

(Through the Bible) Numbers

by Zac Poonen

The book of Numbers teaches us about the importance of order, discipline, and restitution, as well as God's sovereignty and power.

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Scripture: Numbers 26:11

Topics: "Obedience To God", "Spiritual Discernment"

Description

This sermon delves into key chapters in the book of Numbers, highlighting the importance of obedience, discipline, and discernment in the journey of faith. It emphasizes the consequences of rebellion against God's appointed authority, the significance of God being our portion and inheritance, and the power of resurrection in the midst of spiritual death. The narrative of Balaam serves as a cautionary tale against the lure of material gain and the need for spiritual discernment. The appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor underscores the importance of following God's guidance over personal ambitions.

Transcript

Well, we're going to turn today to the book of Numbers. This is the fourth of the books that Moses wrote and this deals with Israel's wanderings and Israel's wars in the wilderness. And there are a number of important chapters, as you've probably been noticing.

We can't go into every chapter in a brief study like we are having, where we mostly take just one session to cover a book. So, what I want to share with you is the important chapters and I hope that it wets your appetite to study the scriptures more deeply and intensely on your own. Now, this book is called Numbers because the people of Israel were numbered twice.

Moses took a census of the Israelites. It says in Numbers 1 verse 3, from 20 years old and upwards, all those who were able to go out to war. They took a census according to the families once, at the beginning of their wanderings and then later on, towards the end of their wanderings as well.

That you read in chapter 26. And in chapter 2, you have the arrangement in which the camps of Israel were to be placed. God is a God of order and one of the things you learn from this is the discipline and orderliness which God taught His people.

Remember, there were a bunch of totally undisciplined slaves in Egypt and God, when He let them out, not only redeemed them, not only baptized them in the Red Sea and baptized them in the cloud, but began to teach them order, cleanliness, laws of hygiene. Now these are important lessons for us because there are lots of Christians who say, well, I'm saved. I'm born again by the blood of the Lamb, but they're not clean.

They don't have any sense of hygiene or cleanliness in their lives or in their home. There is no sense of orderliness in their life. There is no discipline in the way they spend their time or their money or the way they keep their rooms.

And all this affects our growth. I've discovered that whatever experience of the Holy Spirit you may have, if you are not disciplined in your life, you cannot become a godly person. Don't think that just because you've got experiences and you know the Lord, that's good enough.

The orderliness with which you see the detail that you see in the book of Numbers. So many details. Don't just get bored reading all that.

But what you can generally learn from those many details is the orderliness with which God conducted and led his people on and the discipline he wanted them to have. God is a God of order. And when there is a lack of discipline in our life, we cannot be the men and women God wants us to be.

I find that, let me give you an example. There are people who say, the apostles never went to a Bible school. So we don't need to go either.

Well, if you're a thoroughly disciplined person, listening to the Holy Spirit, I agree with you. I never went to one. But I disciplined myself to study the Word.

And I've discovered a lot of people who try to follow the apostles without the discipline that the apostles had. They know nothing. And one thing that some of you get here is the discipline of the study of the Word.

Discipline is so important. You cannot know God's Word if you don't take pains and discipline yourself daily, particularly in your younger days, to study the Word and open yourself to the Holy Spirit. Just if we can learn that from some of these details that are given in the book of Numbers, you go to chapter 7, for example, and the offerings of the leaders.

Such detail. One silver dish weighed 130 shekels. And one silver bowl weighed 70 shekels.

And so much of it is repetition throughout that. But God takes, what we learn there is that God takes interest in every little thing that every person offered. It's not just a general statement.

I know that 10 of those people may have offered the same thing, but God says, no, I'll write down what this person gave and what this person gave and what this person gave. There we see something of the heart of God, the nature of God. He's interested in the individual.

And particularly in a time like ours where, you know, in a large country like ours, it's very easy to sort of get lost in feeling that I'm just one among so many. You read something like Numbers chapter 7 and see how the Lord took interest in every single dish, every single little thing that every single individual offered. And if you read through that, I don't have time to show it to you.

You find the Lord could have condensed it and said all these people gave basically the same thing. They generally gives a few things, but he doesn't put it like that detail. You know that God is interested in detail in your life.

Every little thing. These are some of the lessons that we can learn as we study these scriptures. I want to show you here something else in Numbers chapter 3. I don't know whether you know this.

There were 12 tribes among in Israel. Why did God choose one, the Levites, to be the priests? Did God pick lots? Was it just because they were favorites? God has no favorites. When he chooses a particular person for a particular task, it's because he is that man and usually fulfills certain conditions.

Why did God choose Paul? Why did God choose Peter? It was not random. Why does God choose one person today and not another? We may all offer ourselves for God's service. That's fine.

