

- 1 Be concise.** Please share your thoughts and answers, but be considerate so that others will have time to share their answers also. Be charitable and kind. Be willing to share with the group, but do not try to dominate the conversation. Use the time after the class to find help with any personal issues or problems you may be confronting in your life.

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.”

(James 1:19–20)

- 2 Be thoughtful with your answer.** Consider your words. Do not simply regurgitate what you have always heard. We have the tendency to speak in “Christianese” — words that only people who grew up on the pews would understand. Think about how your words will be heard by others. Will they understand what you are saying? Is what you are about to say going to be useful for the building up of the faith of others? Or will your words be confusing, cause hurt, or worse, damage someone’s faith? Speak without harshness or anger, but with kindness and humility.

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

(Ephesians 4:29)

- 3 Rely on the scriptures for truth.** It is easy to rely upon conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. Bible study is about seeking God’s answers for our lives, not dispensing the advice of the world. We must consider that our natural answers may be the wrong answers if they are not founded on God’s word.

“For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”

(1 Corinthians 1:25)

This is a booklet to aid you in your personal study of this book. Read through the text first, discovering God's precious truths for yourself. Write down the main point of each section of text in the space provided. Use the margins on each side of the text and the backside of the page to make notations of the truths you discover and passages you do not understand. When you believe you have seen all there is in text, read and answer the questions in the booklet pertaining to that section of text. The questions are not an exhaustive list of things to look for in the text. The questions are to help you consider the points that the author was trying to convey to his audience. Be prepared to share your findings in class.

The Septuagint called this book Numbers because there is a numbering of the people at the beginning and at the end of the book. But in the Hebrew Scriptures the book is called, bamidbar which means "In The Wilderness." This title comes from the first line of the book which says, "The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai" (Numbers 1:1). "In The Wilderness" is a more appropriate title because this book will describe Israel's travel in the wilderness from Mount Sinai to the edge of the Promised Land. Numbers is the sequel to Exodus, which we can see by reading the first verse that we are picking up where we left off. The dating tells us that it has been one year since the exodus. They have been at Mount Sinai for 11 months. During those 11 months God has been teaching the people his laws, as revealed in the second half of the book of Exodus and all of the book of Leviticus.

The story of the book of Numbers is written about a people whose lives are lived between the accomplishing of their redemption and its consummation. They live between the exodus and the promised land. They live in between the times, enjoying the exodus but not yet enjoying the full realization of God's promises and the promised land. It is so easy for us to declare these Old Testament books as irrelevant to our lives. They are stories of the past and we might sometimes see good points that we can learn from today. However, this is not the outlook that the New Testament has regarding these books, including the book of Numbers. After describing some of the events that are recorded in the book of Numbers, the apostle Paul declares:

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. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:11-12 ESV)

Notice that the apostle Paul says that these things were written down for us, not for them. Yes, they are examples for us. But the instructions in this book are directed at us. We live as they did, between salvation accomplished and salvation completed. We live between the work of God in accomplishing our salvation exodus at the cross and the time when that salvation will be brought to its consummation when Christ returns. God did not bring Israel out of Egypt to abandon them to make their own way through the wilderness. In the same way, God does not abandon us to make our own way to the promised land of eternity as we walk through this wilderness. Exodus is what God has done to set you free. Numbers is what God is doing to bring you to the promised land. The New Testament makes many references to the events that happen in the book of Numbers (1 Corinthians 10:5; Hebrews 3:8; 3:17; Acts 13:18; John 6:49).

What are the chief temptations of living in the wilderness? The people of Israel were constantly tempted to doubt that there really was a promised land ahead. All they could see with their eyes was the barrenness of the desert. God did not just immediately take them into the promised land but took them on a journey of tests to prepare them for the goal. The book of Numbers contains the message of the need to live by faith while walking in the wilderness. Do not believe what you see with your eyes and abandon God. What was supposed to help them with faith while walking through the wilderness? The presence of God was ever before them. They needed to keep their eyes on the Lord who was leading them through the wilderness (Hebrews 12:1-2). They had the tabernacle constructed so that worship before God would happen on a regular basis, so as to not forget what God had done and where the people were going. Jesus tabernacled among us (John 1:14) for the same purpose: we have seen his glory. So it is one month after the tabernacle was erected. The people are getting ready to go to the promised land.

