

## *Exodus Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Nine: Exploring Canaan and Aftermath – Numbers 1-19*

#### Book of Numbers

- 1) How did the book of Numbers get its name (see Numbers 1:2-3; 3:15-16, 3:40; 4:2-3, 21-23, 29-30 and 26:2-3)? **The title “Numbers” originated with the Septuagint (as did the titles of the other books of the Pentateuch). It was so named because of the censuses it records. Its Hebrew title was “In the Wilderness.” It is also known as the Fourth Book of Moses.**
- 2) What were the three main locations where the Israelites camped during the time period covered by the book of Numbers (see Numbers 1:1, 10:11-12 [also 13:26] and 22:1)? How many years altogether did they spend wandering between these locations (see Numbers 14:26-35 and Deuteronomy 1:3, 8)? **The three primary locations in which Israel camped in the book of Numbers were Sinai (Exodus 19 - Numbers 10), Kadesh, in Wilderness of Paran (Desert of Zin [Numbers 13-21]), and Moab (Numbers 22-36). Altogether, Israel spent forty years in these three locations.**
- 3) Consult Acts 7:23-30 and Numbers 14:26-35. How old was Moses...
  - a) when he left Pharaoh’s household and fled into the desert? **Moses left Egypt at age 40.**  
when the Lord sent him back to Egypt to deliver Israel? **God called him back to Egypt at age 80.**  
from the time when Israel left Egypt to the time when they arrived in the Promised Land? **Moses spent 40 more years in the desert with the Israelites between the time he was 80 and 120.**
  - b) How does this change your thinking about your usefulness to God in every stage of your life (including your present stage)? **God is always preparing us for future service. Moses’ first 40 years in Pharaoh’s household weren’t wasted. There he received leadership training and became knowledgeable in geography, warfare, and writing, among other things. God spent the next 40 years working on Moses’ character, humbling him as a shepherd and teaching him faithfulness in routine work. At age 80, God did not see Moses as too old to play the biggest role of his life – the one for which he is best known. During the final 40 years of his life, Moses used all the skills the Lord had developed in him over the previous 80 years. God is always at work in His people. Personal sharing**

#### Numbers 1-10

- 4) Read Exodus 13:1-2, 15; 32:1-4, 25-29; and Numbers 1:47-53; 3:5-13; 8:15-19. Under what circumstances was the Tribe of Levi set apart from the other tribes, what responsibilities were they given, and what requirement did setting them apart fulfill? **The Levites were set apart because of their willingness to defend the Lord’s holiness, following the Golden Calf incident (putting their fellow Israelites to death, at the Lord’s command). God had required that each firstborn son or animal to be given to Him (Exodus 13), and according to Numbers 8:16, he took the Levites, as a Tribe, in place of the firstborns from every other tribe and family. The Levites were assigned to serve Aaron’s sons, the priests, by guarding the Tabernacle (preventing any non-Levite from approaching it [Numbers 3:10]). They also bore responsibility for the Tabernacle’s care and obligations (Numbers 3:8).**
- 5) Read Numbers 2:1-3, 9b-10, 16b-18, 24b-25, 31b, 34; 9:15-17, 21-23, and 10:2.
  - a) For what occasions were the tribes arranged? **The tribes were arranged around the Tabernacle for encampment, as well as for marching (setting out).**
  - b) Give reasons why you think this was helpful. **The arrangements not only made encampment and marching more efficient, since they were according to maternal heritage, they also allowed close relatives to be near one another (the one exception was the tribe of Asher).**

- c) How did the Lord use the cloud? **The Lord's presence was symbolically in the cloud and it hovered over the Ark in the Tabernacle. When it hovered over the Ark, the people remained encamped. The lifting of the cloud signaled the time to break camp and move on. Presumably, the cloud provided shelter from the hot, desert sun during the day and the fire within it provided light and warmth at night.**
  - d) What was the purpose of the trumpets? **The trumpets were sounded for calling the community together and for announcing the breaking of camp. Secondly, they were used for battle and on days of celebration.**
  - e) Does God's ordaining of the tribal arrangement, the cloud, and the trumpet blowing tell you anything about Him? If so, what does it reveal? **They speak of God's orderliness, sovereign control, and provision for and protection over His people.**
- 6) All the events that occurred at Sinai prepared the Israelites to set out for the Promised Land. Read (aloud, if possible) the Aaronic Blessing in Numbers 6:22-26.
- a) Why do you think this blessing was especially fitting for Israel at this stage in her history (for one reason, see Exodus 23:27; Numbers 1:3, 10:35; 21:1, 23, 33)? **The Aaronic blessing would have been especially comforting to a people sojourning as strangers through unknown territory. It would have stirred them to recall the Lord's promised blessing to their Patriarchs. It also reminded them of their daily dependence on Him for their "keeping," His favor, and His peace. Because of the dangers inherent in travel, these blessings were especially needed. Among many unknowns, one near certainty was that they would eventually face warfare.**
  - b) Read 1 Peter 2:9. As a royal priest of God, over whom might you pronounce the Aaronic blessing this week? **Personal sharing**

