

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe**  
**Week # 5 – Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026**

**Discovering the Bible**

**Notes – The Journey**

**Oct 7 & 8, 2025**

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*Exodus 32:1-19, The Golden Calf*  
*Exodus 34:1-10, The Second Tablets*  
*Numbers 10:11-13, 29-36, The Journey Begins*  
*Numbers 11:4-35, The People Complain*  
*Numbers 13:1-2, 17-33, The Spies Enter Canaan*  
*Numbers 20:1-13, God Provides Water*  
*Numbers 27:12-23, Joshua Succeeds Moses*  
*Deuteronomy 6:1-9, The Great Commandment*  
*Deuteronomy 6:10-25, Remember Your Past*

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**In the last two sessions we have been focusing on the covenant God made with the people of Israel. In our lesson today, the covenant is about to be fulfilled.**

1. During this journey the covenant responsibilities of the people are spelled out. The Ten Commandments received by Moses at Mt. Sinai form the center of those responsibilities.
2. The law of God can no longer be diminished by human interpretation as a set of instructions to modify behavior. The law is intrinsic (written in the hearts) and evidenced by the transformed life of loyalty, service and obedience to God.
3. The book of Numbers, the fourth book of the Old Testament, derives its name from the early Greek translation of the Bible called the *Septuagint*. It was later translated from Greek to English as Numbers.
4. The Hebrew name for the Book of Numbers is *בְּמִדְבָּר* (Bamidbar), which means "In the wilderness" or "In the desert".
5. Numbers is the story of the people in the wilderness as they travel from slavery of Egypt toward the freedom of Canaan.
6. In the Bible, the wilderness symbolizes periods of
  - isolation
  - testing
  - and purification
7. The number 40 also holds a deep symbolic meaning which represents for the ancient hearer, a period of testing, probation, and judgment, as well as transformation and new beginnings.  
*"It represents a full, complete duration leading to a significant event or transition."*
8. In our text we find these two powerful symbols *wilderness* and the *number 40* helping to create a powerful image of the complexities of the Hebrew journey.
9. On the journey, the people who left Egypt as slaves were formed into a community of God's people. The qualities needed for conquering and maintaining the land of Canaan were developed and the demands of God's commandments were linked with the promises of God's covenant.

### **Exodus 32: 1-19**

- The people's impatience
- Aaron creates the calf
- Idolatrous feast
- God's anger
- Moses' intercession
- God relents

### **Exodus 34:1-10**

- New tablets commanded
- Moses returns to Mount Sinai
- The Lord descends
- God reveals His character
- God's mercy and justice proclaimed
- Moses bows and worships
- Moses's intercession
- Covenant renewed
- The covenant's purpose

### **Numbers 10:11-13, 29-36**

- The Israelites leave Sinai
- A new destination
- Following the Lord's command
- Moses appeals to his brother-in-law
- Hobab's expertise
- The Ark of the Covenant leads the way
- The Lord's guidance
- Moses' prayers:

### **Numbers 11:4-35**

- The People's Craving and Complaining
- The Sending of the Quail
- The Plague at Kibroth Hattaavah
- The Seventy Elders and Prophecy

### **Numbers 13:1-2, 17-33**

- The spies are chosen and sent
- The mission and return
- The mixed report

### **Numbers 20:1-13**

- The Israelites arrive at the wilderness of Zin and camp at Kadesh, near the end of their 40-year wandering.
- Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, dies and is buried in Kadesh.
- The community runs out of water, causing the people to complain bitterly to Moses and Aaron, questioning why they were brought out of Egypt to die in the desert.
- The Lord tells Moses to take his staff, gather the people, and speak to a rock to command it to pour out water for the community and their livestock.

- Instead of speaking to the rock as instructed, Moses strikes it twice with his staff.
- Water gushes out abundantly from the rock, and the people and their animals drink.
- The Lord confronts Moses and Aaron, telling them they will not lead the people into the Promised Land because they did not trust in him enough to demonstrate his holiness before the Israelites.
- The place is named Meribah, which means "quarreling," because the people quarreled with the Lord.

