

## ROUTE 66: The Book of Numbers

All right, let's TURN to TWO PLACES this morning... One is the BOOK OF NUMBERS... And the OTHER is 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Chapter 10...

I want to BEGIN—like I did last week—by READING something from the NEW Testament... Something the Holy Spirit REMINDS US... in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Chapter 10...

In Verse 1—we read: ***“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”***

This is being written about the Children of Israel, and we COMMENTED on some of these things in our study of Exodus & Leviticus... **“But with most of them,”** Paul writes in Verse 5...

**“God was NOT well pleased...”** – He says: ***“their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. [And] these things became OUR EXAMPLES... TO THE INTENT... that we should NOT lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as [were] some of them.”***

Verse 8: ***“Nor let us commit sexual immorality...”*** – Verse 9: ***“nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor [let us] complain,”*** Verse 10, ***“as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.”***

Once he affirms—AGAIN—in Verse 11 that: ***“All these things happened to them AS EXAMPLES, and... were written for OUR ADMONITION...”***

So, I begin HERE, this morning, by pointing-out the fact... that the things written in the FIRST 5 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE... **APPLY TO US**, as Christians

In fact, ONE of them... in Verse 9... how some were ***“destroyed by serpents”***... refers to what is probably **THE** central passage of the Book of Numbers... Let's look at Numbers Chapter 21 together... In Numbers Chapter 21... We read an account...

That—as the Children of Israel are journeying TO the Promised Land—Verse 4 says: ***“the soul of the people became very discouraged...”*** Verse 5, says ***that “...the people spoke AGAINST God and AGAINST Moses [saying]: ‘Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.’”***

So, we've noted before how one of the BIGGEST PROBLEMS of the Children of Israel is their SHORT-TERM MEMORY! – In Exodus, God brings forth water from a ROCK! – And yet, here they are AGAIN... **COMPLAINING**... ***“So,”*** verse 6 says, ***“the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they BIT the people; and many [them] died.”***

Verse 7: ***“the people came to Moses and said, ‘We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against YOU... pray to the Lord that He might take away the serpents from us.’ So***

*Moses prayed for the people. [And] the Lord said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it shall live.’”*

Now... IN JOHN’S GOSPEL... Jesus SPELLS OUT FOR US—quite CLEARLY—what God is doing in this passage... He’s talking to Nicodemus, and He says: *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*

And see, Nicodemus... AS A PHARISEE... would have been VERY FAMILIAR with this Old Testament passage... And, what Jesus BASICALLY says is:

*“Remember when the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and how they were dying? And how Moses lifted up a serpent on a pole, and anyone who looked at it – if they had been bitten – they lived?” – “Just like THAT! The Son of Man is going to be lifted up on a cross... And ANYONE who has been bitten by the serpent... if they will LOOK UPON ME in faith... they won’t die! – They will have eternal life!”*

See, man’s PROBLEM is SIN... And—in the SAME WAY that Moses was instructed to **MAKE AN IMAGE** of the THING that was KILLING THEM... Scripture says: *“God MADE [Jesus]... to **BE** sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

Numbers 21 is so CENTRAL to the Book of Numbers, that Numbers has often been called *“The Gospel in the Old Testament.”* – It’s a story of REPEATED SIN... RESULTING FAILURE... until God—in His GRACE—allows the serpent to be LIFTED UP in the wilderness...

It’s ESSENTIALLY a BOOK about Israel’s JOURNEY from Mount Sinai to BEING CAMPED JUST across the Jordan River from the Promised Land... It’s ASSOCIATED with Leviticus...

But it’s SUBJECT MATTER is QUITE DIFFERENT... Leviticus deals with the **LAWS** of God’s people... Numbers deals with God **LEADING** His people...

Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: *“Leviticus... is the believer’s WORSHIP; Numbers is the believer’s WALK... Leviticus speaks of PURITY; Numbers of PILGRIMAGE... Leviticus deals with our spiritual POSITION; Numbers with our spiritual PROGRESS... Leviticus deals with our CONDITION WITHIN; Numbers our **CONDUCT** WITHOUT... Leviticus is CEREMONIAL; Numbers HISTORICAL... Leviticus emphasizes PRIVELEGES; Numbers RESPONSIBILITY... Leviticus calls us to FELLOWSHIP with God; Numbers calls us to FAITHFULNESS to God.”*

Once again—that Moses wrote this book has never *really* been contested... Chapter 33, Verse 2, SPECIFICALLY REFERENCES Moses writing down points about the wilderness journey.

The book spans about 40 years... And—of the 27 Chapters—SEVENTEEN are concerned with JUST the last YEAR.

The title “Numbers” comes from the Greek “arithmoi” (which is where we get the English word “arithmetic”), and it’s taken from Chapter 1, Verse 2, where God tells Moses to: *“Take a*

***CENSUS of... the congregation of... Israel... according to the NUMBER of names... You... shall NUMBER them by their armies.”***

These Chapters ALSO deal with the PLACEMENT of the twelve tribes **AROUND THE TABERNACLE** wherever they would camp... Now, THIS REMINDS US...

God is a God of ORDER... Up till now, the people just sort of ARRANGED THEMSELVES however they wanted... But NOW, God ORGANIZES THEM... David Guzik writes:

*“There’s a limit to what we can DO and BE for [God] without order & organisation. It isn’t that order & organisation are requirements FOR progress in the Christian life; they ARE progress in the Christian life... Nothing is accomplished in God’s kingdom without order & organisation.”*

At the CENTER of this organization is the TABERNACLE, where God’s PRESENCE DWELLED. – And, the LEVITES were the ones who camped CLOSEST to it...

Jon Courson writes: *“That’s always the way it is. Those involved in serving the Lord cannot help but experience His presence.”* – The tribes were arranged to the east, south, west, & north...

Now—when we LOOK at the TOTAL NUMBER of TRIBAL POPULATIONS—and their PLACEMENT around the Tabernacle, here’s what we see:

- The total number of people camped to the NORTH was 157,600...
- The number of people camped to the SOUTH was 151,450 (So, ABOUT the same)...
- The total number of people camped to the WEST was 108,100...
- And then, the total number of people camped to the EAST was 186,400...

Now, I don’t know about you... But what would this look like from the air? – **AND**... Numbers 2:34 says: **“The children of Israel... camped by their STANDARDS...”** – A “standard” was an EBLEM, or a BANNER—or a SYMBOL—that represented each of the TWELVE TRIBES...

And—according to TRADITION, and SEVERAL AUTHORS—the **“standards”** of the four tribes camped CLOSEST to the tabernacle were an EAGLE, a LION, a MAN, and an OX...

Why is this significant? – Remember what the TABERNACLE REPRESENTS... It is a scaled-down, earthly “model” of the REAL HEAVENLY THRONE ROOM... Both JOHN and EZEKIEL describe 4 LIVING CREATURES associated with the presence of God... and they have the face of a LION, a MAN, an EAGLE, and an OX (or a CALF)... That’s pretty cool...

Now, Chapters 9 & 10 tell us how the Lord LED the people on their journeys... It says: ***“it came to pass on the twentieth [day] of the second month... that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.”***

Chapter 9 CLOSES: ***“Whether it was two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain... and not journey; but when [the***

*cloud] was taken up, they would journey.”* – Which is EXACTLY how WE should be in following the Lord.

Now—in Chapter 11—the problems begin... Verse 1 says: *“Now... the people complained...”* and, *“it displeased the Lord... for the Lord HEARD it... and His anger was aroused.”*

One of the things that stands out **MOST** about the Children of Israel is that... they were **CHRONIC COMPLAINERS**... And, there’s several things that we learn from this...

First of all, complaining **DISPLEASES** the Lord... We read the Lord’s ANGER is aroused. – Second... Psalm 106 tells us that the people *“complained in their tents...”*

Now, this is one of the DECEPTIVE THINGS about complaining... We have a TENDENCY to think that nobody hears us! And yet, here we read quite the opposite: THE LORD **HEARD** IT...

