

**LECTURE 6: NUMBERS**  
**“The God Who Expects Faithfulness”**  
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**I. Orienting Data:**

- A. Content:** The Israelites’ long stay in the desert as they journey from Mount Sinai to the plains of Moab, with supplemental covenant laws
- B. Historical Coverage:** Forty years, a period within which the generation that left Egypt died off almost entirely
- C. Emphasis:** Preparation for military conquest of the promised land; God’s covenantal loyalty toward Israel with regard to the land; Israel’s repeated failure to keep covenant with God; God’s leadership of his people and affirmation of Moses’ leadership; preparations for entering and worshiping in the promised land; conquest and settlement of the land east of the Jordan River; provides a prelude to Deuteronomy.

**D. Literary Structure**

1. Preparations for Journeying to the Promised Land (1:1–10:10)
2. The Journey to the Promised Land (10:11–25:18)
3. Preparations for Entering the Promised Land (26:1–36:13)

**E. Detailed Outline:**

1. *Preparations for Journeying to the Promised Land* (Num 1:1–10:10)
  - a. Numbering the people (1:1–54)
  - b. Arranging the camp (2:1–34)
  - c. Assigning the priestly and Levitical responsibilities (3:1–4:49)
    - The priests' duties (3:1–4)
    - The Levites' duties (3:5–51)
    - The transportation assignments (4:1–49)
  - d. Clarifying various details (5:1–6:27)
    - Keeping the camp clean (5:1–4)
    - Making restitution (5:5–10)
    - Dealing with suspected marital unfaithfulness (5:11–31)
    - The Law of the Nazarites (6:1–21)
    - The pattern of the Aaronic blessing (6:22–27)
  - e. Consecrating the tabernacle, altar, and Levites (7:1–8:26)
  - f. Celebrating the Passover (9:1–14)
  - g. Overviewing the people's process for following YHWH (9:15–23)
  - h. Making trumpets of remembrance (10:1–10)
2. *The Journey to the Promised Land* (10:11–25:18)
  - a. From the wilderness of Sinai to the wilderness of Paran (10:11–12:16)
    - The journey begins (10:11–36)
    - The people begin to resist (11:1–35)
    - YHWH reaffirms Moses's special position (12:1–16)
  - b. The journey's turning point (13:1–14:45)
    - The scouts' appointment (13:1–16)
    - The scouts' activity (13:17–20)
    - The scouts' report (13:25–14:10a)
    - YHWH's response (14:10b–38)
  - c. Ancillary instructions and events (15:1–19:22)
    - Instructions identifying Israel is still God's people (15:1–41)
    - The rebellions of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (16:1–17:13[28])
    - Support for the priests and Levites (18:1–32)
    - Purification rituals (19:1–22)
  - d. From Kadesh to the plains of Moab (19:1–21:35)
    - Arrival at Kadesh and the death of Miriam (20:1)
    - Quarrel over lack of water (20:2–13)
    - The unsuccessful attempt to pass through Edom (20:14–21)
    - Departure from Kadesh and the death of Aaron (20:22–29)
    - Devoting Arad to destruction (21:1–3)
    - The bronze serpent (21:4–9)
    - Moving from Oboth to the fields of Moab (21:10–20)
    - Encounters with Sihor and Og (21:21–35)
  - e. Events on the plains of Moab (22:1–25:18)
    - The Balaam saga (22:1–24:25)
    - Trouble in Shittim (25:1–18)
3. *Preparations for Entering the Promised Land* (26:1–36:13)
  - a. Numbering the people (again) (26:1–65)
  - b. Answering questions about inheritance rights (27:1–11)
  - c. Commissioning Joshua to succeed as leader (27:12–23)

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- d. Supplying guidance for various occasions (28:1–29:40)
- e. Instructing on vows (30:1–16)
- f. Punishing Midian (31:1–54)
- g. Dispensing Jazer and Gilead to Reuben and Gad (32:1–42)
- h. Overviewing the journey itinerary (33:1–49)
- i. Overviewing the boundaries of the Promised Land (34:1–15)
- j. Listing the tribal chiefs (34:16–29)
- k. Allocating cities of refuge and the avenger of blood (35:9–34)
- l. Answering further questions about inheritance rights (36:1–12)
- m. Summary statement (36:13)

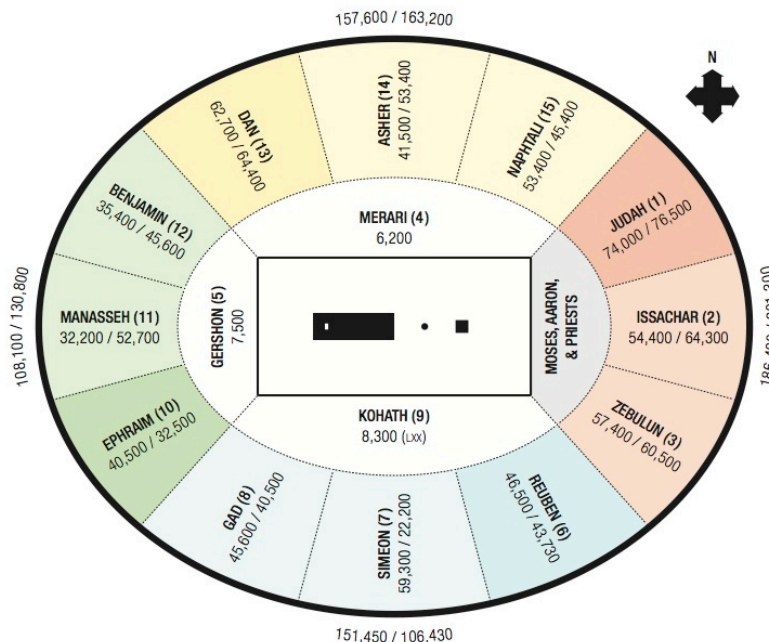
## **II. Preparations for Journeying to the Promised Land (Num. 1:1–10:11)**

### **A. Numbering the People (1:1–54) and Arranging the Camp (2:1–34)**

1. The great numbers in the military census stresses the reality that Yahweh has been faithful to his Abrahamic promise to multiply Israel's offspring (Gen. 15:5; 22:7; Exod. 1:7). It also implies that God will also be faithful to give Israel the land.
2. The arrangement and ordering appears connected with tribal significance rather than birth. Even before entrance into the land, the tribe of Levi was set apart in closest proximity to God's presence; they are representative of what Israel as a whole was supposed to be: a kingdom of priests. Figure 6.1 contrasts the birth order with the tribal order listed.
3. The "brighter" tribes in Fig. 6.2 are primary in each of the four groupings, which are ranked Judah > Reuben > Ephraim > Dan in the order they journey. While Num. 2:17 places the movement of the tabernacle between the southern group (#2 = Reuben) and the western group (#3 = Ephraim), ch. 10 states more specifically that the Levites in charge of carrying the tabernacle proper (Merari and Gershon) would depart as soon as it was taken down (or perhaps directly after the Judah group) (10:17) and then the Kohathites, who carried the tabernacle furniture, would journey later, after the Reuben group, so that "the tabernacle was set up before their arrival" (10:21).

**Fig. 6.1. Birth Order vs. Camp Order of the 12 Tribes**

<i>BIRTH ORDER</i>	<i>CAMP ARRANGEMENT ORDER</i>
Reuben	Judah
Simeon	Issachar
Levi	Zebulun
Judah	Reuben
Zebulun	Simeon
Issachar	Gad
Dan	Ephraim
Gad	Manasseh
Asher	Benjamin
Naphtali	Dan
Joseph: Manasseh & Ephraim	Asher
Benjamin	Naphtali

**Fig. 6.2. Camp Arrangement in Numbers**

- Yahweh's presence in cloud by day and fire by night was central to the camp, hovering over the holy of holies. When it lifted from the tent of meeting, Israel would follow, the cloud leading the twelve tribes to their next general destination (9:15–17). This did not limit, however, Moses and his father-in-law determining which spot in the general region was best to camp (10:31).
- As with the blessing of Jacob in Genesis 49, the tribe of Judah rather than the first-born Reuben bears primary status within the camp arrangement (Gen. 49:8, 10). Not only is Judah the first tribe listed but also their group camp is placed nearest the east entrance to the tabernacle, and they are the first to arrive at every

destination (even before Yahweh's tent and throne but directly following Yahweh's presence). The implications of this placement are as follows:

- a. Of all the tribes in the camp, the Judah group is directly next to the priests, nearest the tabernacle entrance. Of all non-Levitical tribes, therefore, Judah had the most direct access to the presence of God, and their placement at the entrance suggested that they stood with the Levites as guardians of Yahweh's worship and holiness. As the head tribe among the kingdom of priests, Judah is being paralleled with the priests in order to send the community/reader a signal.
- b. Judah's placement at the head of all the journeying tribes and before Yahweh's throne suggests that Yahweh will lead his people and conquer for them through Judah (Gen. 22:17b–18; 49:8, 10). As with his placement in the camp, Judah is the earthly guardian of God's people, bearing an office similar to both priest and king.