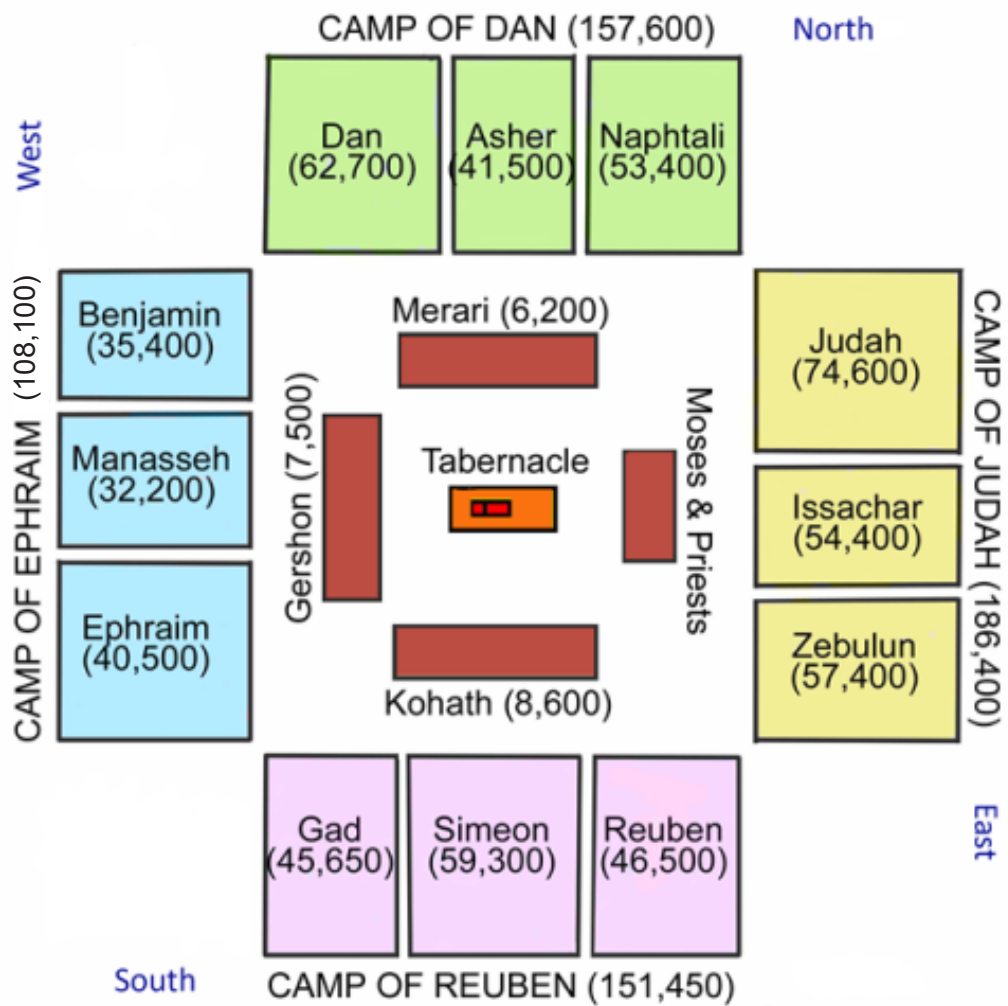
OUTLINING NUMBERS:

_____ (Numbers 1:1-10:10)

_____ (Numbers 10:11-25:18)

_____ (Numbers 26:1-36:13)

THE TABERNACLE



Encampment of Israelite Tribes in the wilderness

Numbers 2:1 - 3:39

NUMBERS

1

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 How does the book of Numbers begin? What connections are made to Genesis and Exodus?

- 2 Who was to be counted in the census?

- 3 What promise was made to Abraham concerning his offspring (Genesis 15:5; 16:10; 22:17)? Does the numbering of the people indicate that this promise has been fulfilled?

- 4 Which tribe is the largest? Why would this be unusual? Why is this in keeping with Jacob's blessing (Genesis 49:8-10).

- 5 What was the purpose of the Levites who were not the priests (sons of Aaron) (1:47-54)?

- 6 Where were the Levites to camp (1:53)? Why (1:51-53)?

- 7 How does the chapter end (1:54)? Why would this be notable to the book of Numbers and the message of this chapter?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 How were the tribes to camp? How many tribes were on each side?

- 2 Where is the tribe of Levi?

- 3 Where did the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh come from, for they are not the 12 sons of Jacob?

- 4 In what direction were the camps supposed to face (2:2)?

- 5 Where is God in the camp arrangement? What is the message to the people?

- 6 What do we do in our lives that shows God in not in the center of our lives? What changes can we make so that God is always the focus of all we do?

