



SERIES: MAY- JULY: THE MAIN THING

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Scripture: Numbers

TITLE: Numbers - Correction

Sometimes the best learning opportunities are the painful lessons learned in failure. I remember a few years ago when I stopped referring to a map while driving to the East Coast. I went off of my own instincts and ended up in Northern Virginia instead of North Carolina.

Everyone makes decisions that can come with some unexpected and extended consequences. The people of God are no different. That's why we should read and know the book of Numbers.

The book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Bible. It was written by Moses around 1400 B.C. It covers a span of roughly 40 years. We spend time with Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua, Caleb, and Balaam.

It's only been one year since the exodus from Egypt. It was shortly after the exodus that the people began to complain and distrust God. Well, the book of Numbers shows God's loving but painful correction for their disbelief and irresponsible decisions.

The book of Numbers can be put into three sections. Chapters 1-12 take place at Mount Sinai with the old generation. Chapters 13-20 are 38 years in the wilderness. It is the tragic transition between the old and new generations. Then chapters 21-35 are with the new generation at the doorstep to the land of Canaan.

There is this consistent theme found in the Bible and so far in the first four books: if we trust God, we will follow His path. When we don't, the road ahead is full of unnecessary pain and correction.

Now, where is Jesus in the book of Numbers? Well, He doesn't make a guest appearance, but His shadow is seen in several places. For example, consider this event from Numbers 21:5-9. It's there that the people are complaining. So God sends poisonous snakes to bite the people. They repent and ask for healing, so Moses does as God commands. Moses makes a snake and mounts it on a pole, so when people look at it, they might be healed.

You may think, "That's weird, Nat. What does that have to do with Jesus? Well, remember what Jesus said in John 3:14-15 (CSB). Jesus said,

"Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

We are prone to wander and complain in the face of great care, benevolence, deliverance, and mercy. So when we rebel against God, God lovingly corrects us. That's the main thing about the book of Numbers.

So here's my challenge for you today: stop complaining. God has promised to meet our needs. He hasn't promised a life without hardship. Israel continued to distrust God and do it their way, which made life incredibly hard.

We're no different. We aren't content with God's way, so we complain, and then we spend time in the wilderness. So today, stop complaining and follow God's path today. When you do, you will win the day!