**B. Overviewing the People's Process for Following YHWH (Num. 9:15–23):** Israel didn't "wander" through the wilderness. Instead, they waited and followed—two lessons they needed to desperately learn.

### III. The Journey to the Promised Land (Num. 10:11–25:18)

#### A. The Journey's Turning Point: Israel's Failure in the Wilderness (13:1–14:45)

##### 1. Theological Lessons from Num. 13–14

- a. Key Transitional Texts:
  - Num. 14:11. And Yahweh said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?"
  - Num. 14:21–23. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh, <sup>22</sup>none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, <sup>23</sup>shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.
- b. God's people must face life's giants...
  - i. With confidence that God is with us and for us (Num 14:9).
  - ii. With persevering faith birthed through the experience of God's past power and mercy (14:11).
- c. Lack of faith is a sin deserving of death (14:12; cf. Rom. 14:23 with 6:23).
- d. God responds to the prayers of the righteous—those who pray for the fame of God's name (Num 14:14–20).
- e. Israel's sin cannot thwart God's purposes to fill the earth with his glory; he will preserve a remnant through the judgment (14:21–24, 29–30).

**Fig. 6.3. Israel's Ten Testings of God**

Num. 14:21–23. “But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet <i>have put me to the test these ten times</i> and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers.”			
1	When Israel expressed fear at the Sea, as Pharaoh approached (Exod. 14:11–12)	6	At Rephidim, when the people were thirsty and quarreled with Moses and tested God (Exod. 17:1–2)
2	Three days into the wilderness at Mara, when Israel complained that the spring was bitter and they were thirsty (Exod. 15:24)	7	At Sinai when Israel worshipped the golden calf (Exod. 32:1–6)
3	2 ½ months after the exodus in the wilderness of Sin, when Israel complained that they were hungry (Exod. 16:2–3)	8	At Taberah, when Israel complained about their misfortunes and God's fire consumed some of the camp (Num. 11:1)
4	In Israel's failure to eat all daily manna (Exod. 16:20)	9	At Taberah, when some complained that they were sick of manna and hungry for other food (Num. 11:4)
5	In Israel's failure to gather enough manna to sustain through Sabbath (Exod. 16:27)	10	At Kadesh when the 10 spies expressed lack of faith in God (Num. 14:1–4)
Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie; adapted from 'arakin 15a, <i>Babylonian Talmud</i> .			

## 2. Later Biblical Reflections on Israel's Failure in the Wilderness

### a. Psalm 95.

Oh come, let us sing to Yahweh; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

<sup>2</sup>Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! <sup>3</sup>For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods. <sup>4</sup>In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. <sup>5</sup>The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

<sup>6</sup>Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Yahweh, our Maker! <sup>7</sup>For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup>do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, <sup>9</sup>when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. <sup>10</sup>For forty years I loathed that generation and said, “They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.” <sup>11</sup>Therefore I swore in my wrath, “They shall not enter my rest.”

#### i. An overview:

##### (1) An invitation to engage in authentic corporate worship (95:1–7a)

###### (a) The anticipation of authentic corporate worship: a call to join in praise (95:1–5)

###### (i) Expressions to Yahweh of our anticipation (95:1–2)

###### (ii) The basis for our anticipation (95:3–5)

- Yahweh's greatness (95:3)
- Yahweh's sovereignty (95:4)
  - The dimensions of his sovereignty
  - The basis for his sovereignty

###### (b) The practice of authentic corporate worship: a call to homage and submission (95:6–7a)

###### (i) The expressions and focus of our homage and submission (95:6)

###### (ii) The basis for our homage and submission (95:7a)

##### (2) The qualifications for an individual to engage in authentic corporate worship: a call to trust and obey (95:7b–11)

- (a) The time and call to trust and obey (95:7b–8)
  - (b) The need to trust and obey (95:9–11)
    - (i) The example of the fathers
    - (ii) Yahweh’s response
- ii. Implications:
  - (1) Authentic worship in the presence of God is here considered the context for enjoying “Sabbath” rest.
  - (2) The psalmist, living after the conquest, applies the Numbers episode in a way that suggests Israel, whom Joshua led into the promised land, in some way was still longing for more rest. “Don’t be like Israel of old, who failed to enter rest due to hard hearts!”
- b. Hebrews 3:12–4:2.  
 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup>But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup>For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.  
<sup>15</sup>As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” <sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that *they were unable to enter because of unbelief*.  
<sup>4:1</sup>Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup>For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because *they were not united by faith* with those who listened.
  - i. Israel heard good news in the wilderness comparable to the good news proclaimed to the church, but only some listened (Heb. 4:2; cf. 1 Pet. 10–12).
  - ii. Persevering faith proves that we are indeed in Christ (Heb. 3:12–14) and have responded to the gospel (4:2).
  - iii. Persevering faith alone ensures we will enter consummate rest (4:1); Israel’s disobedience in the wilderness was a failure to persevere in faith, and because of this they were unable to enter rest (3:15–19).
  - iv. Persevering faith unites us with other believers (4:2) and is fueled by the encouragement of other believers (3:13).
  - v. The church must not be like Israel but work together by faith, striving daily to enter rest (4:11) in a way that recognizes our weaknesses and draws near to God for mercy and grace to help in time of need (4:15–16).
- c. Other texts:
  - Ps. 106:24–27. Then they despised the pleasant land, *having no faith in his promise*. <sup>25</sup>They murmured in their tents and did not obey the voice of Yahweh. <sup>26</sup>Therefore he raise his hand and swore to them that he would make them fall in the wilderness, <sup>27</sup>and would make their offspring fall among the nations, scattering them among the lands.
  - Rom. 9:30–32. What shall we say, then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; <sup>31</sup>but that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that

law. <sup>32</sup>Why? Because *they did not pursue it by faith*, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone.

- 1 Cor. 10:1–6. For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup>and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup>and all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. <sup>6</sup>Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.
- Jude 5. Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed *those who did not believe*.
- Cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 11:1–12:11.

## B. From Kadesh to the Plains of Moab (19:1–21:35)

1. Moses's lack of faith (20:12)
  - Num. 20:12. And Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them." (cf. Gen. 15:6)
2. The Bronze Serpent (21:4–9)
  - a. The original situation:
    - i. The presence of serpents (*nēḥāšîm*) in Israel's midst (Num 21:6) reminds the reader of the serpent (*nāḥāš*) in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1), mankind's failure, and presence of curse, and the promise of his defeat (3:15). It also reminds the reader of the sign God gave Moses and the people that Yahweh was greater than Pharaoh and would defeat him (Exod 4:2–5; cf. 7:8–13).
    - ii. The people's request that God take away the serpents (Num. 21:7) was nothing less than a request to remove the consequence of their sin—a request that God's wrath be turned away.
    - iii. Yahweh charged Moses to "make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, so that everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live" (Num. 21:8). The "pole" here is the common term for war-banner or standard, which served as an image of power and hope (e.g., Isa 18:3; Jer 4:6; Ps 60:6). It seems possible that the fiery serpent was portrayed as a defeated enemy, so that its elevation identified Yahweh's victory over the serpent.
    - iv. Regardless, God promised that if the people would look upon Moses' hand-crafted bronze serpent (a picture of their own sin and the curse), then they would live (21:8–9). And members of the congregation enjoyed life instead of death only if they trusted God's promise by looking upon the image of their sin in faith.
  - b. The ultimate hope:
    - i. Jesus declared that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so much the Son of Man be lifted, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14–15)—imagery that in John's Gospel clearly points to Christ's death on the cross (12:32–33): "[Jesus answered,] 'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.' He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die."



