**Survey of Old Testament**

**Numbers 1 Moses to take a census**

1. The book takes its name from the two numberings of the men of war in chapters 1–4 and 26–27. The first census was made the second year after the nation had left Egypt, and the second was made thirty-eight years later when the new generation was about to enter Canaan. These numberings were not of the entire nation, but only of the men twenty years and older, able to fight. The first census revealed that there were 603,550 available men; the second, that there were 601,730.
2. Numbers has an important spiritual lesson for Christians today, as explained in Hebrews 3–4 and 1 Cor. 10:1–15. God honors faith and punishes unbelief. At the root of all of Israel’s sins in the wilderness was unbelief: they did not trust God’s Word. It is interesting to note that the nation did not grow during their wilderness wanderings. In fact, the second census showed 1,820 fewer men of war. The nation wasted thirty-eight years, endured unnecessary afflictions, failed to grow, and failed to honor God all the while they were on their “death march.” This is what unbelief does to Christians.
3. Numbers 1:17–46 The numbers from the tribes were as follows: Reuben 46,500 (v. 21) Simeon 59,300 (v. 23) Gad 45,650 (v. 25) Judah 74,600 (v. 27) Issachar 54,400 (v. 29) Zebulun 57,400 (v. 31) Ephraim 40,500 (v. 33) Manasseh 32,200 (v. 35) Benjamin 35,400 (v. 37) Dan 62,700 (v. 39) Asher  41,500 (v. 41) Naphtali 53,400 (v. 43) Total 603,550 (v. 46).
4. Judah was the tribe the promised messiah would be born out of. Judah also led the people through the wilderness as they followed the Lord. They were also known as the tribe of praise.
5. The Levites were not numbered. The actual number of the Levitical men twenty years old and upward is not listed, as is the case of the twelve tribes. However, we are given some idea of the size of this tribe with the information that it had 22,000 male babies one month old and upward (3:39) and 8,580 able bodied priests from ages thirty to fifty (4:48).

**Numbers 2 The arrangement of the camp**

1. “And the Lord spake unto Moses”. This phrase is found some eighty-five times in the book of Numbers. God was interested in the details concerning the position the tribes assumed during their camp time, their manner of marching, the location of the tabernacle, etc. We see a great emphasis on discipline and order. To understand this, it must be remembered that the people were only a few weeks removed from their enslavement in Egypt. They were totally disorganized as a nation, and they enjoyed no formal administrative background.
2. The tribe of Levi was to be divided by its major clans and placed immediately around the tabernacle.

**Numbers 3-4 Commission of the Levites**

1. Aaron’s sons would suffer a fifty percent mortality rate. His eldest two, Nadab and Abihu, had already been struck dead by a divine judgment. His younger boys, however, would turn out much better. Eleazar would later replace his father, becoming Israel’s second High Priest. Ithamar, the youngest, was appointed by God to be in charge of the tabernacle.
2. The Levites are taken for the service of the sanctuary in place of the first-born.  The first-born were dedicated to God in commemoration of his slaying the first-born of the Egyptians, and preserving those of the Israelites.  Even the cattle of the Levites were taken in place of the first-born of the cattle of the rest of the tribes.
3. Aaron, Miriam, and Moses were descendants of Levi through his son Kohath (1 Chr 6:1–2; 23:13). The descendants of these three sons are now assigned specific duties concerning the tabernacle. In brief, the Gershonites were responsible for the tent and coverings and the Kohathites for the furniture and vessels, while the Merarites were in charge of the frames, boards, pillars, and sockets. It must have been inspiring just to witness the harmony of these three highly trained teams as they set up and took down the tabernacle.

**Numbers 5-6 Purity of the camp.**

1. In the book of Leviticus the phrase, “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” or its equivalent, is found over a dozen times. There were three kinds of individuals who were to be put out of the camp to assure the purity of the people. These were: the leper, the one with a running issue, and one defiled by the dead.
2. Numbers 6 - A man or woman could vow a vow of a Nazarite. This is the first mention of a very important Old Testament consecration vow. The word, Nazarite, is derived from a verb meaning “to dedicate.” This was a voluntary vow taken for a specific period of time by either a man or woman. There are several well known biblical Nazarites. Samson is, perhaps, the most famous (Jud 13:5, 7; 16:17). It would appear the prophet Samuel also became one (1 Sam 1:11–28). In the New Testament, John the Baptist immediately comes to mind (Lk 1:15), and also the Apostle Paul (Acts 18:18).
3. There were three prohibitions in the Nazarite vow: (1) He was prohibited from drinking any fruit of the vine. Wine was the symbol for joy (Ps 104:15), but the Nazarite was to receive his joy from God alone. (2) He was not to cut his hair. In the New Testament  (1 Cor 11:14) Paul states that long hair for a man was a shame and disgrace. It may be that by this method the Nazarite male could both understand and demonstrate the reproach of the Lord (3) He was not to come into contact with a dead body. Physical death, of course, was a direct result of Adam’s rebellion against God (Gen 2:17).

**Numbers 7-8 Tabernacle service**

1. In preparation for the move from Sinai to the Promised Land, the tribal leaders brought to the Lord gifts of six wagons and 12 oxen. These, they said, were to be at the disposal of the Levites to help them in their work of transporting the tabernacle and its contents.
2. This chapter surprises us by beginning with instructions for lighting the lampstand in the Holy Place. At first it seems that the lampstand is out of place, that it belongs back in Exodus where instructions were given for the Tabernacle. But as one reads on into the chapter he sees the account here is appropriate, for the following verses (5–22) record the dedication of the Levites. The spiritual orders here suggest that divine illumination must precede Christian dedication!

**Numbers 9-10 God Leading His People**

1. It was now the second year after Israel’s wonderful deliverance from Egypt, and the nation was to observe the Passover. This feast was the constant reminder that their redemption depended on the blood of the lamb and the power of God. Every blessing they experienced came through the blood, even as with the church today.
2. We have seen the guiding cloud before in Ex. 13:21–22. It is encouraging to know that the same God who saves also guides us in our journey. Of course, God wanted to guide the nation into the place of His blessing, but their unbelief hindered Him.
3. These two trumpets were made of silver and were used to call the assemblies for the journeying of the camp. The priests and Levites lived right next to the tabernacle, it would be their responsibility to warn the camp. As we read these verses, we see that the trumpets were used for several other purposes: to assemble the camp at the door of the tabernacle; to call the heads of the tribes together; to sound an alarm, either for war or for the journeying of the camp; and to announce the special days, the new moons, etc.. It is interesting that trumpets are associated with both Israel and the church. The rapture of the church, when God calls His heavenly people together, will be with the sound of the trumpet.
4. Each tribe was camped at a specific place around the tabernacle, and each section moved as the trumpets commanded.
5. Hobab was Moses’ brother-in-law who told Moses he was returning home but Moses wanted him to stay and help guide them. God had promised to guide His people, yet Moses wanted to lean on the arm of flesh.