

Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture

Lessons from Numbers

Good morning church and welcome to week 8 of our sermon series entitled...

Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture

Today we will be looking at the Book of Numbers to see what we can learn. But before we do let's do a **quick flyover** and see what's in the book.

OVERVIEW OF NUMBERS

FOCUS	PREPARING	TRAVELING	WANDERING	TRAVELING	PREPARING
	<u>Chapters 1—10:10</u>	<u>Chapters 10:11—12</u>	<u>Chapters 13—19</u>	<u>Chapters 20—21</u>	<u>Chapters 22—36</u>
DIVISIONS	Census	Cloud Lifts	Spies & Rebellion	Moses' Sin	Balak & Balaam
	Cleansing the Camp	People Depart	Offerings	Edom By-passed	Israel's Adultery (Plaque)
	Offerings	<u>3 Complaints</u>	Rebellion of Korah (Death)	Death of Aaron & Miriam	2nd Census (New Generation)
	Dedication of Levites	General Complaint (Consumed with Fire)	Complaint of the People (Plaque)	Canaanites Defeated	Laws, Offerings, Vows
	2nd Passover Celebration	Hunger Complaint (Quail to the Full)	Renewed Leadership (Aaron's Rod Budded)	People Complain (Bronze Serpent)	Transition of Leadership (Moses to Joshua)
		Aaron & Miriam Complaint (Leprosy)	Provision for Priest/Levites	King Sihon & Og Defeated	War & Settlement
PLACE	Sinai	Sinai to Wilderness of Paran	Wilderness	To Plain of Moab	Plains of Moah
TIME	One Month		40 Years		Six Months
KEY VERSE	<small>²⁰ Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; ²¹ but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD— ²² because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, ²³ they certainly shall not see the land of which I ¹⁴ swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. Numbers 14:20-23</small>				
THEME	God's Judgment for Disbelief and Disobedience VS. God's Faithfulness and Mercy				

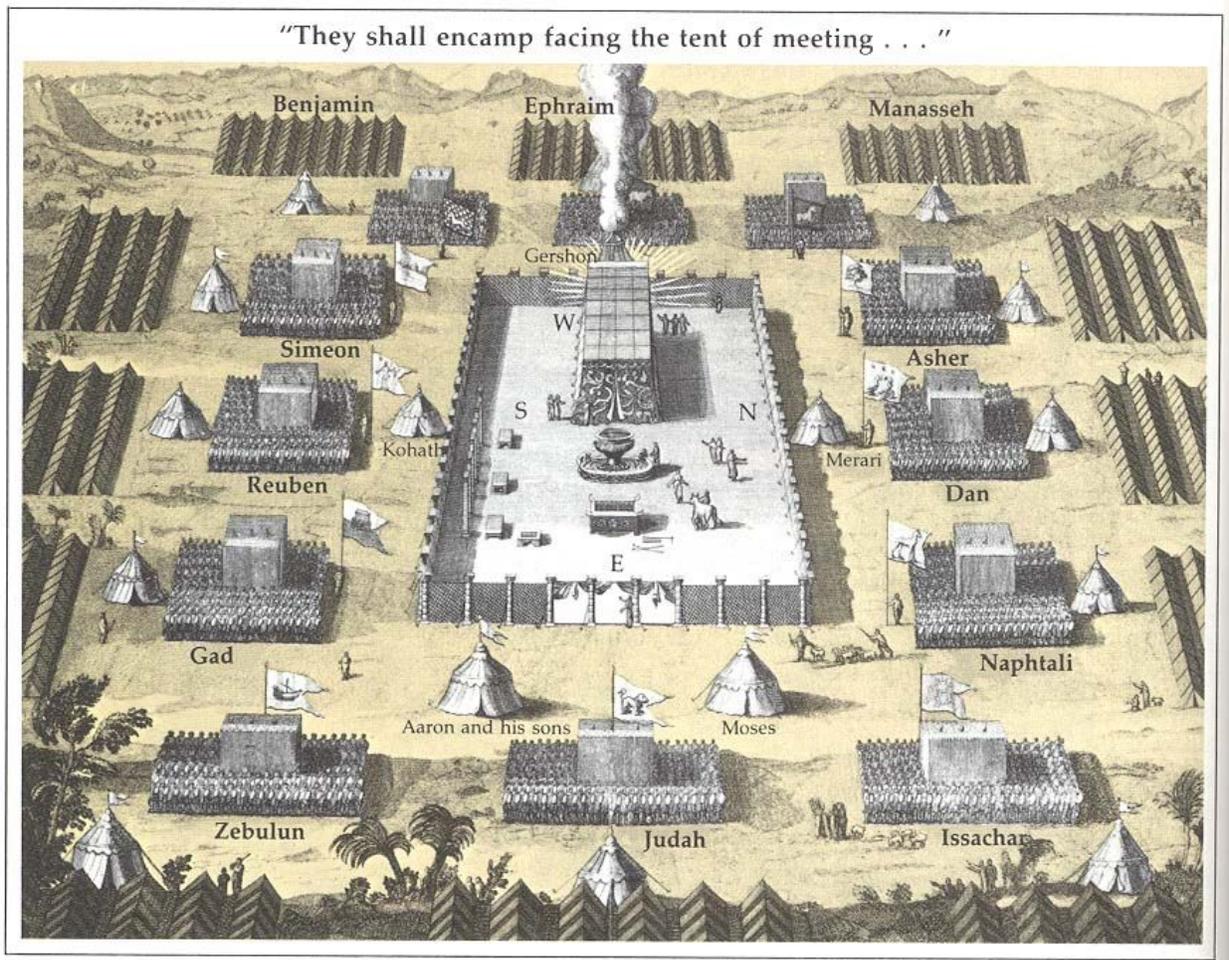
Our goal this morning it to look **at 5 lessons** and glean what we can learn from them and apply them to our life as Jesus Followers.

