

Numbers Commentary

The book of Numbers theme is the consequences of unbelief. Two major censuses are conducted during Numbers. The first census occurs in chapter one after the Hebrews had been freed from slavery and had left Egypt successfully. Here the Hebrew warriors were counted. The second census occurs in chapter 26, and takes place about a generation, or forty years, later. Again, the Hebrew warriors were once again counted.

Despite experiencing the mighty miracles God performed on their behalf against Pharaoh in Egypt, that first generation failed to believe what God had told them. He promised them a land rich with rivers of milk and honey. He promised them victory over their enemies. In chapter 13 Joshua and Caleb gave an accurate report, and wise counsel. Nevertheless, the other ten spies negative report was believed, and the Hebrews could not enter into the Promised Land; due to their own unbelief. How often are we like them? How often do we see only obstacles, rather than obstacles to overcome? Do we too wander in circles of unbelief?

So that first generation wandered for forty years. It should have taken them no more than forty days to travel from Egypt to Canaan. Yet so many of the Hebrews complained, doubted, and grumbled. Despite all that God had done for them, they eventually died off without fulfilling God's best plan for their lives (Hebrews 3:7-19). A new generation then had the chance to enter into the Promised Land, and enter it they did.

According to Acts 2:47, only the Holy Spirit has the Biblical right to conduct a census today. Church growth is not for man to number. It is not for man to strive to achieve. God knows His own.