

NUMBERS

Count on God because ...

Integrated sermon, kids program
and Bible study series

8 June – 20 July 2014

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WELCOME

Alongside Leviticus, which we did last year, Numbers is one of the most misunderstood and least preached on books of the Bible. The authors of the New Testament saw many parallels between the experience of the Jews in the desert, recorded for us in Numbers and the church.

We not only “learn from other people’s mistakes” but see the incredible faithfulness of God to His plans despite the rebellion of His people. Once we understand the cycle of rebellion, judgment, intercession and grace that exists in Numbers we can then grasp with greater depth the wonders of living this side of the cross of Jesus.

We follow the same God that we read about in Numbers, we still rebel and God still judges sin. However we know that for all who trust in Jesus, that judgment fell on Him, He intercedes for us along with the Holy Spirit and we can therefore live safely under God’s grace. We are then, under grace, challenged to live as a church in a way that reflects the unity, holiness and faithfulness of the God we read about in Numbers, for the praise of His glorious Grace!! Enjoy the series.

Your brother in Christ,



Matt Lehmann

Senior Pastor



OUR SEVEN WEEKS IN NUMBERS

There are many different ways to teach the Bible and for this series we have chosen to do an overview series. We'll cover off key sections and ideas through this series showing you how the book fits together as a whole, as well as how it fits into the wider Biblical storyline. By the end of the series our prayer is that you'll love Numbers and be much better equipped to read it all and apply it to your life today.

INTEGRATED SERMON AND BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Bible studies and sermons in this series are designed to both complement and reinforce each other. The series will make sense if you just listen to the sermons, however doing the studies as well will make for a far richer experience.

We won't read all of the below chapters in church and we will have some New Testament readings also, but below is a guide to where we're going:

SUNDAY SECTION	SERMON TITLE
8 June Numbers 1-9	Provision for the journey
15 June Numbers 10-14	Lessons from compulsive grumblers
22 June Numbers 11-14	What's wrong with grumbling?
29 June Numbers 15-17	Leadership challenge
6 July Numbers 20-21	Can we understand God's love without Numbers?
13 July Numbers 22	The perspective of an ass
20 July Numbers 25	Stand firm

OUR SEVEN WEEKS IN NUMBERS

BIBLE STUDIES

Regular Bible study in small groups is a great way to grow as a Christian. If you are able to join one of our community groups and haven't done so yet, please consider it in the next few weeks. The easiest way to get into a group is to go to our website at www.trinityinnersouth.org.au/#/connect and launch the form at the bottom of the "Community Groups" page.

If you aren't able to make a group, the studies can be done personally. Even better though, perhaps find someone else who lives near you to go through the studies each week - over breakfast or a coffee for example. I'm sure you get the picture now, we think regular Bible study is really helpful.

MANY THANKS TO CHRIS JOLLIFFE FROM HOLY TRINITY CITY

As a young preacher I have a number of preachers around the world I listen to a lot who I seek to learn from. They're not the big names who move around preaching their favourite sermons, they're the week in week out pastors who hop up and consistently preach well. Chris Jolliffe from Holy Trinity City is one of my favourites in Adelaide. I doubt I would have had the confidence to preach seven weeks in Numbers had he not done it first.

Chris has generously provided a lot of his hard work for this series to build upon, including these Bible studies. I'm very aware that I stand on the shoulders of one of the greats as I preach this series. Chris would be embarrassed by such accolades and prefer I didn't mention him, but I see it as an issue of integrity as a preacher.

NUMBERS FOR CHILDREN

CHILDREN AT TRINITY INNER SOUTH

Our childrens programs at Trinity Inner South are for children from the age of three up to year six at school. In our kids programs throughout the series the children will be studying the same key points as the adults are in the sermons, in age appropriate ways. As such the kids talk, sermon and kids programs will all be on the same topic.

We'd love all our kids to grow up strong in their faith in Jesus, well disciplined so that they are well prepared for a life of loving God and people. This is a key responsibility for all Christian parents and as a church we want to support, partner and equip you for this task. Each week the kids will have take home questions and activities to help you learn together.