Another thing... Verse 4 says this complaining STARTED with the **“mixed multitude”**... *“The mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving...”* And then, very subtly, it says, *“**SO**... the children of Israel **ALSO** wept...”*

So complaining is **CONTAGIOUS!** – We need to be SO CAREFUL who we ALLOW OURSELVES to listen to, ESPECIALLY in our day-and-age of such CONSUMABLE MEDIA!

Now, this **“mixed multitude”** FIRST appears in Exodus 12... This was a whole cross-section of people who came WITH the Israelites out of Egypt... But, my point is: They **WEREN’T** JEWS... They **weren’t** God’s people...

That’s why it’s interesting to note the NATURE of their complaining... They say: *“Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate... in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being [is] dried up; [there is] nothing at all except this manna [before] our eyes!”*

So, they’re ACTUALLY saying *“It was BETTER in Egypt!”* – It was BETTER in BONDAGE... than the miraculous food God provided in the wilderness! – And this **CAUSES** the Children of Israel to **COMPLAIN**.

It’s been said: *“Israel got into trouble the MOST when they wanted a MENU change!”* – The same thing can happen to US, right? – When **“our daily bread”** isn’t enough... And we DOUBT God’s PROVISION for our lives...

Be careful to NOT lend a “sympathetic ear” to a person who is not “FULLY FOLLOWING” the Lord... The children of Israel were DECEIVED into thinking they had it better-off in Egypt! – In Verse 4, they ask: *“Who will give us MEAT to eat?!”*

In Verse 18, God tells Moses: *“[tell] the people... you SHALL eat meat... not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, but [for] a whole month...”* – You shall eat meat *“until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have*

*despised the LORD...*” – God’s like, “*You want meat? I’ll give meat until it COMES OUT YOUR NOSE!*”

Psalm 78 ELABORATES... It says: “*They tested God in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy.*” – They said: “*Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? – He struck the rock, so that the waters gushed out... [But] Can He give bread also? Can He provide meat for His people?’ Therefore the LORD heard [this] and was furious...*”

Psalm 106 says that: “*[The Lord] gave them their request, but sent LEANNESS into their soul.*” – Isn’t that interesting? – They GOT what WANTED... but, it DIDN’T satisfy.

The OTHER significant event of Chapter 11 is God sending the 70 elders to HELP MOSES. God says—in Verse 16— “**Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you KNOW TO BE elders of the people...**”

In other words: Moses was not supposed to pick guys that he thought could BECOME elders; he was to pick men who were already BEING elders...

Second, the Lord said: “**Bring them to the tabernacle... that they may stand there with you.**” The FIRST “role” of these men was simply to BE THERE with Moses...

That’s one of the MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES of ASSISTING in Church Leadership... Just BE there... We’re not going to be effective leaders if we’re NOT AT CHURCH...

Third, the Lord says: “**I will take of the SAME SPIRIT that is upon YOU and put the same upon THEM...**” – The elders were to share the same heart, the same vision, the same Spirit as Moses. They weren’t supposed to “define” their own ministry... Their ministry was to be an “extension” of Moses’ ministry...

And—in Verse 17—God says: “**They shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone.**”

Now—CONVERSELY—one of the things in Numbers is the NUMBER OF TIMES people CHALLENGE Moses’ authority... In Chapter 12, it’s his own brother and sister...

Verse 1 says: “**Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses...**” – The phrase “spoke against” is “criticised.” – They say: “**Has the LORD indeed spoken ONLY through Moses? – Has He not spoken through us also?**”

Verse 2 says, “**the Lord heard it.**” – (Of COURSE He did!) – And, He ASKS—in Verse 8— “**Why... were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?**”

Verse 10 says Miriam was STRICKEN with LEPROSY, and Moses CRIES OUT to God—in Verse 13—“**Please heal her, O God, I pray!**” – And God HEALS here... Moses prays **8 words**, and God heals Miriam...