But God picks out some people. And he can pick you out. There is no partiality with God.

If you fulfill the conditions. Paul says that in 1 Timothy 1 that Jesus Christ considered him faithful and put him into the ministry. God tests our faithfulness.

We'll see that later on in the Bible too. But one example of it. Numbers chapter 3. It says in verse 40 and 41.

The Lord said to Moses, number every firstborn male. The son of Israel from a month old and upwards. Make a list of their names.

The reason was all these firstborn were supposed to be killed in Egypt. They should have died. And they escaped because of the Lord's mercy and the blood on the doorposts.

But strictly speaking, they were considered dead. Dead but alive. Just like we Christians.

We should have died. But because of the blood we are alive. And then the Lord said, verse 41.

Take the Levites for me. Instead of the firstborn. And the cattle of the Levites.

Instead of the firstborn of the cattle of the sons of Israel. So Moses numbered all the firstborn. And they were, verse 43, 22,273.

And they numbered the Levites. And the Levites were 22,000. Exactly.

It's almost the same number. The remainder, 273, they had to pay a redemption price. We read in verse 46 and 47.

But the point I want you to notice here is the reason why the Levites were chosen. First of all, they were in place of the firstborn. The firstborn should have died.

But they escaped. And therefore they belong to the Lord. You should have died.

Eternally. But you escaped. And therefore, like the Levites, you and I are for the Lord.

The firstborn. Like the firstborn, you and I are for the Lord. Instead of the firstborn, the Lord said, I'll take the tribe of the Levites.

But there's one more reason. And I want you to turn back to Exodus and chapter 32. Exodus and chapter 32.

We read here in verse. You know, this is the time when Israel was worshiping the golden cow. In verse 26, it says here that when Moses came and he saw, in verse 25, the people were out of control.

He stood in the gate of the camp and he said, who is on the Lord's side? Come to me. And all those 600,000 people heard it. And the Levites came forth.

All those Levites, they came and stood there. What were the others doing? They had the opportunity. The tribe of Judah could have come.

The tribe of Reuben could have come. None of them came. The Levites came and stood there.

That was the day. God chose them to be his servants. He saw one group of people who was willing, who were willing to stand against the entire lot of compromising so-called believers.

Who had been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, baptized in the Red Sea, baptized in the cloud. And do you know how God chooses his servants today? When he sees one person, it may be you, who is willing to stand with God and with God's servant, with Jesus. Moses represents Jesus here.

Standing and saying, who is on the Lord's side? Come and stand with me. And if you are willing to stand with him against your compromising fellow believers, against your brothers. Remember Judah, Reuben, Simeon, all these people were the brothers of Levi.

And stand against their brothers, and stand even against their parents. God will pick you up to serve. And he will make a covenant with you, that you will be his servant.

That was the reason. I want you to turn also to Deuteronomy and chapter 33 and verse 9 and 10. It says about Levi, verse 8. This is the blessing with Moses, bless the Israelites.

Verse 8 of Levi, he said. Levi said concerning verse 9, concerning his father. Deuteronomy 33, 9 and his mother.

I did not consider them. He did not even acknowledge his own brothers. He did not regard his sons.

This is in that time, you know, when they stood for the Lord. But they observed thy word and kept thy covenant. What was that? See when these people came and stood with Moses.

Moses told them in Exodus 32, 27. Take your sword and go back into the camp. And kill every man his brother, every man his friend, every man his neighbor.

Don't worry if that's a special friend of yours. Take the sword and kill. And 3,000 people were killed that day by the Levites.

That's what he's referring to here. That they did not consider whether that person that they were going to kill was their father. Or mother.

Or brother. They were on the Lord's side against their relatives. If the relatives compromised, they say you can compromise.

Today we don't use the sword, literal sword. Today we use the sword of the scriptures, the word of God. That's what we use.

We're not men of violence. In those days they used the literal sword. But we stand with the word of God against our friends, relatives, neighbors.

And that's how the Lord picks us out. Now we turn to Numbers and chapter 4. I'm just picking out a few things from the book of Numbers. And you can study it on your own.

I hope it whets your appetite to study this wonderful book. In Numbers chapter 4, we read of the sons of Levi who were given responsibilities in the tabernacle. Levi did not choose his own sons.

No. It was God. God may choose my son to serve him, but God must choose him.

I can't choose him. That's the point. God said the sons of Levi have got to have these responsibilities.

Levi had these three sons. Kohath, Gershon, Merari. Now you know that earlier, we studied that yesterday, that the sons of Levi, Nadab and Abihu, offered strange fire and they were killed.

They would have had a tremendous responsibility in the camp. The sons of Aaron. But they missed it.