- 7 How does the chapter end (2:33-34)? Why would this be notable to the book of Numbers and the message of this chapter?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What familiar phrase does chapter 3 begin with that is repeatedly used in Genesis?
- 2 What does God remind the reader about (3:3-4)? What is the message?
- 3 What role is given to the tribe of Levi (3:5-10)? What is the message?
- 4 Explain 3:11-13. What was going to take for himself? Why? Who does God take instead?
- 5 What was the work for the family of Gershon (3:21-26)?
- 6 What was the work for the family of Kohath (3:27-32)?
- 7 What was the work for the family of Merari (3:33-37)?
- 8 Since there were not enough Levities to take instead of the firstborn males, what else is required for the 273 firstborn males? What is God teaching?
- 9 How does the chapter end (3:51)? Why would this be notable to the book of Numbers and the message of this chapter?

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 How old did you have to be to be put into service as a Levite (4:1-3)?

- 2 Who was to take down the articles of the tabernacle (4:5-14)?

- 3 What would happen to the sons of Kohath if they touched these articles of the tabernacle before they were covered (4:15)?

- 4 What would happen to the sons of Kohath if they looked at these articles of the tabernacle before they were covered (4:20)? What is the message God is teaching?

- 5 Knowing the seriousness of the tabernacle, consider the meaning of this passage regarding Jesus: And the Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 ESV)

- 6 How does the chapter end (4:49)? Why would this be notable to the book of Numbers and the message of this chapter?

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What conditions caused people to be put outside the camp (5:1-4)? Were these conditions the result of sinful behaviors?

- 2 What is God trying to teach the people with this teaching in 5:1-4?

- 3 How does God describe sin (5:6)?

- 4 What was a person to do who sinned against another person (5:6-8)?

- 5 What do we learn about what true repentance looks like (cf. Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 19:8; 2 Corinthians 7:6-13)?

- 6 Explain Numbers 5:11-31. How was this a protection for the woman? How was this a protection for the man?

- 7 What is God's view of adultery (cf. Leviticus 20:10)

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Why did a person take a Nazirite vow (6:1,5,6,7,8,12)?

- 2 What did a person have to do to keep a Nazirite vow (6:1-8)? What is God teaching about holiness?

- 3 What did a person have to do if a person became defiled while under the vow (6:9-12)? Did the vow continue in time where left off or did a person have to start over with the vow?

- 4 What did a person do once the vow was completed (6:13-21)?

- 5 What sacrifices were offered at the end of the Nazirite vow (6:13-20)? What is God's message? Look back at Leviticus 1-6 to remember the purpose of the various sacrifices.

- 6 Explain the blessing in 6:22-27. What six things will God do for the people? Explain each blessing.

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is the time frame of this chapter (7:1)?
- 2 What happens over the next twelve days in chapter 7?
- 3 What was one of the purposes of the tabernacle (7:89)?
- 4 What repetition is given in 8:1-4? What is the message?
- 5 What instructions are given in 8:5-22? What was the response of the Levites (8:22)?
- 6 What question comes up in 9:6-7? What is Moses' answer to this question (9:8)? What lesson do we learn from this?
- 7 What is God's answer (9:9-14)? Is this the answer you would have guessed God would give?
- 8 What is the repetition in 9:15-23? What is the message of this paragraph?
- 9 When it comes to obey God, what must all people do?

TRANSFORMATION:

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- 8** What was God's response (11:16-23)?
- 9** What does this account about Moses and these two men as recorded in 11:24-30 have to do with the whole of this account? What does this have to do with the message of complaining?
- 10** What do the people do when God sends the quail? The distance around the camp is about 12-15 miles. Take a map and mark out how far this distance is from your house or church to gain a sense of how far the quail extended 3 feet deep. Why is the people's response worthy of condemnation?
- 11** How much did the least of the people gather? A modern calculation is this is about 475 pounds or about 1900 birds. What are the people doing? What is the sin?

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Read Numbers 12:1 carefully. Why are Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses? Explain.

- 2 What do Miriam and Aaron say in verse 2 because of their feelings in verse 1? What do they mean by this?

- 3 Why are Miriam's and Aaron's word in verse 2 ridiculous, according to verse 3? Is there any basis for a charge against Moses?

- 4 What is the Lord's response (12:4-9)? What does he say about Moses? What was special about the relationship that Moses and the Lord had? What does God say about Moses' faithfulness?

- 5 What happens to Miriam (12:10-12)? What does Moses do (12:13)? Are you surprised about Moses' response?