- ii. In what way does Jesus' death parallel the lifting up of the bronze serpent in the wilderness? Just as the serpent was a picture of Israel's sin and the curse and all that was hostile to God, so too Christ took on our sin and curse upon himself. And only those who look to him can enjoy deliverance from God's wrath.
    - 2 Cor. 5:21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
    - Gal. 3:13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.
    - 1 Pet. 2:24. He bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
3. *Excursus*: "God's Provision for Life: A Sermon Outline on Num. 21:4–6 and John 3:14–16"
  - a. The Question: How can serpent-like qualities and their deadly results be overcome in our lives?
  - b. Big Idea: The only way to overcome our own sin and death is to look in faith upon the God-provided image of the defeat of our serpent-nature and its results displayed in Christ's substitutionary death.
  - c. WALK THROUGH NUMBERS 21:4–9
    - i. The Need for God's Provision to Enjoy Life (vv. 4–6): *"From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup> 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 we loathe this worthless food.' <sup>6</sup> Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died."*
      - (1) The people's death-deserving sin (vv. 4–5):
        - (a) Impatience with respect to God's timing and ways.
        - (b) Fear of death.
        - (c) Discontentment with God's provision and a sense of entitlement.
          - (i) The Lord supplied them with water (Exod 17:6; Num 20:8, 10–11; 21:16).
          - (ii) The Lord supplied them with bread (Exod 16:4, 8, 12, 15, 22, 29, 31–32, 35; Num 11:6–7, 9).
      - (2) God's just punishment (v. 6): You like to look like the serpent (hostility against God's plan), so I will send lots of them upon you.
        - (a) In the Bible, when we see a serpent, we should automatically think "curse" and "sin" and remember the first proclamation of good news in Gen 3:15 that God would overcome the serpent and his evil schemes through a male deliverer—an offspring of the first woman. He would bruise the serpent's head, giving him a mortal wound, but the serpent would also bruise the deliverer's heel.

- (b) In this story in Numbers the serpents are a picture of curse and associated with the people's sin. God sent the fiery serpents because the people rebelled and complained. They did not want to follow the Lord any more, for following him was too hard. They felt that God was withholding good from them, and they wanted something different—something that they thought was better. They thought Egypt would have been a better place to stay than to die in the wilderness.
- (c) What is ironic is that God's punishment by serpents recalls their time in Egypt, where they were ruled by the serpent-king Pharaoh. The original readers would have known that Pharaoh believed his kingdom was protected by the cobra-goddess, and so he wore an image of the serpent on his headdress. Here the people are wishing they could have returned to the place where the serpent-king ruled, and God gives them serpents as a punishment.
- (d) These people in Moses' day were much like Adam and Eve in the Garden. Rather than guarding the sacred space and slaying the ancient serpent, the devil, they listened to him, and the result was their death. Death comes to all who turn away from God. In our story, by God giving the people serpents, he was saying something like, "If you want to follow the ways of the serpent (standing against the Lord and his ways), then I will give you lots of them, and they will kill you, all so that you may know how deadly following the serpent instead of God actually is." And the serpents "bit the people, so that many people of Israel died."
- (e) Centuries later, the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Cor 10:9–12, "*We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them and were destroyed by serpents,<sup>10</sup> nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer.<sup>11</sup> Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.<sup>12</sup> Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.*"
- ii. The Nature of God's Provision to Enjoy Life (vv. 7–9b)
  - (1) The context for provision (v. 7)
    - (a) The people's true repentance has three characteristics:
      - (i) True repentance means *admitting* that I have sinned against God, not just man.
      - (ii) True repentance means *recognizing* that reconciliation with God is only possible by humbly approaching him in prayer through the covenant mediator (Moses in the old, Jesus in the new).

- (iii) True repentance means *affirming* that the Lord is a just judge, that he holds the power of judgment in his hands, and that he alone holds the power to remove sin's curse.
- (b) Moses' intercession.
- (2) The character of provision (vv. 8–9b)—Divine mercy:
  - (a) The God of the Bible is all powerful, and when he chooses to act, nothing can stand against him, not even the vilest of serpents. When the Lord first raised-up Moses as a prophet to deliver Israel from Egypt, he feared that the people of Israel would question whether the true God had in fact called him to deliverer them from the serpent-king Pharaoh. God gave Moses a sign. *"The LORD said to him, 'What is that in you hand?' He said, 'A staff.' And [the Lord] said, 'Throw it on the ground.' So [Moses] threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it"* (Exod 4:2–3), fearing the serpent just like Israel feared the serpent-king Pharaoh. But then God told Moses, *"Put out your hand and catch it by the tail, so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand"* (Exod 4:3). By this sign, the Lord was declaring that he had power to stop the serpent-king's schemes in his time and in his way. As he would later declare to Pharaoh himself, using the same language, *"By now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth"* (Exod 9:15–16). In our story, God is the one who sent the serpents, and God alone was the one who could stop them.
  - (b) The Lord commands Moses to fashion an image of a serpent—and to place it as if slain and conquered like a banner on a pole. It is just amazing that God would take the very image of the devil himself—the one who embodies all that is evil and broken and against God—and use it as the means for the people's deliverance. He promises life to all who would affirm their neediness and look by faith upon the elevated image of their overcome sin and curse.
  - (c) Moses, as the covenant mediator, willingly heeds God's command, preparing the means by which God's people could enjoy life again (cf. John 5:30; 10:18).
- iii. Acting upon to God's Provision to Enjoy Life (v. 9c–e): The people needed provision, God provided, and the people responded: *"And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live."*

## d. WALK THROUGH JOHN 3

- i. The Need for God's Provision to Enjoy Eternal Life: As we enter into John 3, we find a context not unlike that in Numbers 21. But rather than focusing on Israel's disregard for the Lord's ways, John focuses on those in the world at large who disbelieve in the God-man Jesus and disobey him.

## (1) People who do not believe in Jesus:

- (a) Are condemned and under God's wrath (vv. 18, 36):

*"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God....<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him."*

- (b) Love darkness because their deeds are evil (v. 19): *"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."*

- (c) Hate the light because they fear exposure of sin (v. 20): *"For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed."*

- (2) God's just punishment: God's wrath (v. 36) is upon those who personally love doing what is evil (v. 20). This is where everyone is until they believe in God's Son Jesus (v. 36).

- ii. The Nature of God's Provision to Enjoy Eternal Life: *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,<sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:14–16).

## (1) Jesus is here compared to the serpent on the pole (vv. 14–15)

- (a) When Jesus spoke of being lifted up, he's connecting Moses' bronze serpent being placed on a pole with his own death on the cross (12:32–33): *"[Jesus answered,] 'And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself.' He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die."*

- (b) Just as the serpent was a picture of Israel's sin and the curse and all that was hostile to God, so too Christ took on our sin and curse upon himself. And only those who look to him can enjoy deliverance from God's wrath.

- *2 Cor. 5:21. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
- *Gal. 3:13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.*

- *1 Pet. 2:24. He bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
- (2) The provision of salvation from condemnation is a gift.
- (a) Jesus was “lifted up” by God (v. 14): *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”*
- *Acts 4:27–28. For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,<sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*
  - *Isa. 53:5, 10. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed....<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief.*
- (b) “God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son” (v. 16): *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*
- (c) Coming to the light (i.e., believing in Jesus) is itself a gift of God (v. 21; cf. 1:12–13; 3:6–8; 6:44, 64–65).
- (3) In the OT there would have been the question, How can God justly pardon Israel? He is a just judge, so how can he justly forgive sinners?
- *Rom. 3:25–26. God put forward [Jesus Christ] as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*
- (4) Whoever believes in him may have eternal life (vv. 15–16): *“Whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”*
- (a) *Believing* is “looking” to Jesus as the curse bearer: true repentance (vv. 14–15).
- (b) *Believing* is trusting God to heal you and remove his wrath when you “receive” Jesus for who he is (1:12).
- (c) *Believing* is being satisfied in and loving Jesus and his ways over the dark ways of the world (vv. 19–20) and accepting of and surrendering to Jesus’ true identity (3:18, 36) as Savior (4:42), Sovereign (12:13), and Satisfier (6:35).
- iii. Acting upon God’s Provision to Enjoy Eternal Life
- (1) Will you repent from your sins and look to Jesus as your curse bearer?
- (2) Will you trust God to heal you and to remove his wrath through the work of Christ?
- (3) Will you find the freedom that can only come by allowing your ugly heart, sinful desires, rebellious spirit to be exposed? Those

who do, will find life. God's wrath will be removed, and you will not perish but have eternal life.