That we read the other day, the sons of Aaron. They could have been in this number who were doing a ministry in the camp, but they missed it. But these people, the tribe of Levi, Kohath and Merari and the sons of Merari, Gershon and Kohath, they had the responsibility to move the tabernacle.

The most sacred job in the moving of the Israelites was given to the sons of Levi. And what we see here is that you cannot take God's commandments lightly. That's what I mentioned yesterday, how Uzzah in David's time tried to touch the ark because he thought it was falling and God killed him and said, you are not a Levi, you are not allowed to touch the ark.

The lesson we learned from that is, if God has not given you a responsibility, you should not try to touch it. For example, when people go and criticize another church, I say that's none of your business. Are you an elder there? No.

Leave those elders to take care of that church. Do you criticize somebody else's children? Are you their father? Mind your own business. When you criticize somebody else's children, you're touching something which God has not given you to touch.

When you are trying to sort out something in another church where you've been given no responsibility, you're like Uzzah, touching the ark. The ark was to be handled only by certain people. So that's what we see here.

And each were given specific tasks. For example, we see here in verse 24, this is the service of the family of the Gershonites. Verse 33, this is the service of the families of the sons of Merorite.

It was specific. And now I want you to see something interesting in chapter 7. In chapter 7, we read that the leaders of Israel, verse 2, made an offering to the Lord. And all the leaders, their offerings are mentioned.

And they brought their offering, verse 3, 6 covered carts, 12 oxen, a cart for every 2 leaders and an ox for each one. So they presented these 6 carts and 12 oxen. Now when you divide 6, now this was to carry the items of the tabernacle.

Now when you divide 6 carts between 3 people, you know, 3 groups, Kohathites, Merorites, Gershonites, how many carts do each people get? How many carts does each group get? Two. When you divide 12 oxen among 3 groups, how many oxen does each get? Four, right. Now listen, see how he did it.

So Moses, verse 6, took the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. And he gave 2 carts and 4 oxen to the sons of Gershon for their service. Good.

But he gave 4 carts and 8 oxen to the sons of Merorite. And verse 9, he did not give any carts or any oxen to the sons of Kohath. Because they had a special privilege to carry the ark.

And that was not to be carried on a bullock cart. The Philistines did that later on. And David did it and that's when it began to topple.

And Uzzah touched it. They were to carry it on their shoulders. So it could have been very easy for these Kohathites to say, Well, here God has given that brother 2 cars.

Or carts. Today it's cars. Those days it's carts.

God has given that brother 4 cars. And here I have to walk. Or I have to cycle to serve the Lord.

Do you have complaints like that? God, in his great wisdom, does things very exactly. Don't bypass these verses hidden in the middle of Numbers. There's a message for you over there that can deliver you from complaining when you see somebody else has got 2 cars and you've got only a cycle.

Does God answer these problems? He does in the middle of Numbers. In these chapters you skip and move on. I hope I will encourage you thereby to study the scriptures more carefully.

Numbers chapter 5. I want to show you something else here about God's command concerning lepers. It says in Numbers 5 verse 1 and 2, Command the sons of Israel, and the Lord spoke to Moses, that they send away from their camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person. Now there are some people who feel and who give people a wrong impression that because the Lord said in Exodus 15, 26, I am the Lord that healeth thee.

All Israel got healing. Whenever they were sick, they went to the Lord and they were healed. They were not.

The lepers were not healed. They were put outside the camp. Here is the verse.

It says, Command the sons of Israel that the lepers should trust the Lord for healing. No, they should be put outside the camp. Could the Lord heal them? Certainly.

When Jesus came, every leper that came to him, he healed. Not even one was left out. But here, the Lord could heal them, but he didn't.

Now that's just to teach us that we should not try to lock God down in a box. We make a little doctrine and we say the Holy Spirit must live within this doctrine. He is going to heal everybody.

You take that type of position and you will be unrealistic and you will kill certain people who could have been healed with medicine and do a lot of stupid things like that. There was a law for the cleansing of the leper. We saw that in Leviticus 14 yesterday, 13 and 14.

But here, we see here that you cannot dictate to God and say, You said in Exodus 15, 26, I am the Lord that healeth thee. Now heal this leper. We are not going to put him outside the camp.

The Lord said put him outside the camp. Humble yourself and acknowledge that there are situations where the Lord does not heal for some good reason or the other. See, the Bible is very realistic.

And it's people who don't study the Bible carefully who get all these wrong doctrines. And the multitudes of Christians who are being deceived today, even by people who have gone through Bible schools and got doctorates, who do not know the Bible, unfortunately, who have not studied the Scriptures carefully. I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, use your time here to study the Scriptures carefully so that you understand God's heart and God's laws and God's ways and lead God's people aright.

That is so important. It grieves my heart when I see poor people being led astray by leaders who do not know God and do not know his word. And those poor people suffer.