Chapter 16 records the “*Rebellion of Korah*” incident... Verse 1 says: “**Korah... with Dathan and Abiram... TOOK MEN... and they rose up before Moses with... two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation... They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, “You take too much upon yourselves... for ALL the congregation is holy... Why... do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?”**”

One commentator wrote: “The ‘Korahs’ of ministry are difficult enough... but the people who follow them... who... lack the discernment to oppose the “Korahs” are often MORE painful.”

In Verse 13—they actually refer to EGYPT as “*a land flowing with milk and honey...*” – David Guzik writes: “*Divisive people commonly create a past of their own preference...*”

And—in Verse 23—God tells Moses to: “**Speak to the congregation, saying, ‘Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’**” – (Which is good advice for US when it comes to DIVISIVE PEOPLE! – Just STAY AWAY FROM THEM!)... Verse 31 says:

“***It came to pass... that the ground split apart under them, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up... all the men with Korah, with all [their] goods. They... all... went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.***”

And, we’d THINK—on the heels of that—the people would learn something, right? – Verse 41 says: “**On the NEXT DAY... the children of Israel complained...**” – Unbelievable! – You see what I mean when I say that COMPLAINING is a SERIOUS PROBLEM for the Israelites!

Now... there IS ANOTHER INTERESTING encounter... In Chapter 22, we see a guy named BALAAM... And, he is actually described as hearing from the Lord, but he is HIRED by a king named BALAK to CURSE the Israelites...

Now, God won’t LET Balaam CURSE the Israelites... Every time he OPENS HIS MOUTH, a BLESSING comes out... And, we’ve got the whole “talking donkey” story (which, some of you may not know what I’m talking about... There’s another Old Testament appearance of Jesus)...

But—in Chapter 24—Balaam PROPHESES over Israel, and he says: “**I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near. A Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter... out of Israel.**”

And, both “*early Jewish... [and] Christian writers understood this as a reference to the Messiah.*” – In fact, it MIGHT have been THIS PASSAGE that caused the wise men to FOLLOW THE STAR to where Jesus was born...

Now, when Balaam SEES that he is UNABLE to CURSE the Children of Israel, he advises Balak—in Chapter 24—to use **WOMEN** to seduce the Israelite men... And this will CAUSE them to WORSHIP FALSE GODS... which they DO...

And this becomes a PERENNIEL ISSUE for the Children of Israel... BAAL WORSHIP is FIRST PRACTICED in Numbers Chapter 25... BUT...

The occasion that—ARGUABLY—has the GREATEST CONSEQUENCE happens in Chapter 13... The Children of Israel move “*from Hazeroth and camp in the Wilderness of Paran.*”

So, they’re preparing for an invasion of the Promised Land... God says to Moses—in Verse 2—“*Send [spies to] the land of Canaan...*” – And, Verse 3 says, “*So Moses sent them... according to the command of the Lord.*”

Down in Verse 25—we read that the spies “*returned... after forty days.*” – And, in Verse 27, they said: “*Truly [the land] flows with milk and honey...*”

“NEVERTHELESS,” they say in Verse 28... And, this is a word that means “DESPITE ALL OF THAT”... In other words, they are saying “But.” – “BUT!”

*“Oh man! You should see this place! It is a land flowing with milk and honey! – (Whatever THAT means!) – Look at the grapes we brought back! They’re HUGE!”*

NEVERTHELESS, they say... DESPITE ALL OF THAT... “*the people who dwell in the land [are] strong; the cities [are] fortified [and] large; moreover we saw the*” GIANTS there...

Verse 32 says they: “*gave the children of Israel a BAD REPORT.*” – Chapter 14, Verse 1, says: “*SO... ALL THE CONGREGATION lifted... their voices and... wept...*” – Verse 36 says they: “MADE... THE CONGREGATION COMPLAIN... BY... BRINGING A BAD REPORT.”

TEN MEN... (‘cause it’s not ALL of them... Caleb & Joshua bring a GOOD REPORT... We’ll talk more about them later)... TEN SPIES bring a BAD REPORT... and cause a CONGREGATION of—what??—a few MILLION to complain???