### C. Events on the Plains of Moab (22:1–25:18)

#### 1. Negative Views of Balaam outside Numbers

- Deut. 23:3–5[4–6]. No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of Yahweh. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of Yahweh forever, <sup>4</sup>because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. <sup>5</sup>But Yahweh your God would not listen to Balaam; instead Yahweh your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because Yahweh your God loved you.
- Neh. 13:1–2. And it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, for they did not meet the people of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them—yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.
- 2 Pet. 2:14–16. They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! <sup>15</sup>Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing, <sup>16</sup>but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.
- Rev. 2:14. But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality.

#### 2. An Initial Positive Reading of Balaam in Numbers

- a. When initially asked to curse Israel on behalf of Balak, Balaam seeks Yahweh in prayer and asserts his need to follow Yahweh's direction.
  - Num. 22:8, 12–13. And [Balaam] said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as Yahweh speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.... <sup>12</sup>God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them. You shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." <sup>13</sup>So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go to your own land, for Yahweh has refused to let me go with you."
- b. Upon a second request to go to Balak, Balaam calls Yahweh "my God" and declares that no amount of money can cause him to do more or less than what the Lord commands.
  - Num. 22:18. But Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the command of Yahweh my God to do less or more.
- c. After the second request, Yahweh commands Balaam to go to Balak but then stood against him, calling his way "perverse." Was not Balaam simply obeying God?
  - Num. 22:20–22, 32. And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise, go with them; but only do what I tell you." <sup>21</sup>So Balaam rose in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. <sup>22</sup>But God's anger was kindled because he went, and the angel of Yahweh took his stand in the way as his adversary.... <sup>32</sup>And the angel of Yahweh said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me."
- d. After meeting Balak for the first time, Balaam stresses how he can only speak as God directs.
  - Num. 22:38. Behold, I have come to you! Have I now any power of my own to speak anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that must I speak.
- e. Every time Balaam fails to curse Israel, he affirms his need to speak only what Yahweh puts in his mouth (23:12, 26).

### 3. Evidence of Balaam's Bad Heart

- a. The narrative of Israel's preservation through the Balaam saga opens with a strong echo of the Abrahamic promises in Balak's lips: "I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed" (22:6; cf. Gen. 12:3). If indeed Yahweh was Balaam's God, the prophet would likely have already known the Lord's perspective on the matter and would not have needed to "bring back word" (Num. 22:8).
- b. Stress on money is made early in the narrative where we learn that Balak's emissaries went to visit Balaam "with the fees for divination in their hand" (22:7). That this and even more money was driving Balaam's actions is strongly implied in the way the rest of the narrative is shaped. While he sends them back at the word of the Lord, his later responses suggest that he expected Balak to return with an even greater pot.
- c. The second invitation is initiated with great fan fare and promise of riches: "Let nothing hinder you from coming to me, for I will surely do you great honor, and whatever you say to me I will do" (22:16–17). At this, Balaam responded in a politically correct-manner, asserting that no level of payment could cause him to go against the will of Yahweh (22:18). Nevertheless, he returns to Yahweh for counsel (22:19), thus revealing his own lack of unswerving commitment to God's already-revealed direction.
- d. And as with all who "by their unrighteousness suppress the truth" and fail to "honor [God] as God," God gave him over in the lust of his heart to impurity (Rom. 1:18, 21, 24). God commanded him to "go with them" (Num. 22:20), but he then became enflamed in anger against Balaam's rebellion, and the talking donkey alone saved him from certain death at the hand of the angel of Yahweh: "Behold, I have come out to oppose you because your way is perverse before me" (22:32).
- e. Balaam affirmed the evil of striking his donkey and wanting to kill it (see 22:29), but his response calls into question whether he really affirmed that his journey to Balaak was sinful. He said to the angel of Yahweh (22:34): "I have sinned, for I did not know that you stood in the road against me [[here most likely only referring to a sin of beating his donkey]]. Now therefore, if it is evil in your sight, I will turn back." If God's calling his way "perverse" was not enough to make him recognize Yahweh's view was that his actions were sinful, then God will once again give him over to his rebellion, though in a way that will work good for Israel: "Go with the men, but speak only the word that I tell you" (22:35).
- f. After blessing Israel the first time, Balaam stressed his need to speak only what Yahweh put in his mouth (23:12). Nevertheless, he willingly followed Balak to another spot (23:14) and then another (23:28). At this point, the narrator highlighted the pagan practices that accompanied Balaam's prophetic office: "When Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, and he did not go, *as at other times*, to look for omens, but set his face toward the wilderness" (24:1).
- g. At the end of the third oracle, Balak's own fate is sealed for curse: "Blessed are those [Israel] who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you"

(24:9). At this Balak claims that he will *not* honor Balaam as promised, claiming that Yahweh has withheld glory from him because he failed to curse Israel (24:11).

- h. Balaam's final oracles were delivered at Peor (23:28), the very place Israel turns allegiance away from Yahweh in ch. 25. In 31:16, we learn that it was none other than Balaam who incited the Midianite women to seduce Israel toward Baal at Peor, a sinful act that resulted in divine judgment both against God's people (25:3–9) and the Midianites (31:3, 7–8; cf. Rev. 2:14).
4. The Significance of Balaam's Four Oracles
  - a. *Oracle 1* (Num. 23:7–10): **God's faithfulness** in his multiplying Israel into a great nation as promised.
    - Num. 23:7–10. And Balaam took up his discourse and said, "From Aram Balak has brought me, the king of Moab from the eastern mountains: 'Come, curse Jacob for me, and come, denounce Israel!' <sup>8</sup> How can I curse whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce whom Yahweh has not denounced? <sup>9</sup> For from the top of the crags I see him, from the hills I behold him; behold, a people dwelling alone, and not counting itself among the nations! <sup>10</sup> Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!"
  - i. Concerns Israel in the wilderness.
  - ii. While commissioned to "curse" Israel, Balaam asks, "How can I curse whom God has not cursed?" (23:7). Here we have the first of many potential echoes of the patriarchal promises in the oracles themselves (cf. 22:6), all of which arouse within readers a sense of Yahweh's faithfulness and sovereign working in bringing Israel to the Promised Land. God had promised to bless, not curse, Abraham and his offspring (Gen. 12:2–3).
  - iii. Israel is distinguished from the other nations of the world (Num. 23:9), perhaps because of their landlessness or, more likely, because of their divine election (Gen. 12:3; 18:19; Exod. 19:5–6).
  - iv. The questions "who can count the *dust of Jacob*" is an allusion to patriarchal promises in Genesis. We thus have a clear pointer to Yahweh's greatness and faithfulness on behalf of his people.
    - Gen. 13:16. I will make your offspring as *the dust of the earth*, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted.
    - Gen. 28:14. Your offspring shall be like *the dust of the earth*, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.
  - v. Israel's "end" was already anticipated as being exalted in the world. Not only would the offspring of Abraham be numerous like the dust of the earth or like the stars in the sky (see Gen. 15:5; 22:17), they would possess a land stretching from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates (15:18). Furthermore, a male ruler from the tribe of Judah would rule, receive the obedience of the peoples, overcome the gates of his enemies, crush the evil serpent of old, and by this stand as the instrument of blessing to the world, overcoming the global curse (49:8, 10; cf. 3:15; 22:17b–18). Balaam's prayer is that his end would be like Israel's.