So there's a very important responsibility that we have here. Jesus himself said in the time of Elisha, there were many lepers in Israel. None of them were healed, Jesus said, in Luke chapter 4. But Naaman the Syrian, he was healed.

So that's just in passing. Now I want to show you something here about restitution. We saw a little bit about that yesterday.

And that's mentioned here in Numbers chapter 5 and verse 11. No, not verse 11, sorry, verse 6 to 8. When a man or a woman commits a sin, acting unfaithfully, he shall confess his sin and he shall make restitution, verse 7, in full for his wrong, and add one-fifth and give it to him whom he has wronged. You know, it's a sin against the Lord, but it's also a sin against a person, like we saw yesterday about the guilt of them.

And it says, when you give restitution, again the Lord repeats here, give 20% more, because you have cheated that man. I remember many, many years ago when I got converted, one of the things the Lord spoke to me was to make restitution to the government and to people concerning things I had cheated. And I was debating in my mind, you know how we can be calculating? Yeah, this is how much I feel I owe.

But I had a little bit of a doubt. Was it this much or was it this much more? And the doubt I had was exactly 20% more. And I never knew about this verse.

I was debating, thinking how much should I give, and I was going to give what is less. And then I read this verse. It was almost as if the Lord spoke directly to me, add 20% and give it.

Let it be more rather than less. If you're in doubt as to how much you should give back to somebody, give more rather than less. Your conscience will be clear in the day Jesus comes again.

That's what I felt. I don't want that extra 20% in my bank and not be ready for the coming of the Lord. Okay.

Now, in verses 11 to 31, we read of instructions concerning if a man's wife has committed adultery, there's a way in which God would expose them by taking some water with the dust from the tabernacle and make the woman drink it, and her belly would swell. Now, the method used in the New Testament is not like this, with water and dust, but by the discernment of the spirit, like when Peter exposed Ananias and Sapphira supernaturally by the gift of the spirit, something this woman did in secret was revealed by this method. And by the discernment of the spirit, what Ananias and Sapphira did in secret was also revealed.

And as this was a very important part of the New Testament law, discernment given by the spirit, where God gives a leader discernment to see the true spiritual condition of a person, is a very important requirement to serve the Lord. Numbers chapter 6 deals with what is called a Nazirite vow. Not N-A-Z-A-R.

It's got nothing to do with Nazareth. N-A-Z-I-R, Nazirite. Jesus was not a Nazirite.

In the last part of Matthew 2, it says he was a Nazarene. Sorry, Matthew chapter 3. He was a Nazarene, not a Nazirite. And he dwelt in Nazareth.

I think that's Matthew 2, perhaps, the last one. Anyway, he was a Nazir... Nazarene means he lived in Nazareth. And that's referring to the verse in Isaiah 11-1.

Not Nazirite. Because a Nazirite had to have long hair. He could never cut his hair.

He could never drink wine. You know about Samson, he was a Nazirite. And it says here in... Numbers chapter 6, verse 3. He shall abstain from wine, and verse 5. No razor shall pass over his head until the days... He dedicates himself for a certain period.

In Samson's case, he was dedicated for life, he was a Nazirite. There were two ways in which Samson could have lost his strength. One was by cutting his hair.

And the other was by drinking wine. If he had drunk wine, he would have lost his strength. His strength was not in his hair.

His strength was in his dedication. And that dedication was shown by his not cutting his hair and not drinking wine. Either of the two would have made him lose his strength.

Now Jesus did cut his hair, and he did drink wine. So he was not a Nazirite. In verse 22-27, we see the blessing.

Numbers 6, 22-27. We see the blessing with which Aaron was commanded to bless the people of Israel. I just mention it here to show you that this is the greatest blessing that God can ever give us.

The greatest blessing God can ever give us is not healing, is not prosperity. This health and wealth gospel is not the good news that the Bible speaks about. Not in the Old Testament, and not in the New Testament.

When the Lord wanted to bless the people of Israel, he did not tell Aaron to say, May the Lord bless you with a lot of money, with many children, and a lot of prosperity, and a lot of good health. No. Listen to this.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. That's my prayer for you. Keep you from falling into sin.

May he make his face shine upon you. That means may you be able to look clearly into his face every day, because you've got a clear conscience. And may he give grace to you.

And may he lift up his face upon you and give you peace. There's no health there. There's no wealth there.

But there's grace. There's peace. There's keeping.

There is the face of the Lord shining upon me. I say, Lord, I don't want anything else. I don't care whether I have health or wealth.

If I have this, it's enough. And he says, you invoke my name like this, and I will bless them. This is the blessing of the Lord that we are to seek even today.

