

# Destin Church of Christ

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## Chapter 6: Wanderings

Timeless Truth: God's promises demand our trust.

Numbers 10 – 14; 20 – 21; 25; 27; Deuteronomy 1 – 2; 4; 6; 8 – 9; 29 – 32; 34

Timeline: 1525-1450 B.C.

The people of Israel were traveling a relatively short distance after their deliverance from Egypt on the way to the Promised Land. With a small group it should have taken a matter of weeks. Even with 1-3 million people, it should have only taken 4-6 weeks. It ended up taking forty years!

This portion of *The Story*, this season of wanderings, contains some of the saddest and most painful accounts in all of the biblical narrative. It wakes us up to the reality that God continues to be with his people, even when they are running the other direction and walking in circles ... in a desert.

### Lesson Breakdown:

- The Rabble (Numbers 10-12)
- A Crisis of Faith (Numbers 13-14)
- Fighting Battles (Numbers 21, 25)
- Transitions (Numbers 17; Deuteronomy 1-2, 4, 6, 8-9, 29-32, 34)

### Plot Points:

- The Lord is looking for followers who will passionately honor and trust him.
- Israel's constant grumbling elicits God's wrath.
- Israel evaluated God's commands according to their limited perspective, disobeying God and refusing to take the land, condemning an entire generation to death in the desert.
- Moses' years of faithful obedience did not give him license to disobey, even once.
- To live faithfully is directly tied to constantly remembering God's Word.

As you watch the video for Session 6 of *The Story*, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ The second major problem with road trips is when the driver makes a wrong turn.
- ✓ The Israelites are heading to the fertile land of Canaan.
- ✓ The people decide not to move forward out of fear.
- ✓ They dragged their children into this mess as well.
- ✓ They have a fresh opportunity to trust God.
- ✓ We would be fools not to follow God's GPS.

## UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

- On the twentieth (20th) day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from the tabernacle (pg. 71) [Numbers 10:11] and the people marched out in organized units, grouped according to the 12 tribes.) [Numbers 10:14-28].
1. The people started grumbling ... again. What were the people of Israel asking for? (pg. 72) [Numbers 11:4]
- God said He would supply the meat for the people to eat. (pg. 73) [Numbers 11:18]
2. God said He wouldn't just furnish enough meat for 1-2-5-10-20 days. For how long did God say the people would eat meat? (pg. 73) [Numbers 11:20]
  3. How far from the camp did the quail fall? (pg. 73) [Numbers 11:31]
- God, in an act of anger, while the people were still chewing the meat, struck them with a severe plague. (pg. 73) [Numbers 11:33]
4. What was the place called, and why? (pg. 73) [Numbers 11:34]

### Numbers 12 ...

5. Who is Miriam? Have we run into her before? (pg. 44) [Exodus 2:5-10]
  6. Why did Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses? (pg. 73) [Numbers 12:1]
  7. God is angry and calls Moses, Aaron, and Miriam out to the Tent of Meeting, then gives some chastising words to Aaron and Miriam. What did Aaron notice about Miriam when God left and the cloud rose from over the tent? (pg. 73-74) [Numbers 12:4-10]
- Moses cries out to God to heal her. (pg. 74) [Numbers 12:13]
  - Miriam was shut outside the camp for 7 days and the people did not journey until she had returned to the camp. (pg. 74) [Numbers 12:15]

### Numbers 13 ...

- God tells Moses to send out one leader from each of the twelve tribes to explore the land of Canaan. (pg. 74) [Numbers 13:1-2]
- The names of the tribes and their leaders are listed in verses 4-16.

- Moses gives the men some instructions as he sent them out to explore the land (pg. 75) [Numbers 13:17-20].
8. What did the men bring back from the Valley of Eschol? (pg. 75) [Numbers 13:23-24].
  9. What did the men report to Moses? (pg. 75) [Numbers 13:25-29, 31-33].
  10. What was Caleb's response? (pg. 75) [Numbers 13:30].

#### Numbers 14 ...

- When the Israelites heard about the giants in the land, they wept loudly. They wished they had died in the land of Egypt or in the wilderness, and thought it would have been better to return to Egypt with their wives and little ones. (pg. 76) [Numbers 14:1-3].
  - Joshua joined Caleb, and described the land as a land that flowed with milk and honey, and said the protection of the people of the land would be removed because God was with the people of Israel. (pg. 76) [Numbers 14:8-9]
11. All the community wanted to do what to Joshua and Caleb? (pg. 76) [Numbers 14:10]
    - God threatens to disown the Israelites and will make Moses' clan a nation that would be greater and mightier than the people of Israel were. (pg. 76) [Numbers 14:11-12].
    - Moses said the Egyptians would tell the inhabitants in this land that God could not take this people into the land that he swore to give them, and he killed them in the wilderness. (pg. 76) [Numbers 14:13, 16].
    - Moses asks, so God forgives them and says all the earth would be filled with his glory, but none of these people will ever enter that land (pg. 77) [Numbers 14:20-23].
    - God tells them to set out for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea (pg. 77) [Numbers 14:25].
    - Page 76 - [Numbers 14:2] - God says anyone twenty years old or older will die in the wilderness ... except Caleb and Joshua. (pg. 77) [Numbers 14:28-30].
    - God says that since the spies spent forty days exploring the land, the people would wander in the wilderness for forty years—a year for each day. (pg. 77) [Numbers 14:34-35].
  12. What happened to the men who had gone to look at the land? (pg. 77) [Numbers 14:36-38].