Here is an overview of the main teaching points the kids will be learning. They all start with "Count on God because ...":

SUNDAY SECTION	KIDS MAIN POINT
8 June Numbers 1-9	Count on God because He is holy
15 June Numbers 10-14	Count on God because He is just
22 June Numbers 11-14	Count on God because He is merciful
29 June Numbers 15-17	Count on God because He makes atonement
6 July Numbers 20-21	Count on God because He forgives
13 July Numbers 22	Count on God because He is in control
20 July Numbers 25	Count on God because He is faithful

NUMBERS FOR CHILDREN

Our Childrens worker Michael Cowie has put a great deal of thought into this series. Below is the fridge magnet all the kids will get along with the bible passage we'll be using to help explain Numbers to our kids.



MEMORY VERSES

Romans 3:23-25

 **Week 1**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

 **Week 2**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace

 **Week 3**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

 **Week 4**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement

 **Week 5**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood

 **Week 6 & 7**
²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

BACKGROUND

The Hebrew title of this book means “in the wilderness”. Far from being full of boring numbers and lists, Numbers is actually a fascinating and important story. It covers the 40 year period of Israel’s history spent wandering in the wilderness between Mt Sinai and the plains of Moab. The Israelites had been brought out of Egypt by God’s mighty hand. He had led them to Mt Sinai where they received the law, which instructed the people how they were to live as God’s holy people. This is the focus of Leviticus, which we studied last year at Trinity Inner South.

Numbers is the outworking of God’s faithfulness to the promises He made to Abraham and the moulding of Israel into the holy people of God. It focuses on the Promised Land, Israel’s journey towards it, and the role of faith and obedience for God’s people. There are episodes throughout Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers that show repeating cycles of rebellion, judgment, intercession and grace. They highlight God’s faithful, gracious and holy character and the persistent sinfulness of His people.

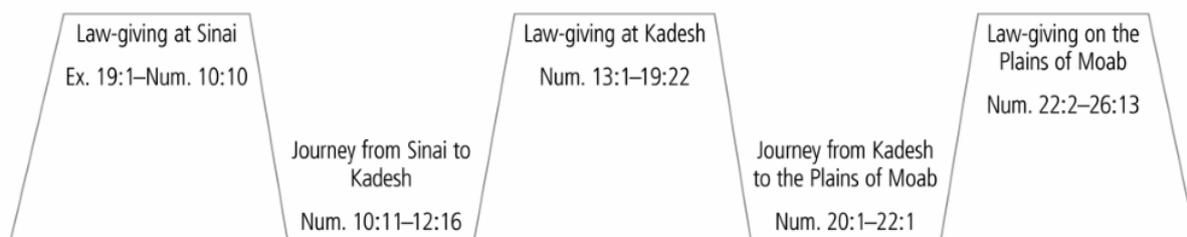
The fact that Numbers is an example of law mixed with narrative reminds us that God’s saving work among his Old Testament people Israel concerns us too. Numbers points forward to the New Testament, through the people, priests, land of promise and God’s decisive acts to save his people from the consequences of their own rebellion, and ultimately finds fulfilment in Jesus. It reminds us that now is the time to obey God in holiness and faithfulness in response to his saving work through Jesus.

BACKGROUND

Below is a map of the likely route taken by the people from Mount Sinai. ¹



The below diagram helps piece together that God has been giving His people His law since Exodus 19:1, through Leviticus until they depart in Numbers chapter ten and start the cycle of journey and law giving. ²



¹ Map copyright Logos Bible Software

² From ESV Study Bible, Crossway Publications p.261

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

THE HOLY GOD DWELLING AMONG HIS PEOPLE

Numbers 1:1-10:10

1. Who do you live with? Does living with them change how you behave in any way?

READ NUMBERS 1:1-4 AND 1:44-51

2. As the book of Numbers begins, where are the people of God?
3. What does God command (and for what purpose)?
4. The total number of Israelites in v46 might be literal or symbolic, but regardless is a large number. What is the significance of such a large number at this point in Israel's history?
5. How do we find it hard to trust in God's promises, when do we doubt his faithfulness?
6. Read Numbers 2:1-34 to yourself and use it to draw a diagram of the Israelite camp below.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

READ NUMBERS 5:1-4

7. Why does God give this command?

8. What does this tell us about God?

READ NUMBERS 6:22-7:3

9. What were some of the roles of the priests?

10. What does this tell us about God's relationship with his people?

READ NUMBERS 8:15-9:5

11. What reminders of the Exodus does God give the people?

12. Why does He remind them?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

READ NUMBERS 9:15-10:10

Having been ordered and given instructions about how they are to travel, the people are finally about to set out on their journey from Mt Sinai to the Promised Land.