1. WE SHOULD LIVE CHRIST-CENTERED LIVES

Numbers 2:1–2 (NKJV) — *1 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 "Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp some distance from the tabernacle of meeting.*

When you read all the details that follow verse two you might get glossy eyed by all the details. God for **sure wanted the camp to be set up in a particular way.**

But if you were to take a piece of **paper out and lay out** the camp according to God's design you will see something like this...



They say a picture is **worth 1000 words.** Can you see what the Father did? He made the **tabernacle, where His presence dwelt the center of the encampment.**

What is He saying? He wanted the Israelites to know that He was to be at the **center of their lives.** He was the **hub of their existence.**

How does this apply to us? Well, we should be living Christ-centered lives.

The Lord Jesus said...

Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) — 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Seek first...get it...Christ-centered. The problem with most Christians is that they live a **divided life**. They have their Christian life, and they have their secular life and the two never intersect.

That's not biblical. **My walk with Christ impacts all of my life...my family, my work, my worldview and even my recreation.**

Just like setting up the camp in Numbers, God desires for His people to have **Him at the center of their lives.**

2. GRUMBLING AND COMPLAINING ARE SINS

Numbers 21:4–6 (NKJV) — 4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

The people of Israel were **master complainers** and every time they complained it **displeased the Lord**. The people again complained, and God **sent poisonous snakes** into camp and many of the people died.

Let me tell you what complaining does.

- Complaining says you are unsatisfied with God's provisions and grace.
- Complaining clouds your vision and distorts your thinking.
- Complaining is contagious and spreads like a bad virus.
- Complaining obviously will be punished by the Lord.

We are commanded in the New Testament...

Philippians 2:14–16 (NKJV) — 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...

Oh, one more thing...**Complaining can hinder our witness!**

We have seen thus far...We Should Live Christ-Centered Lives and Grumbling and Complaining are Sins.

3. FAITH IS BLESSED BY GOD

Numbers 14:20–24 (NKJV) — 20 Then the Lord said: “I have pardoned, according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord— 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24 But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

Numbers 14:30 (NKJV) — 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.

When the spies were sent to check out the Promised Land, they found a land flowing with milk and honey. I mean just **one cluster of grapes had to be carried on a pole by two men, it was a land of plenty.**

And yet when they returned, they delivered **two very different** reports.

One group, **the majority**, acted out of fear and the other group, **the minority**, acted out of faith.

They should have **all responded out of faith**...just look at **verses 20-22**. All the men have already seen God’s power and deliverance. Why on earth would He change now! They should have known **if God said for them to take the land they could.**

But instead, they **stirred up the crowd** into a frenzy and they were ready to stone Caleb and Joshua.

As a result, the 10 spies lost their lives and that whole generation of Israelites would wander in the **wilderness for 40 years, die off and miss the promised land, only their children** would inherit the land.

On the other hand, Caleb and Joshua responded in **great faith**. Listen to their words...

Numbers 14:8–9 (NKJV) — 8 If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only do not rebel against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them."

They knew God was on their side and they couldn't not fail! As a result, both Caleb and Joshua would enter into the promised land.

We must live by faith.

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV) — 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

4. ANGER & FRUSTRATION WILL GET YOU IN TROUBLE

Perhaps one of the **saddest stores in the Numbers** is when Moses forfeits the Promised Land. He does so because he lets his anger and frustration get the best of him and he makes an unwise move.

Numbers 20:9–12 (NKJV) — 9 So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. 12 Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

- Moses rebukes the people harshly, calling them rebels, which I have to say they deserve the title.
- Moses' anger clouds his judgment, and he responds in the flesh not in faith.
- Moses dishonors God by taking credit for the miracle.

- Moses forfeits entry into the promised land.

James 1:20 (NKJV) — 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Let's recap...

- We should live Christ-centered lives
- Grumbling and Complaining are sins
- Faith is blessed by God
- Anger and frustration will get you trouble

Lastly...

5. EVEN WHEN WE ARE FAITHLESS GOD IS FAITHFUL

In **Numbers 22-25** we read about **Balak hiring Balaam** to curse the nation of Israel. We get mesmerized by a talking donkey, but God is teaching us something much more important.

Look at...

Numbers 22:12 (NKJV) — 12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."

Three times Balaam tries to curse Israel and ends up blessing them. Why?

Because God keeps his PROMISES! What Promise?

Genesis 12:1–3 (NKJV) — 1 Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

In **Numbers** God shows Himself faith to keep His promise. Even when the people **did nothing but grumble and complain**. Little did they know what

God was doing **up on the mountain through Balaam** and they whole time they thought God had abandoned them to die in the wilderness.

Paul reminds us...

2 Timothy 2:13 (NKJV) — 13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.

HE KEEPS HIS PROMISES!!!!

CONCLUSION:

Let's recap...

- We should live Christ-centered lives
- Grumbling and Complaining are sins
- Faith is blessed by God
- Anger and frustration will get you trouble
- Even when we are faithless God is Faithful