I mean, what’s the PERCENTAGE there??? – That is NOT MANY PEOPLE causing an ENTIRE CONGREGATION to complain! – God says to Moses and Aaron:

“*‘How long [shall I bear with] this EVIL CONGREGATION?’ – ‘As I live, the carcasses of you who have complained... shall fall in this wilderness... you shall BY NO MEANS enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. Your little ones, whom YOU SAID would be VICTIMS, I will bring [THEM] in, and [THEY] shall know the land which YOU have despised.’” – “[As for] you,” He says in Verse 32... “*Your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness FORTY YEARS... According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land... for each day you shall bear your guilt one year... I the LORD have spoken... In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.*”*

So, the FORTY YEARS that the Children of Israel wander the wilderness... It is a SENTENCE—a CONSEQUENCE—of their COMPLAINING... Chapters 15 – 19 represent a period of about 37 YEARS...

David Guzik writes: “*There is very little record of what happened during these years; they are compressed into [a few] chapters, while the single year at Sinai is given over 50 chapters... These years accomplished nothing, except the death of the generation of unbelief.*”

Graham Scroggie writes: “*The movements of God’s people when they are OUT of His will are not on His calendar.*” – Guys, WHY is COMPLAINING such a BIG DEAL?

It all comes down to this... The Book of Hebrews says: “***Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me... and saw My works forty years... I was angry with that generation, And... swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'***” – So, he’s TALKING about the Children of Israel here...

And then, we read THIS WARNING: “***Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of YOU an evil heart of unbelief...***” – “***They could not enter [the Promised Land] because of unbelief.***”

COMPLAINING isn’t just a BAD HABIT... Complaining is a SIN... Because—ULTIMATELY, what we’re DOING—is expressing a LACK OF FAITH in GOD... They’re COMPLAINING is EQUATED with what is called “**an evil heart of unbelief.**”

So—LIKE ALL SIN—COMPLAINING needs to be TREATED AS ALL SIN... It needs to be **CONFESSED**, and **REPENTED** of... [and we need to hold people ACCOUNTABLE!]

Now, lest we think that ALL the mistakes in the Book of Numbers were on behalf of the people... In Chapter 20 Moses is forbidden to enter the Promised Land... What happens???

Do you remember a couple of weeks ago when we saw—in the Book of Exodus—how God brought forth water from a ROCK? – Well—THERE—Moses was instructed to strike the rock... And Paul tells us – in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10 – that the ROCK “**was Christ...**”

Well, in Numbers Chapter 20, God tells Moses to: “**Speak to the rock... and it will yield its water...**” – But Moses got MAD... And, instead of SPEAKING to the Rock—he says:

“**Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?**” – And: “**Moses... struck the rock... with his rod; and water came out abundantly...**”

BUT... God said to Moses: “**Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the [people]... you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.**”

See, GOD is still PAINTING A PICTURE for His people... Jesus only had to be STRUCK ONE TIME... on the CROSS... NOW, all we have to do is SPEAK to the Rock, and Jesus gives life-giving water...

David Guzik writes: “*Moses ruined a beautiful picture of Jesus... It was unnecessary – and unrighteous – that Jesus be struck again, because the Son of God needed only to suffer once. Jesus can now be approached with words of faith, as Moses should have used words of faith to bring water to the nation of Israel.*”

So, can you IMAGINE Moses’ response... When—in Chapter 32—TWO TRIBES of the Children of Israel say to him: “***If we have found favor in your sight, let THIS land be given to your servants as a possession. DO NOT TAKE US OVER THE JORDAN.***”



I'm sorry? – WHAT??? – They have JUST been delivered out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt... They have come to the borders of the Promised Land only to have to wander the wilderness for 40 MORE years... And then, Moses has been told that **HE IS NOT** going in... And now, these guys come up and say, "*We don't wanna go.*" – **WHAT?**

Listen: It's a picture of being willing to "*settle for LESS than God's BEST for their lives.*" It's a picture of being willing to live "*outside of God's established borders for our lives.*"

How often do you think people LIVE LIVES where... they can SEE—they **KNOW**—where they're supposed to be... They want to be CLOSE ENOUGH to SEE where they're supposed to be... But they don't want to CROSS OVER the Jordan to the other side...