#### Skim Numbers 11-12.

- 7) What old sin crept back into the camp of Israel? According to 1 Corinthians 10:1-13, why did God ensure all these incidences were recorded? **Complaining and grumbling. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 says these incidences were recorded as examples and warnings to keep us from also falling.**
- 8) From Numbers 11:10-15 and 12:1, 2, 9-13, what was the general nature of the leadership challenges Moses faced (challenges that have continued to burden leaders of God's work in every age)? **In every age, leaders in God's work face occasional opposition from the very people they serve (they also face regular opposition from the invisible world, but that truth is not explicitly taught in this lesson). People complain *to* them and *about* them. Jealousy and complaints about a leader's family members, such as the ones posed by Miriam and Aaron, are not uncommon. People expect their leaders to meet all their wants and needs but seldom honor or recognize them.**
- 9) Read Hebrews 13:7a, 17, 18a. How might you "remember" one of your spiritual leaders or make their work less burdensome this month? **Personal sharing**

#### Read Numbers 13-14.

- 10) What was the goal of the twelve spies, according to Numbers 13:1-25? **The goal of the 12 spies was to explore Canaan. Specifically, they sought information about its fertility, geography, residents and cities. The 12 spies went on a reconnaissance mission to get the people excited about the land's blessings and rain insights that would be helpful in strategizing their attack.**
- 11) Which two men showed exceptional faith and courage? How did they do so? **Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, stood against the other ten spies and encouraged Israel to enter Canaan. Despite the odds (humanly speaking) against their success, they reminded the people not to be afraid because "[the Canaanites] protection is gone, but the Lord is with us" (14:9).**

- 12) Cite the verses that state the results of Israel's unbelief. "Not one of them will ever see the land I promised...to their fathers" (Numbers 14:23). "In this desert your bodies will fall – every one of you twenty years old or more...Not one of you will enter the land...except Caleb and Joshua" (14:29-30). "As for your children...I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected" (14:31). "Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert" (14:33). "Turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea" (14:25).
- 13) Recall the serious sin of Israel at Sinai (Exodus 32). After that incident and again after Israel's unbelief in Numbers 14, Moses interceded with God on behalf of the people.
- Which verses in Numbers 14 show that Moses wisely used his previous experience with God as a basis for handling this present crisis (see Exodus 34:5-7)? After the Israelites rebelled at Sinai by worshiping the golden calf, Moses interceded for the people's sin. God stated He would forgive them but would no longer accompany them personally. Moses begged God, saying he could not proceed without Him. God then agreed to go. As assurance, Moses asked God to "show Himself." God answered by passing in front of Moses and declaring His Name: "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 34:6-7). Moses must have recalled this experience in interceding with God for Israel, as recorded in Numbers 14, for according to verses 18-19, Moses spoke God's own words back to Him, essentially basing his request for forgiveness on God's own self-proclaimed character (slow to anger, abounding in love, and forgiving of sin and rebellion).
  - Read Deuteronomy 4:9. Many places in Scripture (especially in Deuteronomy) exhort us to remember what we have learned. Apparently, the Israelites were not learning their lessons about God. What valuable lesson from the Lord are you eager to prevent from "slipping away from your heart"? How can you "fix" (implant) what you have learned in your heart and mind? **Personal sharing**

#### Skim Numbers 16-17.

- 14) According to Numbers 16:3, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram challenged Moses and Aaron's authority. How did God defend Moses (see Numbers 16:28-33) and Aaron (see Numbers 17)? **God defended Moses' position of authority by immediately fulfilling Moses' prophecy that these three men would not die a natural death (He opened the earth to swallow them alive). The Lord defended Aaron's leadership by causing his staff alone to bud, blossom and produce almonds (those of the other tribal leaders did not).**
- 15) How personally did the Lord take the people's grumbling against His appointed leaders (compare Numbers 17:5 and 10)? How does Romans 13:1-2 explain this? **The Lord counted grumbling against His appointed leaders the same as grumbling against Him. According to Romans 13:1-2, leaders are ordained and appointed by God, and to resist authority is to rebel against God Himself. (Although Paul does not say so in the Romans passage, the Lord Jesus said we are to "render to Caesar only that which is Caesars and render to God that which is God's" [Mark 12:17]. In Acts 5:29, Peter declared, "We must obey God rather than men." Therefore, we should understand the Romans verses to direct us to respect and submit to all authorities and governments, as long as they do not clearly direct their subjects to do what is wrong or demand the loyalty that God alone is due.)**