13. What is significant about the fiery cloud?

14. What is the purpose of the trumpets?

15. Discuss why it's hard to see God dwelling within us sometimes?

16. What do we learn of God's relationship with his people from this whole section of Numbers (1:1-10:10)?

17. How does this help us understand John 1:14-18?

Thank God for His faithfulness to His promises. Give thanks that our holy God is not remote, but wants to dwell with His people, and that the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us, making known God's grace and truth.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

A SHAKY START TO THE JOURNEY

Numbers 10:11-12:16

CONTEXT: Having just set out, Israel encounters a number of difficulties on their journey before arriving at the border of the Promised Land.

1. What do you tend to complain about the most?

READ NUMBERS 10:33-12:16

2. How did the journey start off (10:33-36)?

3. Describe the events of 11:1-12:16 using the table below:

Passage	Person/people	Complains about	God's response
11:1-3			
11:4-9, 18-20, 31-34			
11:10-17, 24-30			
12:1-16			

4. How does this remind you of the journey from Egypt to Mt Sinai (Exodus 15:22-16:30)?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

5. When are you tempted to complain against God's provision (like the Israelites) or about God's servants (like Aaron and Miriam)? When are you tempted to doubt God's provision (like Moses)?

6. What do we learn about Moses from the following passages?
 - a) 11:10-15
 - b) 11:21-30
 - c) 12:3
 - d) 12:7-8
 - e) 12:13-15

7. What do we learn about God from this passage?

8. How might we reject the leaders God has placed over us?

9. Look at Hebrews 3:1-6. How does Moses point forward to Jesus?

Thank God for his generous provision for your material needs. Thank God for your Christian leaders and pray for them that they might continue to serve faithfully and with humility. Thank God for His Son Jesus, who is considered worthy of more glory than Moses.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

TO TRUST OR NOT TO TRUST

Numbers 13-14

CONTEXT: Israel is literally on the edge of the Promised Land, ready to enter.

1. When are you tempted not to believe or trust God?

READ NUMBERS 13:1-33

2. What were the men from each tribe sent to do?

3. What did they find? What was significant about their findings?

READ NUMBERS 14:1-45

4. What two options did the Israelites have (13:30-14:9)?

5. What did they choose?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

6. According to God, what exactly was their sin, and why was God so angry (14:1-11)?

7. When are we tempted to do likewise? Why?

8. What does this passage teach us about the significance of such doubt?

9. What does God threaten (14:10-12)?

10. On what basis does Moses appeal to God (14:13-19)?

11. How does God respond to Moses' appeal (14:20-38)?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

12. What part do our prayers have as we journey towards heaven?

13. What is the irony of 14:25 in light of the people's complaint in 14:1-4?

14. What mistake did the people make in 14:41-45?

15. What does the sin of presumption look like today, and how can we avoid it?

16. How does this passage help you understand Hebrews 3:7-4:13?

Thank God that He is trustworthy, though there are times when we don't trust Him. Pray that God will enable you to continue in trust and obedience, and that you might not be excluded from the heavenly rest due to disobedience.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

CHALLENGING GOD'S HIGH PRIEST

Numbers 16-17

CONTEXT: As part of God's judgment for its unbelief, Israel is wandering in the desert.

1. Why are you thankful for your Christian leaders?

READ NUMBERS 16-17

2. Who were those that opposed Moses and Aaron?

3. What were their complaints (16:3 and 16:13-14)?

4. Does this remind you of previous incidents?

5. What are some ways we might try to approach God on our own terms, rather than his?

6. How many times do Moses and Aaron fall facedown in this passage?
When do they do it and why?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

7. Why does God send the plague on the people in 17:41-50?

8. Why does God stop the plague?

9. What do each of these stories demonstrate about Aaron's role as High Priest?
 - a) 16:1-35
 - b) 16:36-50
 - c) 17:1-13
10. How is the episode in 17:1-13 an act of God's grace?

11. What do the people realise in 17:12-13 (remember 16:36-40)?

READ ROMANS 3:21-26 AND HEBREWS 10:19-22.

How do the episodes in Numbers 16 and 17 help us understand Jesus' role as high priest and his sacrifice?

Thank God for Jesus the great high priest, whose atoning sacrifice makes it possible for you to draw near to God with full assurance and confidence.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

THE ROCK AND THE SNAKE

Numbers 20-21

CONTEXT: Almost forty years has passed since the people refused to trust and obey God on the edge of the Promised Land. Now a new generation find themselves once again in the same spot with the same choice before them.