#### Numbers 27:12-23

- God commands Moses to climb Mount Abarim to view the Promised Land, confirming that he will die and not enter it.
- Moses, focused on the future of the Israelites, asks the Lord to appoint a new leader so the people will not be "like sheep without a shepherd".
- The Lord chooses Joshua, son of Nun, a man "in whom is the spirit" of leadership.
- God instructs Moses to publicly commission Joshua by laying hands on him in the presence of Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly.
- Moses is told to give Joshua some of his authority so that the Israelite community will obey him.
- Joshua's leadership will rely on Eleazar the priest consulting the Lord through the Urim for decisions.
- Moses carries out all of God's instructions, commissioning Joshua before the people.

#### Deuteronomy 6:1-9

- **Obedience for a blessed life:** Moses presents the Lord's commandments, statutes, and ordinances so the Israelites may learn and practice them in the land they are about to possess.
- **Declaration of God's uniqueness:** This passage contains one of the most central creeds of the Jewish faith. The declaration "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" emphasizes the exclusive and undivided nature of God.
- **Total love and commitment:** In response to God's unique faithfulness, the Israelites are commanded to love the Lord with their entire being: "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might". This requires total commitment from their intellect, emotions, and physical strength.
- **Internalization of the word:** The commandments are to be placed "upon your hearts," meaning they should be fully internalized and made the guiding principle of life.
- **Diligent teaching:** Parents are explicitly commanded to teach these truths diligently to their children, ensuring the faith is passed on to the next generation. The word for "teach diligently" suggests an active, deliberate process.
- **Constant conversation:** Instruction is to happen naturally throughout the day, whether at home or traveling, and from the time one wakes up until lying down at night.
- **Visible reminders:** The commands are to be bound symbolically on the hands and foreheads and written on the doorframes of houses and on gates. This serves as a constant, public reminder of God's word and one's allegiance to it.
- **A new, prosperous life:** Moses reminds the Israelites that when they enter Canaan, they will inhabit beautiful cities and houses they did not build, and enjoy wells and olive groves they did not create.
- **The danger of complacency:** He warns them that with this newfound comfort comes the risk of forgetting the Lord who delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
- **Exclusive worship:** They are commanded to serve and worship the Lord their God alone. God is described as a "jealous God," and worshipping other gods would incite His anger, leading to their destruction.
- **Do not test the Lord:** The people are warned not to test God, recalling the instance at Massah where they doubted His provision and presence.
- **Follow the commands:** They must diligently obey all of God's commands, statutes, and decrees.
- **Obedience for success:** By doing what is right and good in God's sight, they will be able to take possession of the land and drive out their enemies.

- **The purpose of the laws:** When their children ask about the meaning of God's commandments, the parents are to tell them the story of their redemption.
- **Recounting the past:** The parents are to remind their children that they were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord used His "mighty hand" to perform great signs and wonders to deliver them.
- **Obedience for continued blessing:** They are to explain that God commanded them to obey these statutes out of fear (reverence) for Him, for their lasting good, and to preserve their lives.
- **Righteousness through obedience:** By being careful to obey all of God's commands, the Israelites will be considered righteous

## Reflection

1. The people grew restless when Moses was delayed coming down from the mountain. How does their impatience lead directly to their demand for a new god? When do you find yourself growing impatient with God's timing and trying to force a result on your own terms?
2. At the incident with the Golden Calf, Exodus 32, verse 14 says that "the Lord relented" concerning the disaster he planned to bring on the Israelites. Given other scripture that describes God as unchanging, how can readers understand the tension of God "changing his mind"?
3. The Israelites fondly remember the food of Egypt, forgetting their slavery there. When you face hardship or disappointment, do you find yourself romanticizing the past or envying what others have? How can this distorted perspective pull you away from God?
4. The unfaithful spies confessed, "we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them". How does fear cause you to minimize your own potential and capabilities?
5. The people's complaint is not just about the lack of water but a rejection of the wilderness itself (v. 5). What do you "complain" about today that may really be a deeper rejection or disappointment in God's plan for your life?
6. How do you keep God's commands "on your heart" so they are a genuine, internal motivation rather than a list of rules to follow out of obligation?

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*Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.*