- b. **Oracle 2 (Num. 23:18–24): God’s constancy** in his reigning, victorious presence with and for Israel.
- Num. 23:18–24. And Balaam took up his discourse and said, “Rise, Balak, and hear; give ear to me, O son of Zippor: <sup>19</sup> God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? <sup>20</sup> Behold, I received a command to bless: he has blessed, and I cannot revoke it. <sup>21</sup> He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel. Yahweh their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them. <sup>22</sup> God brings them out of Egypt and is for them like the horns of the wild ox. <sup>23</sup> For there is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel; now it shall be said of Jacob and Israel, ‘What has God wrought!’ <sup>24</sup> Behold, a people! As a lioness it rises up and as a lion it lifts itself; it does not lie down until it has devoured the prey and drunk the blood of the slain.”
- i. Concerns Israel in the wilderness
  - ii. In response to Balak’s desire that Balaam change his blessing to curse, he asserts that “God is not man, that he should lie, or...change his mind” (23:19). As such, he will fulfill all the blessing promised to Israel (23:20).
  - iii. The emphasis that “Yahweh their God is with them” (23:21) is another echo of the patriarchal promises, this time given to Isaac and Jacob and then experienced by Joseph.
    - Gen. 26:3. Sojourn in this land, and *I will be with you* and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father.
    - Gen. 31:3. Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and *I will be with you*.
    - Gen. 39:2–3, 21, 23. *Yahweh was with Joseph*, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. <sup>3</sup>His master saw that *Yahweh was with him* and that Yahweh caused all that he did to succeed in his hands....  
<sup>21</sup>But *Yahweh was with Joseph* and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>23</sup>The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph’s charge, because *Yahweh was with him*. And whatever he did, Yahweh made it succeed.
  - iv. The “shout of a king” (Num. 23:21) most likely referred to Yahweh’s reigning presence in Israel’s midst, whose glorious deeds on behalf of Israel through the exodus had caused the leaders of Moab to tremble: “Trembling seizes the leaders of Moab.... Yahweh will reign forever and ever” (Exod. 15:15, 18). Or, it could be another echo back to the patriarchal narratives that anticipated a “ruler” from Judah (Gen. 49:10) through whom God would establish sovereign rest once again on a global scale.
  - v. Because the true God is with Israel, all attempts to attack them with magic will fail (Num. 23:23).
  - vi. As promised through the Exodus (Exod. 9:14–16; 15:15) and as already testified to in Numbers (Num. 14:14), all of Israel’s successes in taking the land Yahweh promised (Gen. 15:18) would bring great glory to God in the sight and hearing of the nations: “It shall be said of Jacob and Israel, ‘What has *God* wrought?’” (Num. 23:23).
    - Exod. 9:14–16. For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that *there is none like me*

*in all the earth.* <sup>15</sup>For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth.

<sup>16</sup>But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, *so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.* (See 9:29.)

- Exod. 15:14. The peoples have heard; they tremble.
- Num. 14:14. [The inhabitants of this land] have heard that you, O Yahweh, are in the midst of this people. For you, O Yahweh, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.
- Deut. 2:25. This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples who are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.’
- Josh. 2:9–10. I know that Yahweh has given you the land, and that the fear of you has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you. <sup>10</sup>For we have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to destruction.
- Josh. 9:24. Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that Yahweh your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you—so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing.
- 1 Sam. 4:8. Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.

c. **Oracle 3 (Num. 24:3–9): God’s superiority as Israel’s provider and protector into and in the Promised Land with an earthly king.**

- Num. 24:3–9. And [Balaam] took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, <sup>4</sup> the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered: <sup>5</sup> How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel! <sup>6</sup> Like palm groves that stretch afar, like gardens beside a river, like aloes that Yahweh has planted, like cedar trees beside the waters. <sup>7</sup> Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters; his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. <sup>8</sup> God brings him out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows. <sup>9</sup> He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.”
- i. Concerns Israel’s future in the promised land and her coming king.
- ii. The promised land is depicted with echoes of the Garden of Eden (24:5–6; cf. Gen. 2:9–10).
- iii. Israel’s fruitfulness and agency as a channel of blessing to the nations seems to be depicted in the statement “Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters” (Num. 24:7).
- iv. The text asserts without question that Israel will have a victorious king with an exalted kingdom, likely in echo of the Genesis promises regarding the coming royal deliver (Gen. 3:15; 17:6 with 22:17b–18; 24:60; 49:8, 10): “His king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted” (Num. 24:7). Later biblical authors treat David as an initial fulfillment of this promise (2 Sam. 5:12 // 1 Chr. 14:2).

- Gen. 49:8, 10. Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's son shall bow down before you....<sup>10</sup>The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
  - 2 Sam. 5:12. And David knew that Yahweh had established him king over Israel, and that *he had exalted his kingdom* for the sake of his people Israel.
- v. The mention of “Agag” likely prophetically anticipates King Saul’s defeat and Mordecai’s complete destruction of all associated with king Agag and the Amalekites (see Num. 24:20)—Israel’s oldest enemy, against whom God had declared a war of judgment (Exod. 17:14; 1 Sam. 15:1–9, 32–33; Esth. 2:5–6; 3:1; 6:13; 7:10; 8:3, 5; 9:14, 24). This statement thus serves as a warning to Balak not to seek Israel’s destruction!
- vi. From another perspective, the LXX translates Agag as “Gog” (Γωγ), the ruler personifying ultimate evil that Yahweh overcomes in Ezek 38–39 and then Rev 20:8.
- Rev. 20:7–10. And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison<sup>8</sup> and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.<sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,<sup>10</sup> and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
- vii. The comments in Num 24:8–9 regarding God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their overpowering of the nations recall 23:22, 24. The additional reference in 24:9 regarding blessing and curse recalls the patriarchal promise (Gen. 12:3; 27:29) and thus makes explicit that Balak will be cursed for going against Israel.
- Gen. 12:3. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
  - Gen. 27:29. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!
  - Num. 24:9. Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.
- viii. The assertion that God will lead his king “out of Egypt” and that this king will be “like a lion” (Num 24:7, 9) appears to be alluded to by Hosea. After identifying that, “in the latter days,” the children of Israel will “seek Yahweh their God and David their God” (Hos 3:5), and after recalling the original exodus with “out of Egypt I called my son” (11:1), the prophet anticipates a second exodus where the lion-king will deliver his people (11:10–11).
- Hos 11:10–11. They shall go after the LORD; he will roar like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west;<sup>11</sup> they shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria, and I will return them to their homes, declares the LORD.

- d. *Oracle 4* (Num. 24:15–19): **God’s global sovereignty** through his earthly king.
- Num. 24:15–19. And he took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,<sup>16</sup> the oracle of him who hears the words of God, and knows the knowledge of the Most High, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered:<sup>17</sup> I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab and break down all the sons of Sheth.<sup>18</sup> Edom shall be dispossessed; Seir also, his enemies, shall be dispossessed. Israel is doing valiantly.<sup>19</sup> And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities!”
- i. Oracle 4 specifically relates to what Israel will do to Moab “in the latter days” (*b<sup>ə</sup>ah<sup>ʾ</sup>rîṭ hayyāmîm*) (24:14). The last time this phrase was used was in Gen 49:1 introducing Jacob’s blessing of his sons, amidst which is the specific messianic prophecies of 49:8–10! For the phrase again in the context of new covenant promise, see Deut 4:30.
- ii. As in 24:3–4, the fourth oracle opens with Balaam exalting God over all and testifying to his eyes perceiving reality perfectly (24:15–16). Very quickly, however, the oracle turns to focus on the coming royal redeemer (24:17–19; cf. 24:7).
- iii. Num 24:17–19 portray the Messiah through echoes of Genesis—in reverse order:
- (1) *Sovereign over all*: “his enemies, shall be dispossessed.... And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion” (24:18–19)
    - Gen. 22:17b–18. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies,<sup>18</sup>and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”
    - Gen. 24:60. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, “Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!”
  - (2) *A king and deliverer*: “a scepter shall rise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab” (24:17)
    - Gen. 49:10. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet.”
    - Gen. 3:15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.
    - Ps. 72:4. May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressor!
    - Ps. 89:10. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.
    - Rom. 16:20. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
  - (3) *A light in the darkness*: “A star (*kôkâb*) shall come out of Jacob” (24:17)
    - (a) OT Escalation: The stars (*kôkâbîm*) in the sky are but pointers to the ultimate star (*kôkâb*)—the offspring of promise who was to come (Gen. 15:4–5; 22:17b–18).
      - Gen. 15:4–5. And behold, the word of Yahweh came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.”<sup>5</sup>And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and

number the stars (*kôkâbîm*) if you are able to number them.... So shall your offspring be.”

(b) NT Fulfillment:

- Matt. 2:2. Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.
- John 8:12. I am the light of the world.
- Rev. 22:16. [Jesus Messiah] the root and descendant of David, the bright and morning star.

(c) Significance for us:

(i) In Christ, the light has dawned

- Matt. 4:15–17. “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—<sup>16</sup>the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.” <sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

(ii) With the dawn, new levels of love are possible.

- 1 John 2:8. It is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in [Jesus] and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

(iii) Take heart, noon is coming!

