

Bible Stories for Adults

God Leads His People to the Promised Land

Numbers

Opening

Gathering: Tell of a time when God's way proved to be better than your way.

Today's Focus: God wants us to follow His perfect way and leads us by His Word, His Spirit and His church.

Key Verses: *Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life.* John 3:14-15

Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the [way] of the Lord.
Psalm 119:1

Opening Prayer

Lesson

At Mount Sinai (*Numbers 1-10*)

What was God's basic message for the Israelites on Mount Sinai?

Exodus 19:3-6 = Obey me & keep my covenant, be my kingdom of priests & holy nation

What three types of Law did God give Israel at Mount Sinai?

Exodus 20 = Moral Law (Ten Commandments) - Unchanging

Exodus 21-23 = Civil Law (Governmental) - Changes over time

Exodus 24-40, Lev, Numbers 1-9, Deut = Ceremonial Laws (Worship) - Changes over time

How long had Israel traveled when they reached Mount Sinai?

Exodus 19:1 = Three months to the day – Desert of Sinai is at southern tip of Sinai peninsula

How long did Israel stay at Sinai?

Numbers 10:11 = Almost a year (1 week shy)

How did Israel know it was time to go and where to stop? = Desert of Paran is halfway to Canaan

Numbers 10:12-13 = God's command, Cloud led them to Desert of Paran

Had God's miraculous signs so far made Israel TRUST IN THE LORD? = Just as 3 days after Red Sea

Numbers 11:1-3 = People complained within 3 days (Numbers 10:33), God sent fire

Miriam & Aaron (*Numbers 12*)

Who were Miriam and Aaron?

Numbers 26:59 = Moses' sister and brother

Exodus 15:20 = Miriam was a prophetess

Leviticus 8:1-3, 12 = Aaron was first high priest of Israel

What prompted Miriam & Aaron to oppose Moses and what did they claim? = Cush was Ethiopia

Numbers 12:1-2 = Married a Cushite (Zipporah?); Cush & Midian paralleled in Habakkuk 3:7

Was this a result of Moses being arrogant because of his position?

Numbers 12:3 = Moses was the most humble man around

How did God respond to Miriam and Aaron's opposition?

Numbers 12:4-9 = Moses is more than a prophet, We speak face-to-face - You should respect

How did God punish this rejection of His selection?

Numbers 12:10-12 = Gave Miriam leprosy, Aaron asked for forgiveness

How did Moses and God respond to Aaron's request?

Numbers 12:13-15 = Healed her leprosy, Prescribed 7 days cleansing

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Spies Sent to Canaan (Numbers 13-14)

What did God command when Israel reached Kadesh (southern edge of Canaan)?

Numbers 13:1-3 = Send men to explore the Promised Land, one leader from each tribe

How far did the spies travel and how long were they gone?

Numbers 13:21, 25 (21-25) = To northern edge (Hamath) - 250 miles each way, 40 days

What kind of report did the spies give upon their return?

Numbers 13:26-28 = Flowing with milk & honey, fruitful, people prosperous & powerful

Were the spies ready for God to lead them into the Promised Land?

Numbers 13:31-33 = Didn't trust God, People of the land are too strong

How did the Israelites respond to this report?

Numbers 14:1-4 = Grumbled & decided to pick a leader to take them back to Egypt

Strike 2 (Numbers 14:5-38)

Did any of the spies disagree with the others and trust God to lead them?

Numbers 14:5-9 = Joshua & Caleb, God is more powerful than the people

Did Joshua and Caleb's speech turn the Israelites back to God?

Numbers 14:10 = No. The people planned to stone Joshua & Caleb

What was God's punishment for this lack of faith? = Wander 40 years

Numbers 14:26-30, 33-34 = All over 20 to die in desert, except Joshua & Caleb

What was God's punishment for the spies who had said not to go?

Numbers 14:37-38 = God killed them with a plague

Strike 3 (Numbers 14:39-45)

Did Israel recognize their sin? How did they plan to correct their evil?

Numbers 14:39-40 = *We have sinned*, We will go into the Promised Land

Did Moses agree with their plan?

Numbers 14:41-42 = No. This is against God's command. You will lose.

Did Israel carry out their plan?

Numbers 14:44-45 = Yes. They were defeated as Moses had said

The Korah Rebellion (Numbers 16)

What did the 250 men with Korah say about Moses' leadership?

Numbers 16:2-3 = *The whole community is holy...Why do you set yourself above?*

How did Moses respond to this rebellion?

Numbers 16:4-5, 28-30 = God will show us who is His & who is holy

How did God show His support for Moses and Aaron? = Fire burned up other 250

Numbers 16:31-33, 35 = An earthquake swallowed the rebels & households

Did the Israelites then trust God and accept Moses & Aaron?

Numbers 16:41 = No. They blamed Moses & Aaron for killing God's people

How did God respond?

Numbers 16:43-45 = Wanted to kill off the assembly for lack of faith

How did Moses and Aaron turn God's wrath from the people?