- 6 Are there any problems today among Christians regarding divisions and complaining in regards to race and ethnicity? Do we still see divisions today? What can we do to overcome any divisions?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What does God say he is going to do (13:2)?
- 2 What did the spies find in the land (13:21-24)? What do they report to the people initially in verses 25-27? Read Exodus 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3. What are the spies confirming?? What should be the response to the spies?
- 3 But what else do the spies say (13:28-29)? What does Caleb say (13:30)? But what do the other spies say (13:31-33)? How are the people of Israel being tested?
- 4 What is the response of the people to the spies (14:1-4)? Who do they listen to?
- 5 What is Moses and Aaron's response (14:5)? What is Joshua and Caleb's response (14:6-9)?
- 6 What is the response of the people (14:10)? What does God do (14:11-12)? What does Moses do next (14:13-19)?
- 7 Does God pardon them (14:20)? But will these people enter the promised land (14:21-38)? How do we reconcile these two ideas?
- 8 What is the response of the people (14:39-45)? What do they want to do? Why does God not accept their confession of sin? Explain.

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 After what happened in chapters 13-14, what is amazing about Numbers 15:2? Why is this going to happen?
- 2 Read Ephesians 1:4-6. God says he has "predestined us for adoption." Based on what you have read in Numbers 15:2, what does God mean that he has predestined us for adoption? Explain.
- 3 How are these sacrifices picture (15:3,7,10,13,14)? What does this mean?
- 4 Were outsiders allowed to participate in these offerings and in having a relationship with God (15:14-16)? What is God showing?
- 5 What is the difference between sinning "unintentionally" (15:22-29) and sinning "defiantly" or "with a high hand" (15:30-31)? Explain.
- 6 Could sinning "with a high hand" be forgiven by God (15:30-31)? Could sinning unintentionally be forgiven (15:22-29)? Read Hebrews 10:26-31. Has God changed in regards to how he treats our sins?
- 7 How do verses 32-36 exemplify what God is teaching? What was the consequence?
- 8 What were the people commanded to do in verses 37-41? Why? What was the message?

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is the complaint of Korah and the 250 leaders (16:1-3)?
- 2 Read verses 8-11. What is Moses' answer to Korah? What two things does Moses identify as their error? What lessons do we learn from this?
- 3 Look at Jude 5-6. What does Jude say was their error and how it ties to what angels did?
- 4 What is God ready to do (16:20-21)? What is Moses and Aaron's response (16:22)? What do we learn?
- 5 What is the test Moses puts forward (16:28-30)? What happens next (16:31-35)?
- 6 What was Eleazar the priest to do with the censers (16:37-40)? Why?
- 7 What is the response of the people (16:41-42)? What is God's response (16:43-45)? What do Moses and Aaron do (16:46-50)? How do we see Jesus in all of this?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What are Aaron and the priests pictured doing for themselves and for the people (18:1)? What else is their role (18:2-5)?

- 2 What is the role of the Levites (18:6-7)? How does God describe what the priests and the Levites are to the people in verses 6-7?

- 3 How were the priests and the Levites given provisions (18:8,21)? Did they receive land (18:20)? Why not?

- 4 Describe the purification law in Numbers 19. What was the water mixed with? What was the result of this washing and for refusing the washing (19:12-13,20)?

- 5 Read Hebrews 9:11-14. What is the message of the ashes of a heifer and what do we learn about Jesus from this?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What happens in verse 1? Consider the “first month” is likely referring to the first month of the 40th year of the wanderings. Based on this, why does Miriam die?

- 2 What is the problem for the people of Israel (20:2)? What is the response of the congregation (20:3-5)? Does this sound familiar to prior responses?

- 3 What is wrong with complaining? What are we saying about God?

- 4 What instructions are given to Moses (20:7-8)?

- 5 What did Moses and Aaron do wrong (20:10-13)? Read Psalm 106:32-33. What does the psalmist specify the sin was? Read Numbers 20:12. What does God say the sin specifically was?

- 6 Why are Moses and Aaron left out of the promised land for this sin?

- 7 What lessons do we learn from Moses and Aaron’s failure?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is significant about Edom not allowing Israel to pass through their land (20:14-21)? Consider Genesis 25:23 in your answer. Has God's promises come to pass regarding Edom and Israel yet?
- 2 Why is the death of Aaron significant (20:22-29)? Consider Hebrews 7:23-25.
- 3 What hopeful event happens in Numbers 21:1-3 that shows God's faithfulness?
- 4 What problem does Israel have (21:4)? What is the response of the people (21:4-5)? Have we seen this response from the people before?
- 5 What was God's response to the people (21:6)?
- 6 What do the people do? What does Moses do (21:7)?
- 7 What is God's response (21:8-9)? Is this surprising? What did the people pray for? What could have God done?
- 8 This event is frequently referenced in the New Testament. Consider the following passages and write down the important message we are to learn:
John 3:13-17

