

Numbers

Setting Mt. Siani → Kadesh → Moab | Hebrew Title: “In the Wilderness” (1:1)

The **people** of God are attempting to occupy a **place** where they can enjoy God’s **presence** and so be a **light** to the nations.

Why do these 4 key promises of God not come together in the book of Numbers? sin

Theme

God’s Past Promises will Prevail in Spite of People’s Present Problems

God’s Preparations Preserve his Promises (1-10)

- God prepares His people to enter the promised land through the census.
- God prepares His people for his presence to move with them through cleansing.

God’s Punishment Preserve his Promises (11-16)

- The first generation does not trust God, but complains and fears for their children’s safety and do not get to enter the promised land.
- God is merciful and protects their children and only the second generation of Israel get to enter Canaan.

Warning to learn from Israel: Hebrews 3:7-19

God’s Patience Preserve his Promises (17-36)

Pattern of Numbers: The people sin → God displays his righteous anger → the people need a mediator → God displays his patience

Conclusion

God prepares his people for the fulfilment of his promises, but the people are punished since they do not believe his promises. Nevertheless God’s patience sees that his promises will prevail and will come to pass.

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. **John 3:14-15***



Reflection Questions

1. Why do we need to be reminded that God's past promises will prevail in spite of present problems?
2. Israel had God's presence in the tabernacle in the midst of their camp but we have his very presence in us. How should being indwelt by the very Spirit of God affect your everyday life?
3. Israel's camp in the wilderness was set up with God's presence in the tabernacle in the very middle. How can this physical picture be an example of how God desires for our lives to be lived?
4. God sharply rebuked and punished Israel for their grumbling in the wilderness. The New Testament writers also point to this account to warn believers against it. What are things in your life that you are tempted to complain about? What are some ways you are seeking your satisfaction in your current circumstances or the things of the world rather than your relationship with God and your spiritual blessings?
5. How does dissatisfaction in our lives lead us to sin? How can we be satisfied even in the midst of difficult circumstances?
6. Israel faced trials in the wilderness and had to trust and rely on God for his provision and protection as sojourners. In what ways do our current lives here on earth parallel that setting? What should we look to for our hope and source of endurance?
7. When things got hard in the wilderness, Israel wanted to return to their bondage and slavery in Egypt in order to be more comfortable and forsake God's presence, provision, protection and promises. In what ways do we treasure earthly comfort/blessings more than spiritual blessings? How can we combat this?