

**LIVING AND SURVIVING  
IN THE WILDERNESS**

**Studies in the Book of Numbers**

**Grove Park Bible Chapel**

**September 25-29, 2005**

**Tom V. Taylor**



1:1-4 (07)  
17-18

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Numbers 1-12

## **LIVING AND SURVIVING IN THE WILDERNESS**

### **I. General Introduction**

A. The Title of the Book: "in the wilderness" (Hebrew)

B. The historical background....very rapidly

1. Abraham: Genesis 15:13-16
2. Moses: Exodus 12:40-42
3. Sinai: Exodus 19:1-6
4. Tabernacle: Exodus 25: 1 ff, ch 36, ch 40:20
5. Failure: Exodus 32
6. Recovery: Exodus 40
7. Ceremonial Law: Leviticus, plus
8. Temporary settlement in the wilderness: Numbers
9. Canaan rejected: Numbers 14
10. The long years and bitter records: Numbers and  
Deuteronomy

C. Our text: Numbers 1-12...a period of instruction about living in the wilderness. It is easy to fashion general parallels to our living today by seeing the directions given by God and the actions of the people. Their attitudes and actions before Him are conditioning factors that may easily be applied to us.

### **II. Lesson # 1: Let God Order the Camp...Numbers 1, etc**

A. Background: the processions

1. The flight from Egypt --Exodus 12
2. The march from Sinai-- Numbers 10:11

B. The arrangement of the camp...sorry for the poor art work on the opposite page....art is not one my skills!

. The arrangement:

- shows the importance of order
- shows the wisdom of God: practical!
- unifies the strength of the people

C. Some Soiritual Lessons:

1. God centers the people on Himself
2. Worship is the opportunity of all but particular practices are directed and assigned
3. Obedience is the responsibility for everyone and the most visible cause for blessing.

D. Application

*Follow His Word*

E. Conclusion:

1. The provision of order demonstrates the care and grace of God
2. We are at "our best" when we are subject to the order of God.

### **III. Lesson # 2: Stick Together! Numbers 1, at al.**

- A. An Introductory Note: The tendency to independence may prevent people from working together. The necessity of unity is pressed in this account
- B The key to sticking together as seen in this account is the thought of each person being in one's own place and paying attention to duty.
  1. The men of war...Numbers 1
  2. The Levites: 1:48-54, cf 18:20 ff
    - a. as a group
    - b. the sons of Kohath

3. The Nazarites: ch. 6, see the Nazarite blessing 6:22ff
4. The Princes--ch. 7 (Note their responsibilities)
5. The Leadership:
  - a. Direct guidance: the cloud and the fire
  - b. Divine appointment: Moses and Aaron (ch 12)
  - c. The developed authority: elders: Exodus 3:16

#### C. Application

#### D. Conclusion:

Sticking together is the key to growth, protection and promotion as well as a disciplined administration and economic order. But union is not maintained at the expense of truth and that is why each person needs to be attentive to duty in the right place, worshipping and witnessing as attendants of the Lord. Faithfulness is a big word in this and it is encouraged by "sticking together."

### IV. Lesson # 3: Living before God in correct practice.

#### Numbers 5

##### A. Introduction:

A great chapter on this study is Leviticus 19 but the idea is seen clearly in our text. The number of "rules" is frightening and the ability to keep the law is, of course, impossible. But the general principle of living honestly before God is totally workable and it is a very important lesson for living in the wilderness.

##### B. Underlying principles in this text:

1. Live in cleanliness: 5:1-4



2. Live honestly: 5:5 ff
3. Live in fidelity 5:11 ff

C. The wider ramifications in morality may be seen in Leviticus 18 and 19 among other places. The right style of living is a constant emphasis and the thrust of the New Testament "be holy for I the Lord your God am holy (1 Peter from Leviticus 19) should not be lost on our age.

D. Application:

1. 1 Peter 1-2
2. Ephesians 4 and 5:8 ff
3. 1 Corinthians 5

E. Conclusion:

The health of the camp, physically, morally, spiritually. etc. is of prime importance is living in the wilderness is to be accomplished for the good of people and the glory of God.

#### V. Lesson # 4: Move as Directed...Numbers 9, 10

A. An introductory note:

Movement is often not easy. Between those who wish never to move and those who would like to be always on the run, there is a great gulf. While we cannot answer all the modern questions we can see something of proper movement in the Word of God and we may find some guidelines for practical employment. This will involve a study of Israel's moves that is much

9:1-2  
15-23

10:1-6

larger than allowed in this discussion but the following information may fill in some of the gaps.