## Numbers 20 ...

- The whole Israelite community arrives at the Desert of Zin, and they stay at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried. (pg. 78) [Numbers 20:1].
- There was no seed, figs, vines, pomegranates or water to drink. (pg. 78) [Numbers 20:2-3, 5].
- God tells Moses to take his staff, assemble the community and speak to the rock, so that the rock would produce water for the people and their cattle to drink. (pg. 78-79) [Numbers 20:7-9]
- Moses called the people Rebels. (pg. 79) [Numbers 20:10]

13. Much water came out of the rock after Moses did what? (pg. 79)  
[Numbers 20:10-11]

14. What did God tell Moses and Aaron would happen because they did not trust Him? (pg. 79) [Numbers 20:12-13]

- Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom, asking permission to pass through his country, but the Edomites refused. [Numbers 20:14-21]
- Then the children of Israel came to Mount Hor. God spoke to Moses and Aaron saying: “Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah.” [Numbers 20:22-26]
- Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar. Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. [Numbers 20:27-29]. When only Moses and Eleazar returned to the camp of Israel, and Eleazar wore his father’s high priestly garments, all Israel knew that Aaron was dead and his son was the new high priest.

## Numbers 21 ...

- The people grumbled so the LORD sends poisonous snakes among the people, and many were bitten and died. God tells Moses to make a bronze snake and whoever looked at it lived.
- King Sihon of the Amorites refused to let them cross his territory. Instead, he mobilized his entire army and attacked the Israelites in the wilderness, but the Israelites slaughtered them with their swords and occupied their land.
- Eventually, the people of Israel occupied the territory of the Amorites and later Bashan. (pg. 81) [Numbers 21:31-35].

## Numbers 22 ...

- Word gets out about their success, so local kings were intimidated by Israel's forces. Balak, ruler of Moab, called on a pagan diviner, Balaam, to curse the Israelites. Caught between assurances of wealth from Balak and God's command not to curse them, Balaam was in a dilemma. He finally mounted his donkey to head out to Moab, but the donkey refused to move. Balaam and the donkey go back-and-forth at each other. (pg. 81-82) [Numbers 22:21-27].
15. What did God give the donkey ability to do? (pg. 82) [Numbers 22:28].
16. What did Balaam see? (pg. 82) [Numbers 22:31].
- Balaam gained the courage he needed to tell Balak what God wanted him to hear [Numbers 23-24]. Israel would be blessed; Moab would be cursed. (pg. 82)

## Numbers 25 ...

- The people were unfaithful with Moabite women and worshipped their gods.
  - God tells Moses and Eleazar to take a census of all men from twenty years old and above, itemized by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." (pg. 83) [Numbers 26:1-2]
  - Numbers 26:4-50 gives an itemized list of all who met those specifics.
17. What was the total number of registered troops? (pg. 83 - implied)  
[Numbers 26:51]

## Numbers 27 ...

- God tells Moses to go up into Mount Abarim and see the land He has given to the children of Israel. After Moses sees it, he also will "be gathered to your people", as Aaron had been. (pg. 83) [Numbers 27:12-14]
- Following God's instructions, Moses presents Joshua to Eleazar the priest, and the whole community. Moses laid his hands on him and commissioned him to lead the people. (pg. 83-84) [Numbers 27:22-24]
- There were many administrative details that required Moses' attention before he died and the people crossed the Jordan River. "Remember who you are," he told them, "and to Whom you belong." [Deuteronomy 1-33] (Page 84-88).

- **Deuteronomy 2 ...** We went into the wilderness. Thirty-eight years passed, then the LORD told us to cross by Moab. He delivered Sihon the Amorite to us.
- **Deuteronomy 6 ...** Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one. Love the LORD with all your heart, soul and strength. Teach your children these commandments. [v. 6:5; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27]
- **Deuteronomy 8 ...** The LORD led you in the wilderness and tested you. He is bringing you into a good land. Do not forget the LORD or you shall perish.
- **Deuteronomy 9 ...** It is not for your righteousness that you will occupy the land. You rebelled and made the calf so I broke the tablets of the covenant.
- **Deuteronomy 29 ...** You have seen all that the LORD has done so keep this covenant. If you break it the land will be cursed and the LORD will uproot you.
- **Deuteronomy 31 ...** Joshua will cross ahead of you. Read the law every seven years. The LORD said, "The people will turn away. Write a song as a witness."
- **Deuteronomy 32 ...** Ascribe greatness to our God! The LORD's portion is his people; They turned away so he spurned them; But he will provide atonement.
- **Deuteronomy 34 ...** Moses climbed Mount Nebo. There the LORD showed him the promised land. Then Moses died. No prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses.

Our life is like a road trip. God wants to lead us every step of the way. God sees the picture from the Upper Story and wants the best for us. He wants us to make it to the final destination and to enjoy the journey.

We need to be reminded that whatever choice we make, our lives impact others. They will experience the blessings of our good decisions and they will experience the pain of our destructive choices.

Next week we'll look at how the Lord continues to unfold his Upper Story plan through Joshua and the Israelites entering the Promised Land in the Lower Story. Take time this week to read chapter 7 of *The Story*. (Joshua 1 – 2; 6; 8; 10 – 11; 23 – 24)