And I want to turn now to Numbers chapter 9. We read in Numbers chapter 9, verse 15 to 23, how the Lord led his people by the cloud that covered it during the day, verse 16, and it was by the appearance of fire. It had an appearance of fire at night. Whenever the cloud was lifted, Israel set out, and when the cloud settled down, Israel camped.

Sometimes, verse 20, the cloud would linger for a few days, and verse 19, sometimes it lingered for many days. And sometimes, verse 21, if the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they'd move out. If it remained in the daytime at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they'd set out.

Now, notice in verse 21, it says, they would come and settle down in the evening, and probably in the morning, they'd move. Now, that's just one sentence. But just think of this, practically what it meant.

Here were people traveling with their little children, with all their tents and their animals, and they had to set up the tent. Ah, the cloud has stopped, now let's set up our tent. And they spent many hours setting up their tent, and go to sleep, and get up in the morning, and the cloud is moving.

Can you imagine there, the opportunity they have to complain? Why can't God wait a few days? We just set up our tent last night. You know, a true servant of God will never complain when God tells him to do that which is inconvenient. Maybe he told him to go, and then he told him to return, or told him to stop.

This is how God led them, by the Holy Spirit. Led by the Spirit. I told you yesterday, that you can be born of the Spirit, baptized in the Spirit, led by the Spirit.

As many as are led by the Spirit, Romans 8, 14, are the sons of God. There's a difference between a child of God and a son of God. When I say, this is my child, and this is my son, we're talking about a grown-up son.

Those who are sons of God are led by the Spirit, and the cloud led them, and they had no complaint. If the cloud stopped, they stopped. And if the cloud moved next morning, they were to pack up, and they were not to complain.

God was very strict against this murmuring, complaining attitude among the Israelites, for which he punished them. The Bible says in Philippians 2, Let all things be done without murmuring and complaining. One of the things we see throughout the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites is murmuring and complaining.

And if you murmur and complain, my brother and sister, that is the clearest proof that you have not entered the land of Canaan. You are still in the wilderness. I don't care who it is.

It may be a pastor, a leader. If he murmurs and complains, he's still in the wilderness. And he will lead people into the wilderness, not into Canaan's land.

One proof that we have finished with the wilderness and got into Canaan's land is we've stopped grumbling. We've stopped murmuring, at home and outside, and stopped complaining. We've started giving thanks.

For what? The Bible says, 1 Thessalonians 5.18 and Ephesians 5.20, Give thanks for everything, in all things. Okay. So whenever the cloud moved, they moved, whether it was verse 22, whether it was two days or a month or a year.

Sometimes the cloud stayed for a whole year. And the thing is, they couldn't predict it. When the cloud stopped, you didn't know how long it was going to stop.

So is everyone born of a spirit. It's like the wind blows where it is. You cannot say when the wind is going to blow, when it's going to stop.

So is everyone born of a spirit. We move with the cloud. Okay.

We move on now to chapter 12, where we read about the complaining of Miriam and Aaron against Moses. Aaron and Miriam were jealous, because they were older than Moses. Aaron was three years older.

Miriam was probably 12 years older. Here was God choosing this younger brother to be a prophet and to be the leader. It's not easy when God chooses a younger person to be the leader.

But God chose Moses. And Miriam and Aaron, they couldn't find any fault in this man, because he was a very humble man, like it says in Numbers 12.3. The man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was in the face of the earth. And I believe that's written in brackets.

If you look in your Bible, it's written in brackets, to show that Moses did not write that. He wrote the rest of the book of Numbers, and perhaps Joshua inserted it there, that Moses was the humblest man on the face of the earth. And we read here that the only fault they could find with him was that this man, Moses, went and married a non-Jew.

So they questioned him about that. Why is he married this Cushite woman? And it says, and the Lord, verse 2, heard it. The Lord hears, whenever you speak against His anointed servants.

And the Lord appeared, and said, call them out. And the Lord came there and said, listen to me, verse 6. If there is a prophet among you, I will reveal myself to him in a vision, or in a dream. But with Moses, he is more than a prophet.

I don't have to speak to him in visions and dreams. I speak to him, verse 8, mouth to mouth, face to face. Now tell me something, my brother and sister.

Which is better? For the Lord to speak to us directly, face to face, when we are awake, or when we are asleep, in a vision or a dream. It's very clear from this passage, that the Lord speaking to us face to face,

is far superior to speaking in a vision or a dream. And yet there are so many believers who today think, that if a man has a vision or a dream, he is spiritual.

No. The one who is more spiritual, is the one who can hear God speaking, face to face, directly in his heart, and be led by the Spirit. That is superior to visions and dreams.

Take time to study that passage, and you'll see it very clearly. And then the Lord was angry with these people. And the cloud withdrew from the tent, and Miriam suddenly became full of leprosy, verse 10.

