities, controlled by the Levites, and claim sanctuary. You, of course, had to do so before the Avenger of Blood (a family member commissioned to bring you to justice) caught up to you. You would then be charged to stay within the city until the death of the High Priest, wherein you were pardoned.

Week 6: Numbers



Created with TheTeachersCorner.net [Crossword Puzzle Generator](http://TheTeachersCorner.net)

Across

1. He was the king of Moab who summoned Balaam to curse Israel.
7. This would be Moses' successor.
9. He had all girls, so his daughters inherited his land
14. This group of marauders (related to the sons of Anak) dwelled in the Promised land.
15. His sons would become the high priests.
16. This person is set apart as a kind of holy man for a season of years where he must follow certain rules.
18. In the Hebrew Bible, this book is called, 'In the _____.'
19. Israel celebrated this festival on the fourteenth day of the first month of the second year from when they fled Egypt.
22. When God spoke to Moses in the Tabernacle, he spoke from above this. (2 words)
24. Originally all of Israel was expected to give this member of their family to the priesthood; the Levites replaced them.
26. One of the two faithful spies into Canaan.
27. If you cheated someone, restitution required that you add this much to your repayment.
28. Clean water is sprinkled onto the impure people with this plant.

Down

2. All the family of this man was swallowed up by the earth.
3. On the _____ of the pagan peoples, our God executed judgments.
4. God turned Balaam's cursing into a _____.
5. How was Moses to put water on the Levites for purification?
6. Christian churches have modeled these rolls after the census data in this book.
8. If you accidentally kill someone you can flee to the city of Refuge until the death of this man (2 words).
10. He slew an Israelite man who was committing fornication with a Moabite woman.
11. This son of Aaron had charge of the oil for the light in the Tabernacle.
12. Balaam prophesied that this would come out of Jacob as a sign of the Messiah's coming.
13. Israel faced a terrible defeat against these people.
17. This group was not listed in the initial Census.
20. How many Elders were originally appointed to assist Moses?
21. God judges the people's doubt with fiery (poisonous) _____.
23. This woman was made leprous because she challenged Moses' authority.
25. How old would the Levites be when they retired?