

# Numbers

## Breakdown

- The name Numbers comes from the census lists that are found at the beginning and toward the end of the book, but there is lots of action that happens in between.
- The book of Numbers follows the Israelites during their time in the wilderness, beginning with the year they camped at Mt Sinai to their arrival at the banks of the Jordan River across from the promised land 38 years later.
- Numbers was written by Moses around 1406 B.C. and covers the years from 1444 B.C. to 1406 B.C.

## Main Points

- Numbers takes us on a path of lots of ups and downs. The Israelites' constant complaints, grumbling and rebellion would try anyone's patience, but through it all, God stands behind His covenant - leading them, teaching them, correcting them, and protecting them. Even though the people were not faithful to Him, God's faithfulness never failed.
- All through the book of Numbers, we see signs that point to Jesus the Messiah, including the priests who mediated between God and man, the animals that were sacrificed as a substitute for the people, the water that flowed from a rock, the bronze serpent that was lifted up for the people's healing, and Balaam's prophecy of a star rising in the east that will crush its enemies.

## Did you know?

- The Israelites complained about not having meat to eat, so God sent quail that piled up about 3 feet deep and as far out as a day's walk in every direction. That's a LOT of quail!
- An ancient form of the phrase "piece of cake" originated in the book of Numbers. Do you know who said it?
- The first sinkhole on record was the result of 3 men who rebelled against God. Who were the men and what happened to them?
- Talking donkeys didn't begin with the movie *Shrek*. The first talking donkey was in the book of Numbers. Who owned the donkey and why did it talk?
- Three and one-half tribes decided not to enter the promised land but to settle east of the Jordan River. Which tribes were they and why didn't they want to enter the land?
- God told the Israelites to go to war against Moses' father-in-law's people. Who were they and why?
- Moses and Aaron were not allowed to enter the promised land. Do you know why?

## Further Thought

- The Israelites were constantly complaining about things. What can we learn from seeing the consequences of their complaints?
- Even though the Israelites tried God's patience and made Him angry over and over again, He was faithful to keep His covenant with them. How does that build our trust in God?
- The Israelites rebelled against Moses repeatedly, but their rebellion was actually against God. What does the book of Numbers teach us about submission to authority?