Numbers 16:46-49 = Aaron made atonement for the people, plague stopped

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Aaron's Staff (*Numbers 17*)

What was God's plan to clarify His choice of leaders?

Numbers 17:1-5 = Take staves from all 12 leaders, one that sprouts belongs to my chosen

Which staff sprouted?

Numbers 17:8-9 = Aaron's staff sprouted, budded, blossomed & grew almonds overnight

Water From the Rock - The Sequel (*Numbers 20:1-6*)

What happened at the beginning of the Israelite's 40th year in the wilderness?

Numbers 20:1 = Miriam died (See Numbers 20:22-29 and Numbers 33:38 to get 40th year)

After 40 years, had the people finally stopped grumbling and put their trust in God, Moses & Aaron?

Numbers 20:2 (2-5) = No, People opposed Moses & Aaron because there was no water

What had happened in a similar situation at the beginning of their wanderings?

Exodus 17:3, 5-6 = God had Moses strike a rock and water poured from it

Speak Softly Without a Big Stick (*Numbers 20:7-13, 22-29*)

How did God solve the water crisis differently this time?

Numbers 20:7-8 = Told Moses to speak to rock and it will produce water

Did Moses follow God's instructions? = *Must we bring you water out of this rock?*

Numbers 20:10-11 = No. He struck the rock twice, water gushed out

How did God punish Moses for disobeying Him?

Numbers 20:12 = Moses would not enter the Promised Land with the people

What happened in the middle of their 40th year? = 5th month per Numbers 33:38

Numbers 20:23-26 = Aaron died and his High Priesthood was passed to his son Eleazar

The Bronze Snake (*Numbers 21*)

Did the people finally stop grumbling and Trust God?

Numbers 21:4-5 = Spoke against God & Moses. No bread or water, crummy food

How did God punish Israel for their lack of faith?

Numbers 21:6-7 = Sent poisonous snakes, many Israelites died

How did God solve this crisis when the people confessed?

Numbers 21:8-9 = Had Moses make snake on a pole for people to look at and live

How does God solve our crisis of death when we confess?

John 3:14-15 = *Just as Moses lifted the snake, the Son of Man must be lifted...*

What are some similarities between the bronze snake and Christ's death?

Died from poisonous snake bite = Eternal death from serpent's poison of sin (Satan)

Bronze snake lifted on a pole = Jesus lifted up on a cross

Bronze snake looked like real snake = Jesus was true man but without sin

Israel looked to snake in faith = We look in faith to Jesus

Snake saved Israelites from death = Jesus saved us from eternal death

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Passing Through Edom (*Numbers 20:14-21*)

- How did Israel decide it was time to head north?
Deuteronomy 2:1-3 = God told them to
- Why did God protect the Edomites from conquest by the Israelites? = Descended from Esau
Deuteronomy 2:4-5 = *I have given Esau the hill country of Seir*
- How did Edom respond to Israel's request to pass thru on the King's Highway?
Numbers 20:14, 17-18, 21 (14-21) = Wouldn't let them through, They went around

God Protects Moab and Ammon (*Numbers 21*)

- Why did God protect the Moabites from conquest by the Israelites?
Deuteronomy 2:9 = *I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot*
- Why did God protect the Ammonites from conquest by the Israelites?
Deuteronomy 2:19 = *I have given it to the descendants of Lot*
- How long had passed when Israel reached Moab (Zered Brook)?
Deuteronomy 2:14-15 = 38 years since Kadesh, Entire generation had died

Moses Dies (*Deuteronomy 34*)

- What did God need to take care of before Moses died?
Deuteronomy 31:14 = Commission Joshua as His chosen replacement for Moses
- Where did God bring Moses to die and why? = Great view of the entire land of Canaan, can visit today
Deuteronomy 34:1-5 = To Mount Nebo so he could see the Promised Land
- Did the Israelites accept Joshua as their new leader?
Deuteronomy 34:9 = Joshua filled with spirit of wisdom, Israel listened to him
- How exceptional was Moses?
Deuteronomy 34:10-12 = No one else knew God face-to-face or performed awesome deeds

Closing Prayer

Response

1. When have I felt jealous of someone who seemed to be more important than me?
(*Numbers 12; Psalm 106:16-18; Acts 7:9; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; 12:12-30*)
2. When have I trusted God that human wisdom directed me otherwise?
(*Numbers 13:26-14:9; Isaiah 29:14; Jeremiah 8:8-9; Mark 10:27; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 3:18-20*)
3. In what ways do I respect and support those God has chosen to lead me?
(*Numbers 12:6-8; 16:1-17:13; 2 Cor. 11; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Hebrews 13:17*)
4. Which of the things I did yesterday went my way and which were God's way?
(*Numbers 20:1-12; Proverbs 16:1-9; Isaiah 55:8-9; Hosea 14:9; Micah 4:12*)
5. Who have I recently pointed to the cross that saves those dying from poisonous sin?
(*Numbers 21:4-9; John 1:29-46; 3:14-16; 12:32; Galatians 6:14-15*)