

## The Half Hour That Changes the World

### Numbers

### Book 4

#### **Basic Questions behind the book:**

*How easy is it to forget God is in control when the going gets tough? What does this book teach us about God's presence?*

#### **Summary of book:**

Numbers is the story of the Israelites' semi-nomadic meanderings in the semi-desert of Sinai. They spent 40 years on a journey that could have taken 11 days. This book gets its name from a census, when God's people were counted. It includes two accounts of the numbering of Israel. The Hebrew title means 'In the Wilderness'. This book continues the story told in Exodus, bringing it up to the end of the wanderings in the wilderness. It is mostly narrative and contains some laws. It is also a book that contains some entertaining stories. There is a lot of complaining happening in the book, as the Israelites moan about lack of water, lack of food, etc. Numbers ends as it begins, with preparation. This new generation of Israelites were numbered and sanctified. After defeating numerous armies, they settle on the east side of the Jordan River. Then they faced their greatest test: to cross the river and possess the beautiful land God promised them.

#### **Vital Statistics:**

Purpose: To tell the story of how Israel prepared to enter the promised land, how they sinned and were punished, and how they prepared to try again.

Author: Moses

Recipients: The Israelites.

Dating: It is dated around 1270 -1230 BC (between exiting Egypt and entering Canaan). The desert was scrubland more than sand dunes.

Setting: The vast desert of the Sinai region, as well as lands just south and east of Canaan.

#### **Reflections:**

It seems that the Israelites have a very short memory. While they have experienced God's provision, like all humans, when it gets difficult, they complain and can't see God near them.

*"The Lord said to Moses, 'How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, despite all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?' (14:11)*

*The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace." (6:24-26)*