John 6:32-51

1 Corinthians 10:9-12

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

NUMBERS

21:10-22:41

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is God doing for the people in Numbers 21:10-35? What is the message? What is God showing the people?
- 2 Why is Moab in fear of the Israelites (22:1-4)?
- 3 Who is Balaam? What does Balak want Balaam to do (22:5-6)?
- 4 What is God's response to Balaam (22:12)? Is God's message clear?
- 5 Why does Balaam ask God a second time, based on 22:15-17?
- 6 Read verses 20-22. Explain why God is angry with Balaam in verse 22 for going with the princes of Moab when God seems to have allowed Balaam to go in verse 20. What do we learn from this?
- 7 What is the message of the donkey and Balaam? What is God teaching Balaam? What is God teaching Israel and us by recording this miracle?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1** Describe the first "curse" (23:1-12). Explain what Balaam ends up saying about Israel. What is Balak's reaction? What is Balaam's response?
- 2** Describe the second "curse" (23:13-26). Explain what Balaam says about Israel and Israel's enemies. What is Balak's reaction? What is Balaam's response?
- 3** Describe the third "curse" (23:27-24:14). Explain what Balaam says about Israel and about Israel's enemies. What is Balak's reaction? What is Balaam's response?
- 4** Describe the fourth "curse" (24:15-25). Explain what Balaam says about Israel and about Israel's enemies.
- 5** What do we learn about God in these two chapters? What is God showing about himself?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What sins are being committed (25:1-3)?

- 2 What is God's response and consequence (25:4-9)?

- 3 What is so terrible about what this one man does in verse 6? What are they doing (25:8)? What is God's message?

- 4 Who is Phinehas and what does he do (25:7-8)?

- 5 What does God say about Phinehas (25:10-13)? What reward is given to him?

- 6 Read Psalm 106:28-31. What does the psalmist say about Phinehas? What was it counted to him as? Compare this with what the New Testament says about faith in Romans 4:3-11; 4:22; Galatians 3:6; James 2:23. What can we learn about faith and holiness as you consider Phinehas and the scriptures read?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What does a new census represent for the people in chapter 26?
- 2 What warnings and reminders are given (26:61-65)?
- 3 What is the problem that the daughters of Zelophehad have (27:1-11)?
- 4 What is God's response? What do we learn about entrance into the promised land?
- 5 Why was Moses not allowed to enter the promised land (27:14)? So what will happen to Moses?
- 6 What is Moses' concern (27:16-17)? Where do we see this language in the New Testament?
- 7 Who will God give to address this concern (27:18-21)? What does his name mean?
- 8 What parallels do you see in what is said about Joshua and what Jesus will be when he comes (cf. John 10; Luke 4:17-21; Isaiah 61:1-3)?

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is described in 28:1-8? What is described in 28:9-15? What is described in 28:16-25? What is described in 28:26-31?

- 2 What directions are given in 29:1-6?

- 3 What directions are given in 29:7-40?

- 4 Consider that these laws have already been given in Exodus and they will also be declared in the book of Deuteronomy. Of all the things that God could remind the people about, why does God remind the people about all of these offerings? What is the point? Why are these offerings so important that they are emphasized?

- 5 What directions are given in 30:1-16? What is God's message to the people? What do we learn about God?

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 Why does the Lord tell Israel to attack Midian (31:1-2)? What had Midian done (cf. Numbers 25)?

- 2 What was done with the plunder?

- 3 What sin are the tribes of Reuben and Gad committing (32:1-5)?

- 4 What is Moses' response (32:6-15)? What does Moses say the tribes are doing?

- 5 What do these tribes promise to do (32:16-27)?

- 6 Why is Israel's history recounted in chapter 33? Why would this be important for Israel?

- 7 What are the people instructed to do when they enter the land (33:50-56)? Why must they do this?

TRANSFORMATION:

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Main point: _____

Make additional notes at left and below:

- 1 What is commanded the people in chapter 34? Why are the notations regarding the borders important? Does this have anything to do with God's promises?

- 2 What is the message of chapter 35? How was murder be handled? How was manslaughter (accidental death) to be handled?

- 3 Read 35:33-34. What is God's concern? What is God's message?

- 4 What is the message of chapter 36?

- 5 What did the daughters of Zelophehad do in verse 10? How does this bring the book full circle in its message (cf. 1:19; 1:54; 2:34; 3:51; 4:49; 5:4; 8:4; 8:22; 9:23; 10:13)

- 6 What must we do to enter the promised land?

TRANSFORMATION:

How does this relationship change your relationship with God? What did you learn about him? What will you do differently in your life?

NUMBERS



IN THE WILDERNESS

SELF-STUDY WORKBOOK

by: Brent Kercheville