

In Numbers 22-24, we read the story of Balaam. This is a memorable and well-known story, especially because it includes a talking donkey! Unfortunately, the story is ultimately a tragedy. Balaam had every ability and reason to be a godly person. He was a prophet, he knew God and His power, and he knew what was right. Sadly, Balaam didn't want to *do* what was right. Balaam is a pristine example of what it means to talk the talk, but not walk the walk. He said some true and beautiful things, but he didn't live in a way that backed those up. One example is found in Numbers 23:10 where he says, "...*Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!*" That's a beautiful thought! We should all desire to "die the death of the righteous." But beautiful words are not enough. If you want to die the death of the righteous, you must *live* the life of the righteous. Balaam's beautiful words were nothing more than a vain prayer. What of your prayers and words? Are they backed up with righteous action, or are they, like Balaam's, just vain and empty words?



1. According to Deuteronomy 1:22-23, whose idea was it originally to send spies into the land of Canaan? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What tribes were Caleb and Joshua (Hoshea) from? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did the people find a man doing on the Sabbath day that ended in him being stoned to death? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How did Korah and his followers perish? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why was Moses barred from entering the Promised Land? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which nation refused to let Israel pass through? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Which king of Judah ended up destroying the bronze serpent and why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_, the king of \_\_\_\_\_ sought to hire Balaam the prophet to curse the Israelites.
9. How many oracles of blessing did Balaam utter concerning Israel? \_\_\_\_\_

Bonus (for fun): Which famous artist painted the picture at the top of this page?

# “That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



## Numbers 13-24

### Wandering in the Wilderness

#### Overview

In Genesis, God promised Abraham that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan, “The Promised Land.” Hundreds of years passed between Genesis and Numbers 13, and God had truly made Abraham into a great nation. Camped at the border of Canaan, we would be sure possession of the land to occur on the next few pages of the Biblical story. Sadly, that’s not how it worked out. Our reading this week takes us through the failure of Israel to trust in God’s power to deliver Canaan to them, and the grave consequences that followed. The nation had doubted God too many times, and they were cursed to wonder the wilderness for 40 years. Numbers shows the nation’s continual struggle with trusting in God and His ordained leadership, and highlights the terrible consequences of rebellion.

Mixed throughout this section are chapters reminiscent of Leviticus in their legal instruction. While this seems to break up the narrative, it’s worth noting these sections usually follow stories of failure. When we fail, it is important to turn to God’s Word and will, and be instructed in His way once more. Preferably, we should learn from the mistakes of those that have gone before and been written about in God’s Word, so that we can avoid those pitfalls altogether.

#### Suggested Reading Schedule

- Monday: Numbers 13-14
- Tuesday: Numbers 15-17
- Wednesday: Numbers 18-20
- Thursday: Numbers 21-22
- Friday: Numbers 23-24

### Complaining



When was the last time you complained? If you’re like most people, it probably wasn’t very long ago. Complaining is common, but that doesn’t make it acceptable—especially for God’s people. Complaining might seem like a small thing, but Numbers helps us see it is a big deal and extremely offensive to God. Over and over the people complained, and each time they were punished severely. Speaking of the Israelites, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:10, “...*nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*” Complaining displays both ingratitude for what God has done, and a lack of trust in what God can do. Strive to learn from the Israelite’s mistake—work hard this week to avoid complaining, and instead practice thankfulness and trust in God!

#### Leadership

Godly Leaders:

- Trust in the Lord (14:7-9)
- Stand for what’s right, not what’s popular (14:5-12)
- Care about the souls of others (14:13-19)
- Warn against sin (14:39-45)

God expects us to respect and follow godly leadership. When the Israelites rebelled against leaders like Moses, they were punished, for their rebellion was truly against God.

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