And suddenly Aaron said, Oh Lord, please don't let this sin be imputed to us. Because her flesh is being eaten away, and she'll be put outside the camp. And Moses, even against whom they criticized, said, Lord heal her.

The Bible says, pray for those who persecute you. That was not an Old Testament commandment, but Moses was a New Covenant man, living in the Old Testament. An amazing man.

Just like today there are people who live in the New Testament age, and live by Old Testament principles. There were one or two in the Old Testament, who lived by New Covenant principles. It's not a question of when you live in history.

You can live today and be an Old Covenant Christian. For example, if you don't have victory over sin, you're like people in the Old Covenant, who had forgiveness, but no victory. Many other marks of that.

Moses was a New Covenant Christian. And he prayed for him. And the Lord said, Okay, put her outside the camp, verse 15, for seven days, so that she learns a lesson, and then let her come back.

And they learned a lesson for their life. But all the others did not learn a lesson. We'll come to that later.

When you come to chapter 13, you'll find that Israelites are brought to the borders of the Promised Land, in a place called Kedesh Barnea. And the Lord said, Go in. But the children of Israel sent twelve spies, to examine the land.

And ten of them came back, twelve of them came back, all twelve, and said, It's a wonderful land. But ten of them said, There are big giants, and we cannot conquer them. But Caleb and Joshua said, There are big giants, but we can conquer them.

And the 600,000 Israelites listened to the majority. What we learned from there is, it is very dangerous to follow majority opinion. Majority opinion is invariably wrong.

The way to life is narrow, and few there be that find it. The majority don't find it. The way to destruction is broad, and many there be go in there at.

If you follow the majority, you will definitely be on the broad way. In Christendom, I want to tell you, the majority is wrong. Don't think the largest church is the most spiritual church.

It's not. Ten people versus two. Whose side will you take? God is on the side of the two, Joshua and Caleb.

Unbelief and the devil were on the side of the other ten. And the Israelites followed majority opinion, and that was why they wandered in the wilderness. They had no discernment to see.

It's not a question of whose majority here. That is for politics and for elections. Here it's a question of whose side is God on.

And if God is with one person, I would rather be with him. God was with Moses, when the Israelites were worshipping idols, and only the tribe of Levi recognized that. And here, when God was with Joshua and Caleb, even the tribe of Levi did not recognize it.

Everybody sided with the other ten. Be careful. These have got lessons for us today.

Christendom is in a compromising situation today. Here and there, God raises up people who stand for the truth of God's word without compromise. If you have discernment, you will see.

God is with that man. I can sense it. I can discern it.

I would rather stand with that man against all of compromising Christendom. And you won't be wrong. You will enter the promised land.

How do you identify the man with whom God is? He speaks the language of faith. Joshua and Caleb spoke the language of faith. We can overcome.

We can overcome anger. We can overcome lust. We can overcome jealousy.

We can overcome murmuring. We can overcome sin. We can overcome the devil.

We're not going to yield. That's the language of the man with whom God is. The man who is not with God, who says, no, we've got to be reasonable.

I mean, you don't understand anything about psychology. I say, I couldn't care less about psychology. I believe God's word.

You see, these are the ways in which people go astray. Human reasoning. God has hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent.

And I'll tell you this. If you use human reasoning and all your cleverness and intelligence to study the Bible, I can tell you right now, you'll go astray. You need the Holy Spirit.

That's why God picked up fishermen, not Gamaliel's scholars. He picked one of them, Paul. But most of the others were fishermen, like Peter, James, and John, because the others were so proud of their knowledge that they couldn't discern where God was.

The same thing here. So that's what we learn from here. That's why they missed the promised land.

And God was so angry with them, and he told them in Numbers chapter 14 and verse 22, Surely all these people, before whom I performed all these signs, will never enter the promised land. They will all perish. These people who have put me to the test ten times.

Ten times. I don't have time to tell you, but it's not an exaggeration. Right from the very first one, when they rebelled at the crossing of the Red Sea, there are ten times in which they rebelled against Moses.

First in Exodus 14, 11. Second, fifth, Exodus 15, 24. Third in Exodus 16, verse 2 and 3. Fourth in Exodus 16, 20, sorry.

Fifth in Exodus 16, verse 27 and 28. Sixth in Exodus 17 and verse 3. Seventh in Exodus 32. Eighth in Numbers 11, 1. And ninth in Numbers 11, 4 and 33.

And the tenth time was here in Numbers 13. It was not an exaggeration. Ten times you have rebelled against me, you will not enter the promised land.

Now we move on to Numbers chapter 16, and you read of the rebellion of Korah. Now we would have thought that Korah, Dathan, Abiram would have learned a lesson from what happened to Miriam. When she was put outside the camp for seven days, all Israel knew that Miriam was put outside the camp for rebelling against Moses.

