

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question: Do you feel like you're in the wilderness or promised land?

Pray: For God to help us understand the book of Numbers for our lives.

Read: Numbers 1:1-3, 2:1-2 & 6:22-27, 9:1-3.

Context:

- Where are the people of Israel and how did they get there?

What does the text say & mean (observe/comprehend):

- Why does God want Moses to take a census? See Genesis 15:1-5
- What is the tabernacle and why is it in the centre of the camp?
- What does it mean for Israel to be blessed?
- What does God command in 9:1-3 & what is Israel's response?

How does the text point forward to Jesus:

- Consider the connections between these Numbers passages and Matthew 3:17, 27:45-46 & 28:16-20, Galatians 3:7-14, Revelation 7:4-17

What does the text mean for us (apply):

- What is similar/different between Israel in Numbers and us today?
- How does God look at us? What blessings have we received? Psalm 139, Matthew 10:31, Ephesians 1:3, Romans 4:7-8, James 1:12.
- What does it look like for you to have God at the centre of your life?
What's one live example for you?

Pray: that Village would have God at the centre of their wilderness journey

Homework: Read Numbers 1-10

Remind: *Village Family Meeting - Sunday 26th*

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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Numbers is the fourth book in what is called the “Pentateuch”, the five books of the Torah. These serves as the foundational books of the people of Israel, giving context to their relationship with Yahweh, the God who is and who created all things.

Numbers takes place in the Wilderness. Between the Exodus, where God rescues Israel out of slavery to Egypt, and the Promised Land, where Israel will experience the fullness of God’s blessings. After rescuing Israel, Yahweh covenanted with Israel. He promised them blessing but in response requires obedience to his good law. The question of Numbers is, will Israel trust God and obey? Or will they rebel as they have already done in Exodus and Leviticus. And, how will God respond if they do?

For Christians today. We too live in the wilderness. In the time between our salvation by faith in Christ, and our enjoying the fullness of eternity in the promised land of the new creation. We too are called to obey Christ by faith.

Context:

- **Where are the people of Israel and how did they get there?**

See above + note the next question.

What does the text say & mean (observe/comprehend):

- **Why does God want Moses to take a census? See Genesis 15:1-5**

See God’s promise to Abraham. Numbers is a step in the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham. Remember how God’s promises often work - like a series of mountains with the final peak fulfilled in Christ.

- **What is the tabernacle and why is it in the centre of the camp?**

The tabernacle is simply a tent. But it’s a special tent where God’s presence dwells. So the people of Israel are camped around the presence of God. This is a picture of the life of God’s people, we should always have God at the centre of our life.

- **What does it mean for Israel to be blessed?**

In chapter 6, the picture of blessedness is to have God’s face be turned towards you, his warmth/life shining on you. Note the opposite, to have God’s face turned away from you is to be ‘far from God’ and far from his blessing.

- **What does God command in 9:1-3 & what is Israel’s response?**

God commands Israel to celebrate. God loves joy. At this point, Israel’s response is obedience. This is the right response and how it should be between God and his people.

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How does the text point forward to Jesus:

- **Consider the connections between these Numbers passages and Matthew 3:17, 27:45-46 & 28:16-20, Galatians 3:7-14, Revelation 7:4-17**

Jesus is the blessed Son of God. God's face shines upon him. Jesus is the truly blessed one of God. However, at the cross, the Father forsakes the Son as the Son takes on human sin. Now, whoever looks to him in faith is truly a Son of Abraham and one of the multitude of God's people (see Revelation). Jesus is on his throne and stands at the centre of God's people.

What does the text mean for us (apply):

- **What is similar/different between Israel in Numbers and us today?**

Get the group to wrestle with this question. Some possible examples:

Israel were altogether in one place, Christian's aren't today.

God's presence isn't in a tent anymore, but within us.

Obedience doesn't look like following the law of Moses (we follow the law of Christ).

Our wilderness isn't a physical place, but a spiritual one.

- **How does God look at us? What blessings have we received? Psalm 139, Matthew 10:31, Ephesians 1:3, Romans 4:7-8, James 1:12.**

God's face shines on his people. We are more valuable to him than any animal. He knows us more intimately than any other. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ and loves us as his children. We are blessed now even in the midst of trials because of our hope in the true promised land (the new creation).

- **What does it look like for you to have God at the centre of your life? What's one live example for you?**

Encourage the group to be vulnerable. None of us truly put God at the centre of our lives in all aspects. But how could we move closer to that? Is there a specific example. You can consider spheres like vocational work, future hope, family life, particular decisions that need to be made, generosity/money etc.