- Rev. 21:22–25. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup>and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

**“Basking in the Rising of the Son”**

Jason S. DeRouchie (3/3/2011)

*“The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.” (1 John 2:8)*

John Newton, author of Amazing Grace, once wrote:

*The day is now breaking: how beautiful its appearance! How welcome the expectation of the approaching sun! It is this thought makes the dawn agreeable, that it is the presage of a brighter light; otherwise, if we expect no more day than it is this minute, we should rather complain of darkness, than rejoice in the early beauties of the morning. Thus the Life of grace is the dawn of immortality: beautiful beyond expression, if compared with the night and thick darkness which formerly covered us; yet faint, indistinct, and unsatisfying, in comparison of the glory which shall be revealed. (The Works of the Rev. John Newton, Vol. 1, p. 319)*

The words that follow are inspired by this quote.

*The sun breaks and beauty appears,  
A daily reminder that all our fears  
Of dread are passed, though pain persists—  
The toil, the sorrow, a persistent mist  
That will be burned away in course of time,  
A hopeful rest when full glow shines.*

*The light of dawn is only agreeable  
Because the light of noon is foreseeable.  
If no hope existed for a brighter light,  
Sustained shadows would be lingering night.  
Yet darkness is passing; the true light glows—  
A brightening sky overcoming sorrows.*

*The dawn of immortality is the life we tread,  
A life of grace because Christ bled  
Taking wrath we all deserve—  
A gift of love to preserve  
A people for himself into the age to come—  
The curse abolished in the rise of the Son.*

—Jason S. DeRouchie

Remembering that our lives today are lived in the dawn, not at *night*, can help us remember that life is not as bad as it could be and that we have not received what we deserve. God is truly for us, shown in the fact that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, the just for the ungodly.

Remembering that our lives today are lived in the dawn, not at *noon*, can (1) help us overcome our own sin, knowing it has already been canceled, (2) help us love the unlovable, knowing the day is nearing when all will give an account, and (3) help us push through the present trials in hope for lasting, unrestrained, untainted joy. Come Lord Jesus!

- iv. With the promises in 24:17 that Moab would be crushed and in 24:19 that “Jacob shall exercise dominion and destroy the survivors of cities” (24:19), Balak is definitively warned that his fate is sealed.
- 5. Baal worship at Peor (ch. 25):
  - a. The story of Israel’s degeneration at Peor provides a stark contrast to the oracles of Israel’s elevation found in chs. 23–24. The narrative structure and content echoes the way Israel worshipped the golden calf while Moses was receiving instructions regarding how God’s presence would tabernacle in their midst (Exod. 25–34) and the way Israel as a nation failed to believe God’s promises after he brought them all the way to the Promised Land (Num. 13–14). Both the presence of the plague and the setting apart of the Levitical priests echo these earlier episodes. What is not present as before is a declaration of Yahweh’s intent to destroy the nation.
  - b. The reader later finds out that it was none other than Balaam himself who engineered the set-up for Israel’s apostasy (Num. 31:16).

#### IV. Preparations for Entering the Promised Land (26:1–36:13)

##### A. Numbering the People (again) (26:1–25)

Fig. 6.4. “Numbers” in Numbers

<i>Tribal Name</i>	<i>1st Registry (Num 1)</i>	<i>2nd Registry (Num 26)</i>	<i>Change</i>
<i>Reuben</i>	46,500	43,730	-2,770
<i>Simeon</i>	59,300	22,200	-37,100
<i>Gad</i>	45,650	40,500	-5,150
<i>Judah</i>	74,600	76,500	+1,900
<i>Issachar</i>	54,400	64,300	+9,900
<i>Zebulun</i>	57,400	60,500	+3,100
<i>Ephraim</i>	40,500	32,500	-8,000
<i>Manasseh</i>	32,200	52,700	+20,500
<i>Benjamin</i>	35,400	45,600	+10,200
<i>Dan</i>	62,700	64,400	+1,700
<i>Asher</i>	41,500	53,400	+11,900
<i>Naphtali</i>	53,400	45,500	-8,000
<b>SUB-TOTALS</b>	603,550	601,730	-1,820
Levites	22,000	23,000	+1,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	625,550	624,730	-820

In 2 Sam. 24:9, we are told that David's census totals were 800,000 warriors in Israel and 500,000 soldiers in Judah (figures likely written down *after* the division of the empire but which are comparable to what is seen in Numbers). In 2 Chr. 27:1–15, different totals are given: 24,000 per tribe, totaling 288,000. In reconciling these accounts, two observations are noteworthy: (1) In contrast to the Numbers census, the Chronicler suggests that Gad and Asher were not part of David's list (replaced by the tribe of Levi and the distinguishing of the half-tribes of Manasseh) (1 Chr. 27:16–22). (2) While the Numbers list includes “all the congregation of the people of Israel...every male, head by head from twenty years old and upward” in the tribes (Num. 1:2–3), the list for David appears to include only “the heads of fathers' houses”—namely, the military commanders and officers (1 Chr. 27:1). Indeed, the Chronicler's record suggests that the total census count was “not entered in the chronicles of King David” (27:25), because the numbering had angered Yahweh (27:24; 2 Sam. 23:31).

1. Initial observations:
  - a. The point of a census appears to have been to register troops for battle.
  - b. Israel's tribes are of unequal size from the beginning.
  - c. The effects of the desert wandering differed from tribe to tribe.
  - d. The desert wanderings resulted in a net loss of 820 men of military age, which stands as a sign of curse in contrast to the promise of multiplication (cf. Exod. 1:1–7).
2. Significance
  - a. Assuming that the average life expectancy in Israel was 75 years old (70–80 years in Ps. 90:10), all those from 20–37 years old at the initial scoping of the Promised Land would never have been expected to die within the next 38 years (Deut. 2:14). The fact that all did die means that Israel experienced a much higher rate of death, all of which stressed that God takes sin seriously and that Israel needed to learn to trust and obey God's Word.
  - b. God does what he promises whether to bless or curse.
  - c. God sustained Israel through the wilderness and maintained Israel's growth rate, which suggests that the new generation were recipients of God's grace and had a fresh opportunity to succeed where the previous generation failed.

- d. The message of Deuteronomy, therefore, finds its context in a graphic reminder of the seriousness of sin and the gracious provision of God.

**Fig. 6.5. The Significance of the Census Numbers in Numbers**

<i>Deut. 2:14.</i> And the time from our leaving Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until the entire generation, that is, the men of war, perished from the camp, as Yahweh had sworn to them.			
<i>Jer. 31:2–3.</i> The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, Yahweh appeared to him from far away.			
		Actual*	Expected**
Total <i>male</i> warriors at the first census (not including Levites), which took place at the beginning of the second year after the exodus (Exod. 38:26; Num. 1:45–46); all these died over the next 38 years, save Caleb and Joshua (Num. 14:22, 33–34; Deut. 2:14).		603,550	Assumed: 603,550
Comparison 1: Death counts during the first several years while the actual and expected population sizes remained about the same.	Approx. # of funerals of men per year	15,883	3,018 to 3,621
	Approx. # of funerals of men per month	1,324	251 to 302
	Approx. # of funerals of men per day	44	8 to 10
	Now add the deaths of the women!		
Comparison 2: Death and birth rates over the entire 38 years.	Approx. # of funerals per 1000 per year	26	5 to 6
	Approx. # of births per 1000 per year	26	28 to 29
Total <i>male</i> warriors at the second census (not including Levites) after the death of the entire first generation (Num. 26:51, 64).		601,730	
<b>Significance:</b> Israel was a walking mortuary, dying at an excessively higher rate than expected and thus providing daily reminders that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and that life would only be enjoyed by sustained faith in God (Num. 14:11; 20:12; Deut. 1:32; 9:23). Nevertheless, the birth rate during those 38 years was almost at the expected level, thus showing God’s sustained love for Israel and his faithfulness to the patriarchal promises (Deut. 7:7–10; 10:15; Jer. 31:2–3; Isa. 63:7–14).			
*The numbers in the “actual” column of Comparison 1 assume a consistent death rate over the 38 years—a fact nowhere mentioned in the biblical text.			
**The numbers in the “expected” column assume an average 70–80 year life expectancy for Israelites at the time of Moses (Ps. 90:10) and a steady population growth rate for Israel during the 430 years in Egypt (Exod. 12:40–41; Gal. 3:17; cf. Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6), the one year at Mount Sinai (Num. 1:1–3, 46), and the 38 years up to the second census list (Num. 26:51; Deut. 2:14). For the relevant population figures see Gen. 46:26–27; Exod. 1:5; 12:37; 38:26; Num. 1:46; 26:51; Deut. 10:22; cf. Acts 7:14. The numbers in the “expected” column are based on modern countries with comparable life expectancies and population growth rates, using population statistics from <a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a> , <a href="http://www.cia.gov">www.cia.gov</a> , <a href="http://www.indexmundi.com">www.indexmundi.com</a> , and Google’s search interface to World Bank.			
Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie and Charles DeZiel.			