But sometimes we don't learn. A foolish man does not even learn from the mistakes of others. A wise man learns from the mistakes of others.

And most of those other people learned a lesson from Miriam's foolishness, but Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did not learn a lesson. To rebel against authority that God has placed is a very serious thing. And that's what you see in the book of Numbers chapter 16, how God punished Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and their families for rebelling against Moses, and they were swallowed up alive.

We read of two people who went to heaven alive, Enoch and Elijah. In Numbers 16, we read of the only people who were swallowed alive into hell. You read, the earth opened up, verse 31, 32, and they went straight alive into hell.

The only people, as far as we know, who went alive into hell. But the interesting thing we see here is that when the rebellion started, there were four people, verse 1, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and on. And they rebelled against Moses.

And Moses said, verse 5, come back tomorrow morning and then we will see. And out of these four people, one person got some sense. On that night, he repented.

And next morning, when you read verse 24, you read that only three people left. Thank God that one man saved his family because he got some sense that night, not to join anymore in that rebellion. And we see one more thing.

It says here that the Lord told them to pull away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And something that is not mentioned in Numbers 16, it's the glory of God to conceal matters, the glory of kings to search it out. In Numbers 26, 11, Numbers 26, 11, you read that the sons of Korah did not die.

How is it that the sons of Korah did not die? They were standing outside the tent with their father in their rebellion against Moses. And God said through Moses, pull away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And the sons of Korah, they had not repented the previous night like on, they repented at the last minute.

At the last minute, they ran away from their father and they stood with Moses. They said, Dad, we're not standing with you. We're standing with God's man.

Sometimes children have to stand with God's people against their parents. And thereby they escaped. They escaped death.

And those sons of Korah wrote Psalms, Psalm 42 to 49, especially Psalm 46. It speaks about the earth opening up and the waters covering the thing. And he says, but we are still, and we know that God is God.

God is our refuge and strength. And they wrote another Psalm, Psalm 84, where they said in verse 10, I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of wickedness along with our dad, Korah. That's what they meant.

See, those Psalms become meaningful. The Psalms of the sons of Korah, when you see the background to how God delivered them at the last minute, teaching us that we should be very careful about rebellion. Once this rebellion came, the next day, the Lord spoke to Moses and said, listen, I want to prove to these people that I'm really standing with you.

And the way I'm going to prove to you is, number 17, tell all the Israelites, the leaders, to bring a rod each. That means break off a branch from a tree and bring a rod. And write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi.

One rod for each of the households. There were 12 tribes and Aaron's rod, that means 13 rods. And in the morning, when you put all these rods in the tent of the meeting, in the morning, fruit will come on one of these rods.

And in the morning when they came, we read that the verse 8, 17, 8, Aaron's rod budded. There was fruit on that broken branch. The Lord said, this is how I identify the man whom I have chosen.

The principle is, the principle of resurrection. Life coming out of a dead branch. The power of resurrection is the means by which God identifies His servants.

That means, in the midst of spiritual death, God's servants can stay alive. They are not swallowed up by the spiritual death of the people around them or of Christendom. Like Aaron's rod, they bud.

They bring forth fruit in the midst of death. They don't complain, saying, oh, it is all so bad around us. It makes no difference.

It can be terrible around us, but we can be fruitful. That is the principle of resurrection. That is how God identifies His servants.

That's the mark of God's approval. Resurrection power. Seek it even more than Bible knowledge.

Another verse, Numbers 18, 20. It's a lovely verse in the book of Numbers. You read there about the Lord telling Aaron, and that's what the Lord tells us.

You shall have no inheritance in the promised land when you go there. I am your portion and your inheritance. I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, there's nothing wrong in having land or houses, but if you ever get attached to them and you say, this is my portion, I'm taken up with my house and my property, you can never be a servant of the Lord.

If you want to be a servant of the Lord, your attitude to everything on this earth must be, I don't have, I may have things here, I may have a scooter or a car or anything, but my attachment is not to any of these things or even a house. The Lord is my portion and my inheritance. The other things the Lord can take away.

Numbers chapter 20. Here we read of Moses being punished for one disobedience. There was only one time that Moses slipped up.

God told him, this was the second time when they were hungry, thirsty for water, and this time God said, don't smite the rock, but speak to the rock. Verse 8. Because Jesus Christ has to be smitten only once on the cross. The rock has to be smitten only once.

After that you speak. You receive the benefit of it. That was the principle.

That's why the second time the Lord said, the rock is there, but don't hit it. But Moses was angry and he took the rock and he, verse 11, he struck it twice in his anger. And the Lord said immediately to Moses, because you have not believed me and treated me as holy, treated my commandments as serious, you will not enter Canaan.

