

Bible Study – July 15, 2026

Numbers: Trusting God in the Wilderness

Numbers 13:1–33; Numbers 14:1–24; Numbers 21:4–9

New Testament Connection: John 3:14–15; 1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus Recap

In Genesis we learned:

- God created the world with purpose.
- Sin entered the world through human disobedience.
- God began His plan of redemption through His covenant with Abraham.
- God worked through Joseph's difficult circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

In Exodus we learned:

- God saw the suffering of His people.
- God redeemed Israel from slavery.
- God established a covenant relationship with His people.
- God called His redeemed people to live in obedience.

In Leviticus we learned:

- God is holy.
- Sin separates people from God.
- God provided atonement through sacrifice.
- God's people are called to reflect His character in everyday life.

Leviticus ends with God teaching His people how to worship and live as a holy nation.

Numbers answers an important question:

Will God's people trust Him when the journey becomes difficult?

Big Idea

Numbers teaches that God remains faithful even when His people struggle to trust Him.

Icebreaker

When you think of the book of Numbers, what stories, people, or events come to mind?

Biblical Context

The book of Numbers follows Israel's journey from Mount Sinai toward the Promised Land.

Although God had redeemed His people and promised them a future, they repeatedly struggled with fear, complaining, and unbelief.

Numbers reveals God as:

- Faithful
- Patient
- Provider
- Guide

The book reminds us that faith is often tested between God's promises and their fulfillment.

Theme 1: Fear Can Cause Us to Miss What God Has Promised

Scripture

Read: Numbers 13:25-33

Numbers 13:30 (NIV)

"Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.'"

Biblical Insight

God instructed Moses to send twelve spies into Canaan.

The spies all saw the same land.

They all saw the same cities.

They all saw the same people.

Yet ten spies focused on the obstacles while Caleb and Joshua focused on God's promise.

The issue was not what they saw.

The issue was how they interpreted what they saw.

Digging Deeper: Fear vs. Faith

Fear causes us to focus on our limitations.

Faith causes us to focus on God's power.

The Promised Land was exactly as God said it would be.

The problem was not the land.

The problem was the people's unbelief.

Cross Reference

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

"For we live by faith, not by sight."

Discussion Questions

The twelve spies saw the same land but came to very different conclusions. Why do you think that happened?

What was the difference between Caleb's perspective and the perspective of the other spies?

The spies described themselves as "grasshoppers" in comparison to the people of the land. What does that reveal about how they viewed themselves?

What does this story teach us about the relationship between faith and God's promises?

Reflection Questions

The Promised Land represented both opportunity and uncertainty. Why do you think people often struggle when God calls them into unfamiliar situations?

What circumstances in life are most likely to challenge your faith?

Theme 2: Unbelief Has Consequences

Scripture

Read: Numbers 14:1-9

Numbers 14:11 (NIV)

"The Lord said to Moses, 'How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me?'"

Biblical Insight

After hearing the spies' report, Israel refused to enter the Promised Land.

Instead of trusting God, they complained and wanted to return to Egypt.

As a result, an entire generation missed the blessing God had prepared for them.

Digging Deeper: The Cost of Unbelief

Israel's greatest problem was not the giants in the land.

Their greatest problem was their lack of trust in God.

Numbers teaches that unbelief can keep people from experiencing all that God desires for them.

Cross Reference

Hebrews 3:19 (NIV)

"So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief."

Discussion Questions

Why do you think the obstacles in the land seemed more real to Israel than God's promises?

What does this passage teach us about the consequences of unbelief?

Even after witnessing God's miracles, Israel struggled to trust Him. What does this teach us about human nature?

How does this story challenge the idea that seeing miracles automatically produces faith?

Reflection Questions

What are some ways people today can allow fear to hinder their faith?

How can remembering God's past faithfulness help us trust Him in present challenges?

Theme 3: God Provides Grace in the Wilderness

Scripture

Read: Numbers 21:4-9

Numbers 21:8-9 (NIV)

"Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

Biblical Insight

As Israel traveled through the wilderness, the people once again complained against God.

God sent venomous snakes among them.

When the people repented, God instructed Moses to place a bronze serpent on a pole.

Anyone who looked at it in faith would be healed.

Digging Deeper: Looking in Faith

The bronze serpent did not have power in itself.

The people's healing came through trusting God's provision.

This event points forward to Jesus Christ and salvation through faith.

Cross Reference

John 3:14–15 (NIV)

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up."

Discussion Questions

Why do you think God chose this unusual method of healing?

What did the people have to do in order to receive healing?

The bronze serpent had no power in itself. The people's healing came through trusting God's provision.

What does this teach us about the role of faith in our relationship with God?

What does this story teach us about faith and God's provision?

Reflection Questions

Why do people sometimes resist God's solution to their problems?

What does it look like to "look to Christ" in faith today?

New Testament Connection

John 3:14–15

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Biblical Insight

The experiences of Israel in the wilderness serve as both encouragement and warning for believers.

Just as God remained faithful to Israel despite their failures, God remains faithful to His people today.

Jesus compared His future crucifixion to the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

Those who looked to the serpent in faith lived.

Those who look to Christ in faith receive eternal life.

Final Reflection Questions

What have you learned about faith from the book of Numbers?

How does Numbers help us understand the dangers of unbelief?

What does Numbers teach us about God's faithfulness?

Reading for Next Week

Deuteronomy: Remembering God's Faithfulness

Read:

- Deuteronomy 6:1–12
- Deuteronomy 8:1–20
- Deuteronomy 30:11–20

New Testament Connection

- Matthew 4:1–11
- Romans 10:6–13

Preview

As Israel prepares to enter the Promised Land, Moses reminds a new generation of God's faithfulness, God's commands, and the importance of choosing obedience.

Big Idea for Next Week:

Remembering God's faithfulness helps us trust Him with our future.