3. Some challenging elements of the numbers in Numbers (While all “responses” below are my own, the list of “problem” statements and proposed “solutions” are adapted from J. Milgrom, *Numbers*, p. 339 and Daniel I. Block, “Introduction to the Old Testament—Part 1: Pentateuch and Historiographic Literature,” Lecture Notes from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001, pp. 111–112.)
- a. Potential problems with the large numbers in Numbers

POTENTIAL PROBLEM	DEROUCHIE’S RESPONSE
1. The numbers presuppose a population over 2,000,000 sustaining itself in an inhospitable wilderness for nearly forty years. Is this really possible?	The text stresses God’s supernatural provision (through manna [Exod. 16:31–35; Num. 11:6–9; Deut. 8:3, 16; Josh. 5:12] and water [Exod. 15:25–27; 17:6; Num. 20:11]) and his supernatural guidance, preservation, and protection (Exod. 17:8–16; Num. 9:15–23; Deut. 1:31; 8:4; 29:5). With God, life can always be sustained.
2. On the surface, the statistics in Numbers appear to clash with the statement in Judges 5:8 from a century later that Israel could only mobilize 40,000 troops against Sisera in the days of Deborah and Barak.	This observation fails to realize that Deborah only called for 10,000 troops from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali (Judg. 4:6, 10)—her goal was not to gather all the potential military men. The figure of 40,000 is only a rounded figure for the total number of troops that assembled, not a statement for how many could have assembled.



<p>3. Numbers 3:40–43 indicates that there were only 22,273 first-born males in the population (from one month old and upward). Because the census list covers males from 20 years old and upward, it is difficult to assess what the first-born figures mean regarding family size. However, if the 22,273 figure was applied only to the male adults (20 yrs. old and upward), it would mean a ratio of 27:1 for adult males to first-born males or 27 sons per household. Assuming an equal number of males to females, the average mother would have had over 50 children! This seems far too extreme to be real.</p>	<p>This numbering is difficult, but it may be reconciled if a large number of the firstborn males actually died in the first month of life. That such actually happened is not hard to fathom in light of the rude conditions Israel experienced in Egypt and the wilderness. Furthermore, such an interpretation gives clarity to why the text explicitly counts the first-born males only “from a month old and upward” (Num. 3:43).</p>
<p>4. The figures assume the population of Israel when they came out of Egypt was more than double the population during David’s reign, near the nation’s prime.</p>	<p>One can only come to this conclusion if you take the clearly generalized figure of 24,000 per tribe in 1 Chronicles 27 as a reference to the fighting men and not to “the heads of father’s houses, the commanders of thousands and hundreds, and their officers,” as the text makes clear (1 Chr. 27:1). In fact, just six chapters earlier, Chronicles numbers the fighting men of Israel at 1,100,000 and those in Judah at 470,000; the text then adds, “But [Joab] did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king’s command was abhorrent to Joab” (1 Chr. 21:6). This means that the fighting men in the days of David actually <i>exceeded</i> those of the conquest generations. (Cf. 2 Sam. 24:9, which estimates 800,000 fighting men in Israel and 500,000 fighting men in Judah.) Similarly, elsewhere in Chronicles we are told Jeroboam I took 800,000 men from Israel against Abijah of Judah’s 400,000 men (2 Chr. 13:3). We also read that Asa of Judah gathered 300,000 men from Judah and 280,000 men from Benjamin to face an Ethiopian army of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots (14:8).</p>
<p>5. With a population this size (counting only the males 20 and up), if the path through the Red Sea was as wide as a modern highway, marching 10 abreast with a new rank every 5 feet, the line would have been 59.24 miles long (not including women and children!). The trip would have taken several days to make.</p>	<p>If the people marched 100 abreast with a new rank every 5 feet, the line would have only been 6 miles long! The point is, the text does not at all make clear how broad a path Yahweh made for the people. We can assume it was quite large, however, for the Egyptians were not able to catch up after their chariots got stuck in the muck.</p>
<p>6. The biblical text suggests that the population of Canaan was much greater than Israel’s: “It was not because you were more in number than any other people that Yahweh set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples” (Deut. 7:7); “If you say in your heart, ‘These nations are greater than I. How can I dispossess them?’” (7:17; cf. 7:22; Exod. 23:29). The archaeological data suggests a population of Palestine at the time nearer 200,000 than 2,000,000–3,000,000, which is close to the population of the region today.</p>	<p>Israel was no small people. Indeed, their size was large enough to bring fear to Egypt, the greatest nation of the day (Exod. 1:9, 12), and to Moab (Num. 22:3–4). The mention of Israel’s election when they were “the fewest of all peoples” (Deut. 7:7) may actually refer to the setting-apart of the patriarchs, who were but 70 in number when they arrived in Egypt (Gen. 46:27; Exod. 1:5). Furthermore, as was evident in the exodus generation’s attempt to take the Promised Land, the potential realization of fear in Israel was due not to the size of the enemy armies but to the strength and size of the individual people and their fortifications (Num. 13:28, 31, 33). As for the archaeological data, the biblical figures at the time of David do not align with the archaeological data either (see response 4 above), but this does not call us to question the Bible. We must assume that either the data set is too small or is not being read correctly.</p>
<p>7. Later extra-biblical figures are more realistic: According to Assyrian records, at the Battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.) Ahab contributed 10,000 to the anti-Assyrian alliance; in 723 B.C., Sargon II deported 27,290 people from Samaria; in 701 B.C., Sennacherib drove out 200,150 people</p>	<p>These figures actually align quite well with what would be expected. Certainly Ahab would not have sent all his troops to Qarqar. The deportation of 27,290 from Samaria is appropriate for the survivors of war in the region of the capital, and 200,150 is amazingly comparable to Judah’s population at the conquest, when one accounts for women and children.</p>

from twenty cities of Judah.	
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- b. Proposed solutions to the “problems”
  - i. *The Anachronistic Interpretation.*
    - (1) W. F. Albright assumed the numbers were “misplaced” from a census list from the time of the monarchy. If the present Pentateuch was composed during the united monarchy, they may have come from a Davidic or Solomonic census list. By using these figures the author has concretely actualized the Exodus experience for the present generation, similar to the way Moses asserts that God made the Sinai covenant with his present listeners who were not originally there (Deut. 5:1–5).
    - (2) Response: The idea that the Pentateuch was finalized in the monarchy is only one of many possibilities, and we have no evidence that such a misplacement actually occurred. Furthermore, Albright’s approach allows the reader to declare a textual mistake wherever he struggles to explain the data, regardless of external support.
  - ii. *Reinterpretation of Hebrew ’elep.*
    - (1) G. E. Mendenhall (“The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *JBL* 77 [1958]: 52–66) has proposed that, since the word *’elep*, which is understood as “thousand,” can also mean “clan or company” (see Judg. 6:15; 1 Sam. 10:19; cf. Num. 10:4; 31:5), the figures in Numbers may actually refer to the military force of the clan, with the hundreds digits in the tribal census referring to the number of contingents subject to conscription. So, for example, the tribe of Reuben, allegedly totaling 46,500, actually mustered 46 contingents numbering 500 men (Num. 1:21), allowing ten or eleven men per unit. The result is that Israel would have had a fighting force of 598 contingents, totaling 5,500 men.
    - (2) A. Malamat has proposed that the Hebrew *’elep* simply stands for any large number and that 600 was the basic military unit. Thus, the so-called 600,000 really means a large number (*’elep*) of military units of 600 each.
    - (3) Finally, J. W. Wenham (“Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *TynBul* 18 [1967]: 19–57) has proposed that *’elep* in Numbers 1 be repointed as *’allûp*, which elsewhere means “tribal chief, clan leader” (of the Edomites: Gen. 36:15–43 [42x]; Exod. 15:5; 1 Chr. 1:51–54 [13x]; of Judah: Zech. 12:5). He proposes in Numbers 1 it means “officer” or “fully armed soldier.”
    - (4) Response: A number of problems arise from the above proposals:
      - (a) *’elep* elsewhere stands for the entire clan or tribe and not just the fighting force (Num. 10:4; 31:5; Judg. 6:15; 1 Sam. 10:19; 23:23; Mic. 5:1).
      - (b) Reading *’elep* as “company” or as “military leader” leaves very small contingents (11–12 men in contrast to 1,000