Verse 12. The Israelites were given how many chances? Ten. At the tenth time they were punished.

Moses, only once. Why? Do you know that God expects more from leaders? He'll be merciful to ordinary people nine times, punish them the tenth time. But if you're a leader, even once is enough.

To whom more is given, more is required. And Moses pleaded with God, oh Lord, 40 years I've longed to enter the land of Canaan, and here at the border of the promised land, he misses out on that which he longed for. And he humbled himself and he never entered the promised land.

But God was good to him. Do you know when Moses entered the promised land? Do any of you remember? On the Mount of Transfiguration. When Jesus was there, Moses stood there for the first time in the promised land.

God honored his servant in a much better way than entering here. If only he knew that, he would have realized that God keeps something better for his servants, even when they have failed. But he had to punish Moses publicly so that people knew that God is strict.

For one disobedience, he could not enter. One more thing I want to say here. Did the water flow when Moses disobeyed? Yes.

Sometimes even when God's servants disobey, blessings still flows from their ministry. What does that prove? It doesn't prove that God's servant is faithful. It proves that God loves the people.

God loved the people so he allowed the water to flow. When you see a disobedient servant of God today, blessing flowing from his ministry, it proves nothing. It does prove one thing, that God loves the people.

But it doesn't prove that God is approving of that servant. He dealt with Moses later and he will deal with that servant later. There are people who will say to the Lord in the final day, Lord, we cast out demons in your name.

We prophesied in your name. We healed the sick in your name. It was true.

Many people were healed. Many demons were cast out. But the Lord said, depart from me.

You did not live a holy life. You lived in sin. So you see, God uses disobedient servants.

That's what we learn from here. Because he loves the people. But it does not mean that he approves of the disobedience of his servants.

In Numbers 22-24, we read about Balaam. And this is an important passage for a number of things. First of all, we see, I don't have time to go into detail in this, but if you look at these three chapters, you see Balaam, God told him, don't go.

And when Balaam, the king, invites you to go and curse Israel, don't go. But then Balaam, the king, said, I'll give you more honor, more money. And then Balaam said, okay, let me seek the Lord again.

You may find yourself in situations like that, where you sense very clearly that God doesn't want you to go somewhere. And then you find the salary is pretty good, better than other places. And then you begin to say, well, I think I should seek the Lord again.

And when you're tempted to do that, please remember Balaam. God doesn't change his mind just because the salary increased or the perquisites became better or the honor was greater. That's what we learned from Balaam.

And what we learned from there is when the angel tried to stop Balaam, Balaam couldn't see it. Even the donkey could see it. A donkey has got more sense than a man who once knew God.

Balaam was a prophet, but he lost his anointing because of his love for money. The love of money blinded his eyes. And that poor donkey, that donkey didn't love money, so he could see the angel.

And the donkey spoke. The first instance of speaking in tongues in the Bible. A donkey speaking a language that it never learned.

Supernaturally, it spoke. Don't think that just because somebody speaks in tongues, he's spiritual. He may be a donkey.

He may not be anything more than that. It may be from God. I'm not questioning that it's from God, but it doesn't mean it's spiritual.

You see, oh, speaking in tongues, this must be a spiritual. No, no, no, he's only a donkey. Don't worry.

But if a man is spiritual and also speaks in tongues, that'd be something. But I believe the first instance of speaking in tongues in the Bible, the donkey speaking a language it never learned is to teach us that God can speak supernaturally even through a donkey, but it doesn't make the person spiritual. I hope you remember that all your life.

And the warning that Balaam is to run after money. And then Balaam suggested to the people of Moab. See, the best way is pollute these people.

Send your daughters, your attractive daughters in there. They'll get attracted to these daughters of Moab and they'll sin with them and God himself will punish them. We don't have to curse them.

We read that in the New Testament. That's advice Balaam gave. And we read finally that that's how Israel was polluted.

And there was one man called Phinehas, the priest who took a spear and killed a man who had taken a Moabite woman, a Midianite woman. And we read that in Numbers 25 and verse 10 onwards. And because of that, God made a covenant of peace and priesthood with Phinehas.

God honors those who stand for his principles with zeal. And that's what we learn from that passage. In Numbers 26, we read of the second census.

In Numbers 27, verse 12 to 23, we read of the Lord telling Moses, appoint Joshua to be your successor. Moses had two sons. A lot of Christian leaders appoint their sons to follow them in leadership.

Moses did not. He listened to God. And God said, appoint Joshua.

And he appointed Joshua. Moses was a man who knew God. He was not trying to build up his family.

I trust that some of these things that we have studied in this chapter will give you, in this book, will give you an appetite to go more deeply into these wonderful books of Scripture where there are so many truths hidden so that you can get much more of what you heard this morning. Let's pray.

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