To STAY on the OPPOSITE side of the Jordan and **SEE** the Promised Land is NOT the same thing as ENTERING the Promised Land... To **SEE** the walls of Jericho fall—from a DISTANCE—is not the same as being involved in the Battle!

And to **SEE** the Christian life—from a DISTANCE... is NOT THE SAME THING as LIVING a HOLY, FRUITFUL, BLESSED, SERVANT-ORIENTED LIFE...

And, I love Moses' response, in verse 6... He says: "***Shall your [brothers] go to war while you SIT here?***" – It's an interesting question for us to consider, this morning...

Are we just going to live the kind of Christian life where our BROTHERS and SISTERS in Christ actually enter the battle... while we just SIT AROUND...

You know, whether we KNOW it or not... Whether we LIKE it or not, God is CALLING us to a certain kind of lifestyle; God has enlisted us as a **SOLDIER** in the spiritual battle...

If we SIT AROUND while our brothers GO TO WAR, we MIGHT **THINK** it is ONLY US that we are affecting... But, listen to Moses' words, in Verse 7... He says:

***"You're gonna discourage the heart of the [people] from going over into the land which the Lord has given them."*** – He says, "*You're unwillingness is going to AFFECT other people... You're going to keep OTHER PEOPLE from PROGRESSING SPIRITUALLY.*"

He TELLS them, "*You're doing the same thing that your fathers did!*" – ***"Look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase... the... anger of the Lord against Israel. For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."***

And, we need to know... That WHEN the battle comes... (because it WILL)... The battle comes to BOTH sides of the Jordan... And, in later books of the Bible...

On MORE than one occasion – these tribes who remain on the OPPOSITE SIDE of the Jordan are the VERY FIRST ONES to get attacked by the enemy...

In Chapter 27, Moses asks God to: “*set a MAN over the congregation, who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation may not be like sheep which have no shepherd.*”

So, this is the FIRST PLACE it's mentioned that JOSHUA will take Moses' place as leader over the people... God tells Moses: “*Take Joshua... a man in whom [is] the Spirit, and lay your hand on him... before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. And you shall give [some] of your authority to him, that the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.*” – We'll talk MORE about Joshua when we come to his book...

But, **THIS** book concludes, in Chapter 36, with the Children of Israel camped “*in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho.*” – Consider ALL IT TOOK to get the people from Egypt to this place... One commentator writes:

*“From their encampment at Sinai, God gave Israel the opportunity to grow from being a slave people to being a ‘Promised Land’ people. He taught them to be ordered, organised, cleansed, separated, blessed, to be reminded of God’s deliverance, God’s presence, receive tools to advance to the Promised Land. Then, as they set out from Sinai, they found themselves struggling with the flesh - they murmur, complain, and rebel; most of all, they fail to enter into what God has for them by faith - and a generation of unbelief is condemned to perish in the wilderness. God led [them] for some 38 years in the wilderness, with much MOTION but no PROGRESS - enduring more rebellion and murmuring, but essentially waiting until the generation of unbelief... died and a generation willing to trust God... came to maturity. So they set out towards the Promised Land again, and faced the same challenges of the flesh - but dealt with them better this time, until they made their way to the threshold of the Promised Land.”*

Somebody once said: “*Staying on the shores of the Jordan River is better than being in the middle of the wilderness... But it isn't the Promised Land yet. They came this far by faith, and they will need faith to take them the rest of the way.*”

Let me close by reading a small—but familiar—passage from Numbers Chapter 6... We refer to this as the “**Aaronic Blessing.**” – And then, don't forget to come back NEXT week, as we continue along Route 66, and our study of the Book of Deuteronomy...

Let's all stand, and I'll read-out this Aaronic Blessing for our conclusion... “*The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ‘Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, ‘This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: ‘The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.’*”