- during the monarchy), which calls into question how Israel's size would have brought such fear to Egypt and Moab.
- (c) The specificity of tribal totals in Numbers calls into question Malamat's proposal, as does the fact that neither of the conscription figures from a century later are divisible by 600 (i.e., 40,000 in Judg. 5:8 and 26,000 in Judg. 20:15).
  - (d) Texts like Numbers 3:43 only seem meaningful if *'elep* means "thousand": "And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273."
- iii. *The Literary Interpretation.*
- (1) J. Milgrom (*Numbers*, p. 339) insists the author intended the 600,000 figure to be interpreted literally, but he views it as number inflation characteristic of ancient epic literature. He compares it to the legendary Canaanite account of King Keret, who calls for a mighty army, "three hundred myriads, peasant levies without number, regular levies beyond counting, marching in thousands like storm clouds, and in myriads as autumn rains" (*ANET*, 143). "Three hundred myriads" is 3,000,000 fighting men—five times Israel's assumed forces at the conquest! Milgrom concludes, "Thus the tendency of ancient epics to inflate numbers is well attested."
  - (2) Response: Milgrom's proposal fails to account for the distinct nature of Scripture, which does not allow for falsification of data. As already noted, Numbers 1 is not the only spot in the Bible with high numbers. The Chronicler observed that Ethiopia gathering an army of 1,000,000 to confront Judah (2 Chr. 14:8; cf. 1 Chr. 21:5; 2 Chr. 13:3).
- iv. *The Literal Interpretation.* The point of Exodus 1:1–7 is that God's faithfulness to his promise made the population of the nation grow during their stay in Egypt, so much so that they threatened the power of Pharaoh. If 51 of Jacob's 53 grandsons each had four male descendants, at this same rate in seven generations the population would total more than 800,000. This suggests that the figures in Numbers are *not* extreme. The question of how there could have been only 22,273 firstborn males (from a month old and upward) in the whole company of Israel (Num. 3:43) seems best explained by recognizing that many if not most of the firstborn males actually died in the first month of life.

## **B. Supplying Guidance for Various Occasions: The Schedule of Public Offerings (28:1–29:40)**

- 1. *Thesis Regarding Food Offerings*: God's "Pleasing Aroma" (28:1–2)
- 2. *Daily Offerings* (28:3–8): morning & twilight
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 2 male lambs 1yr old w/o blemish (1 in the morning & 1 at twilight)

- b. Grain Offering
    - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with 1/4 hin of beaten oil
  - c. Drink Offering
    - 1/4 hin of strong drink per lamb
- 3. *Weekly Sabbath Offerings* (28:9–10): weekly (in the morning? Cf. 28:23)
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 2 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 2/10 ephah of fine flour mixed with oil
  - c. Drink Offering
- 4. *Monthly Offerings* (28:11–15): beginning of month (in the morning? Cf. 28:23)
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 3/10 ephah of fine flour mixed with oil per bull
    - 2/10 ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for ram
    - 1/10 ephah of fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
  - c. Drink Offering
    - 1/2 hin of wine per bull
    - 1/3 hin of wine for ram
    - 1/4 hin of wine per lamb
  - d. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat
- 5. *Annual Passover Offerings* (28:16–25): 14<sup>th</sup> day of 1<sup>st</sup> month = Passover/15<sup>th</sup> day is Feast of Unleaven Bread for 7 days; Passover Morning / Holy Convocation + 7 days of Feast of Unleaven Bread Climaxing in Holy Convocation on 7<sup>th</sup> day:
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 3/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per bull
    - 2/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for ram
    - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
  - c. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat “to make atonement for you” (28:22)
- 6. *Annual Feast of Weeks Offerings* (28:26–31): 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> first-fruits
  - a. Burnt Offering / Holy Convocation
    - 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 3/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per bull
    - 2/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for ram
    - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
  - c. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat “to make atonement for you” (28:30)

7. *Annual Feast of Trumpets Offerings* (29:1–6): 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; Holy Convocation; day to blow trumpets
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 3/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for bull
    - 2/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for ram
    - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
  - c. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat “to make atonement for you” (29:5)
8. *Annual Day of Atonement Offerings* (29:7–11): 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; Holy Convocation
  - a. Burnt Offering
    - 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - b. Grain Offering
    - 3/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for bull
    - 2/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil for ram
    - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
  - c. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat
9. *Annual Feast Tabernacles Offerings* (29:12–38): 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month; Holy Convocation + 7 day feast
  - a. Day 1
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain Offering
      - 3/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per bull
      - 2/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per ram
      - 1/10 ephah fine flour mixed with oil per lamb
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - b. Day 2
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 12 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - c. Day 3
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 11 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - d. Day 4
    - i. Burnt Offering

- 10 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
  - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
  - iii. Sin Offering
    - 1 male goat
  - e. Day 5
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 9 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - f. Day 6
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 8 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - g. Day 7
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 7 bulls, 2 rams, 14 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
  - h. Day 8: Solemn assembly
    - i. Burnt Offering
      - 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 male lambs 1 yr old w/o blemish
    - ii. Grain & Drink Offerings in prescribed quantities
    - iii. Sin Offering
      - 1 male goat
10. *Summary Regarding Food Offerings (29:39)*

**Fig. 6.6. Summary of Public Sacrifices in Numbers 28–29**

Occasion	Burnt Offering			Sin Offering
	Bulls	Rams	Lambs	Goats
Daily (23:3–8)			2	
Weekly Sabbath (28:9–10)			2	
1 <sup>st</sup> of the month (New moon) (28:11–15)	2	1	7	1
Unleavened Bread: 7 days (28:16–25)	2	1	7	1
Weeks (Pentecost) (28:26–31)	2	1	7	1
Trumpets (29:1–6)	1	1	7	1
Day of Atonement (29:7–11)	1	1	7	1 + 1
Booths (Tabernacles) (29:12–38)				
Day 1	13	2	14	1
Day 2	12	2	14	1
Day 3	11	2	14	1
Day 4	10	2	14	1
Day 5	9	2	14	1

Day 6	8	2	14	1
Day 7	7	2	14	1
Day 8	1	1	7	1
The daily (Num. 28:10, 15, 23–24, 31; 29:6, 11, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34, 38–39) and monthly (29:6) sacrifices and perhaps also those for Sabbath continued alongside the sacrifices associated with festivals. There is question as to whether Israel followed a lunar or solar calendar; the former is made up of a 360 day year (12 months x 30 days/month), whereas the latter is 365 days.				
Prepared by Jason S. DeRouchie.				

## V. Guided Reading for Numbers:

### A. Points of Focus:

1. Key chapters: 1, 2, 13, 14, 22, 24
2. Key persons: Aaron, Abihu, Amelek, Ammonites, Amorites, Baal of Peor, Balaam, Balak, Caleb, Joshua, Miriam, Moses, Korah, Yahweh
3. Key places: Edom, Kadesh Barnea, Moab, Sinai/Horeb

### B. Questions:

1. Numbers presents the account of Israel's journey from where to where? Why did Moses "number" Israel in the beginning and end of the journey? What do you think the significance of these numberings is in relation to the message of the book?
2. According to Num 14, what punishment was given to the community for their refusal to undertake the conquest of Canaan? According to Num 14:11, what was the root of Israel's problem in this crisis?
3. According to the forward of Numbers, with the LORD at her head, Israel's march from Sinai to the Promised Land as God's conquering army implicitly discloses "God's purpose in history." What is this purpose?
4. "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come forth from Jacob, a scepter shall rise from Israel, and shall crush through the forehead of Moab, and tear down all the sons of Sheth. Edom shall be a possession, Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession, while Israel performs valiantly. One from Jacob shall have dominion, and will destroy the remnant from the city." Who prophesied this oracle? Does it remind you of any promises(s) in Genesis?