1. When have you been disappointed by not getting something that you had been looking forward to for a long time?

READ NUMBERS 20:1-13 AND 20:22-29

2. Why is Miriam's death mentioned in 20:1?

3. What is familiar about this situation?

4. How does God respond?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

5. What did Moses and Aaron do?

6. What did Moses and Aaron do wrong? What was their punishment?

READ NUMBERS 21:4-9

7. Why does God send the snakes to bite the people?

8. How does God show them grace?

9. What did the people need to do to be saved?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

10. Israel is finally on the move towards the Promised Land. What do we learn about the source of their military success (compare with Numbers 14:39-45)?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13 AND JOHN 3:14-15

11. How do these passages shed light on Numbers 20-21, and the way these incidents pointed forward to Jesus?

12. How does the triumph of the cross over sin help us fight indwelling or recurrent sin?

Thank God for Jesus, who is our Rock and the source of our salvation.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 6

BALAK AND BALAAM (AND THE TALKING DONKEY STORY)

Numbers 22-24

CONTEXT: Having defeated some of the kings and nations south and east of the Promised Land, the Israelites are now camped at the foot of the mountains of Moab (and they stay here until the end of the book of Numbers).

1. Have you ever tried to manipulate God to do what you want?

READ NUMBERS 22

2. Compare Balak and Balaam using the table below:

	BALAK	BALAAM
Who was he?		
What is he like?		
What did he do?		

3. What was God's response to Balak's request?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 6

4. What does the story about the donkey demonstrate about Balaam and about God?
5. In four groups, read and summarise Balaam's oracles (prophecies) and the outcomes of them. Each group look at one of them and then share together.

Numbers 23:1-12	
Numbers 23:13-26	
Numbers 23:27-24:11	
Numbers 24:12-25	

6. What common themes are there?
7. What kind of hardships do Christians face, and how do the lessons of the four oracles provide confidence + assurance in such times?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 6

READ GENESIS 12:1-3

8. How are each of the parts of God's promise to Abraham fulfilled in these chapters?

READ GENESIS 3:15, 17:6, 35:11, 49:9-12

Compare with Numbers 24:7-9 and 24:17

9. Who is Balaam speaking about?

READ GALATIANS 3:6-14

10. What does it mean for us to be blessed by God now?

Thank God that He communicates clearly, not only through donkeys but more so through the Bible. Thank God that He is faithful to his promises.

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 7

WILL THEY EVER LEARN? (A FATAL MISTAKE)

Numbers 25

CONTEXT: Though they themselves were not yet born or were only children when God led His people out of Egypt to Mt Sinai, the current generation of Israel have just been reassured of God's blessing and faithfulness to His promises (Numbers 22-24). They are still camped on the plains of Moab, waiting to enter the Promised Land.

1. Who or what are you tempted to worship other than God?

READ NUMBERS 25

2. Fill in the table describing what these people did, and the outcomes of their actions:

	Israelite men (25:1-9)	Phinehas (25:7-13)
What they did		
How God responded and why		

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 7

READ NUMBERS 31:1-24 to see the end of the story...

3. Who did God hold responsible for this episode?
(Numbers 25:1-2, 4-5, 16-18, 31:1, 15-16)

4. What do we learn about God in this chapter? What does this passage tell us about our need for atonement?

5. What kinds of things seduce Christians today and why?

6. What motivated Phinehas? How should such action shape our motivations today?

READ HEBREWS 4:15.

7. How is Jesus the true high priest and the true Israelite?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 7

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13.

8. What do we learn from this episode and from the whole book of Numbers?

Thank God for Jesus who, though tempted in every way that we are, never sinned.

Pray the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

FEEDBACK

I'd really appreciate feedback on the series, how helpful you found it and any suggestions for improvement. If you are able please send any feedback via email to: office@trinityinnersouth.org.au

Feedback on each aspect of the series would be helpful:

SERMONS

1. Do you think they were faithful to God's word?
2. How engaging were they?
3. Did you feel they were applicable to your life?

BOOKLET

1. Were the studies helpful?
2. Would you use them again if they were produced in future?

OVERALL

1. Did the series help you grow in your relationship with God?
2. Do you have a better understanding of how Numbers fits into the bigger picture of the Bible and points us to Jesus?
3. If you have kids in our programs how did you go teaching them at home with the take home cards?

Any other comments would be welcome.

NOTES

NOTES

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SOUTH