B. Moving steps:

1. Honor the Lord's intentions: do nothing without considering them ch. 9:1
2. Understand the proper liberality in God's law 9:11
3. Be steady where you are but watch for moving signs: 9:15-23; 10:11, 10:34
4. Be alert to dangers and challenges 10:1-10
5. Ultimately, depend on the Lord for guidance.  
This is a bit mystical but it is important and the Scripture in our text for 10:33 is a big help./

C. Application

- when God presents an opportunity
- when God closes! a door
- when God enriches your experience

- D. Conclusion: Be tied to the Lord and His revealed will as seen in Scripture. Do not become fixed on things and objects which, although perhaps good in themselves, make you hesitant to put your hand to the plough. Luke 9:62

VI. Lesson # 5: Learn Contentment Numbers 11

A. Introductory background material:

1. Israel is marked with a history of complaints. It seems to be a fundamental part in our history as well so we merely observe, do not condemn.
2. The judgment of God is seen in 11:1-3
3. And the question of the "mixed multitude" follows 11:4

4. The general answer is given in 11:16-35 and has at least these components:
  - a. Step 1--spiritual help
  - b. Step 2--an abundant supply
  - c. Step 3--an unappreciated overkill

C. Application:

1. Be honest about circumstances and Devine dealings
2. Be thankful
3. Be satisfied

D. And in the New Testament...pointed application

*1 Pet 4:11    Heb 13:5    1 Tim 6:6-8*

E. Conclusion: God cares for His people and in their contentment they show their care for God. But note these fairly important caveats:

1. Contentment is not indolence
2. Contentment is not self-gratification
3. Contentment is not greed

It is, in fact, satisfaction, occupation, and advancement of the testimony of the Lord.

*2. contentment*

**VII. Lesson # 6: Honor Authority:** Numbers 12

A Introduction:

- government  
state or  
church  
1 Pet 13  
Heb 13*
- 1-2 1. Blaming authority has often been a way of easing and/or justifying our trials.
  2. The Divine pattern is one of authority...we need to see it in the complex of life
  3. The Biblical setting in our text...well, troubled thoughts among the people.

B. Authority challenged and maintained



*the older  
sister  
the younger  
brother*

1. A reason behind the challenge 12:1
2. The challenging question 12:2
3. The intervention of God 12:4-9
4. About Miriam and Aaron
5. The result

*she had*

- C. A remote outcome with disastrous results Numbers 3-14  
D. Application

*Keep life valued by Word of God  
Respect and serve in the order established  
Be faithful to the Lord*

- E. Conclusion: Proper yieldedness is a great key to living in the wilderness. It avoids much tension, needless strife and almost all envy. An uncomplaining society has a lot more time and energy to get on with its real work.

### **VIII. Conclusion to our Series:** Numbers 1-12

In our precipitous approach to the passage for the particular topic stated, we have missed a lot of things! But we have made these six points for living and (surviving) in the wilderness and it is good to end with them as a parting note:

*strong healthy*

**Let God Order the Camp**

**Stick Together**

**Live Before God in Correct Practice**

**Move as Directed**

**Learn Contentment**

**Honor Authority**

Thanks for being here and working through this with us and may God find us living for Him in this present wilderness.



*West*  
Ephraim  
Manasseh  
Benjamin

**Gershom**

*South*  
Reuben  
Simeon  
Gad

**K  
O  
H  
A  
T  
H**

**M** *North*  
**E** Dan  
**R** Asher  
**A** Naphtali  
**R**  
**I**

**Moses-Aaron**  
Judah  
Issachar  
Zebulon  
*East*



Durham #7

Numbers 1: 1-4  
17-18

# I. General Introduction

A. Greeting

B. Numbers: my role

C. Historical background

D. Living in the Wilderness

# II Overview: Lesson 1: Set Good Order the camp

A. Background

B. The arrangement (chart)

- worshipping = looking west

C. The arrangement

D. Spiritual Lessons

E. Application

Follow His Word

Be content with His judgments  
displeased but do not  
desert

# III Conclusion



- #2 Stick Together 1: 44-46  
- Remo (only) 49-50  
- set Good Order the Com  
- Each in his own place fulfills  
- The Men of war this you do  
- The Priests  
- the 'Nagars'  
- the Purses

Know your duty / position  
Love One Another

- suggest  
- accommodate  
Commit to the will of God.

Saham #3 Sing / Swain / 10 Lines  
Thurs 5:1-10

## I. Introduction

A. Greeting

B. Review: God/adee, stick together

C. This message: title (reverted)

D. Guidelines - <sup>Stay Healthy</sup> on health matters

E. Withinger provides

## II. Discussion

A. Principles

- 3 { - Cambrian: long, sores, dead 1-4  
- Revert: honesty 5-10  
- Stay morally pure 11-17  
- (the judging law)

B. Wide discussion

C. Application

1 Peter 2: 15-16

2. Eph 4:17, 5:8

3. Rev 5:6

D. Conclusion

~~IV~~ Concluding



the food will provide  
(9 Moses)

Phil 4:11

Heb 13:5

1 Tim 6:6-8

John #5

Numbers 11:1-9  
10-15

Living & Satisfying in the Wilderness

## I Introduction

A. Act

B. Review: Set God - Stick together -  
Stay Healthy - Move when

C. This chapter: Soul

D. Theme: Learn Contentment (content)

## II Discussion

A. The situation -

1. 1-3 complaint / grumbling

4 - and multitude

5-9 complaint (murmur)

11 Moses

11, 12, 13, 14, 15

the nation cannot survive in  
disobedience of God. But

B. Meeting the Need

1. Spiritual help 11-20

the 70

the promise of God

2. Circumstantial supply

31 35

3. Unavailable - 78:26-34

C. Learn Contentment

1. Be honest

2. Be thankful

3. Be satisfied



## D. References

1. Phil 4:11 (to be omitted: Paul)
2. Heb 13:5 (with such things)
3. 1 Tim 6:6-8  
(Golden rule contentment)

## III Conclusion

Learn Contentment....

Exercises

Section  
10:20