I. INTRO:

A. Why study the Book of Numbers? 1 Cor.10:11 [1st Slide - Intro]

1. You may never ride a camel, pitch a tent, or visit a tabernacle...Yet I believe you'll find kinship with these ancient nomadic Israelites.

2. You will find just how often your spiritual journey mirrors their pilgrimage!

B. Egypt was a picture of our lost condition of bondage to the world; Canaan illustrates our claiming our inheritance by faith & enjoying the fullness of God’s provision; In the Wilderness pictures carnal Christians whose belief & disobedience prevent them from entering into all that God has for them.

1. While it may be necessary to pass through wilderness experiences, one does not have to live there!

2. For Israel, an 11 day journey became a 40-year agony!

C. Genesis pictures God’s people as pilgrims & strangers, looking for their inheritance. Exodus & Leviticus depicts Israel as a holy nation of priests, worshiping the Lord. Numbers emphasizes God’s people as warriors, overcoming the enemy & claiming the promised inheritance.

1. Theme of Leviticus we are Worshippers; in Numbers we are Warriors!

D. Panoramic View of Numbers: [Advance Slide(#2) - Map]

1. Mount Sinai [1 year] {Census, Organization; Sanctification} ch.1-9

2. Kadesh-Barnea [several months] {Complaining, Doubting; Promise Land rejection} ch.10-14

3. Wilderness Wanderings [38 yrs] {Wandering, Old Gen Dies; New Census} ch.15-36

4. Note also: How close they were to Canaan.

E. Christ seen in Numbers as:

Manna (Jn.6)[Bread of Life]; Water from Rock (1 Cor.10:4)[Water of Life]; Bronze Serpent (Jn.3)[Jesus on cross]; He’s also our city of Refuge; Star out of Jacob.
II. **IN THE WILDERNESS!**  **(CH.1)**

A. **WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

B. (1-4) Why is it called *Numbers*?

1. The Name *Numbers*: comes from the 2 *numberings*/census' that are taken.
   a) 1 census was for the old generation; numbered at Mount Sinai (ch.1-4).
   b) 1 census was for the new generation; numbered in the plains of Moab (ch.26,27).
   c) Specifically the # of the men able to fight in war (14 times in this chapter “all that were able to go to war”).
      
   (1) God didn’t ask for *volunteers*. When you enter the family of God by faith in Jesus Christ, you automatically become one of His soldiers!
   (2) We are all soldiers, either a good one or a bad one!
   
   d) He numbered them exactly: what sweetness & dignity - to be recognized by God & drawn to His side. (see 1:18)
      
   (1) We may boast we’re not into numbers!...But God’s always been!
      (a) God always keeps inventory of all his Jewels!

2. The Septuagint gave it this name. *(arithmoi)*

3. What was it in the Hebrew Bible originally?
   a) Bemid-bar - *in the wilderness/desert*. {which better indicates what the book is about}
   b) Also been called *Book of Journeyings; Book of the Murmurings; 4th Book of Moses.*

C. It’s a book of Transition: setting aside the old generation because of unbelief (ch 1-20); Then preparing the new generation to inherit the Promised land (ch.21-26).

D. It’s a book of Wanderings: for God made His people wander in the wilderness for 40 years. [Till, the old generation, 20 yrs & older, died off]

   1. Application: “Unless by faith you enter into your spiritual inheritance in Christ, you will “wander” in unbelief & rob yourself of the blessings God has planned for you.” (Warren Wiersbe)

E. What would God teach them/us in the wilderness?

   1. How to be wholly dependent on Him for food, clothing, health, protection, & all things.
   2. So we can learn what He can be to the heart that trusts Him.
F. **THE TRIBES!**

G. (5-46) The army was organized, each tribe with its leaders & its standard. Unity in diversity.

1. Perhaps this pictures the Church today. We have different tribes & standards, & different leaders; but its one army, following one Commander & fighting one enemy!

2. 1 John 5:4 this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith.

H. 603,550 able fighting men - so all together at least 2 1/2 million.

1. Can you imagine the logistics of moving an entire nation to another country today, even with our help of computers & excel spreadsheets?

2. And they did this over & over again...dismantle, pack up, the tabernacle, move, re-set up camp somewhere else. And then be ready to do it again!

I. **LEVITES!**

J. (47-54) The Levites are not to be included in the regular census, for God has especially adopted them & made them supervisors over the Tabernacle.

1. They are counted at one month of age; the begin serving at age 25; & must retire at age 50.

III. **SETTING UP CAMP! (CH.2)**


B. Key: Tabernacle (the very dwelling of God) was always at the center, both when “camped” & when “on the march”!

1. See 2:31,34.

C. Tell me this book won’t apply to us: By its end we will cover 38 years of… “grumbling & judgement, sinning & punishment, repenting & forgiveness, warring & deliverance, attitudes of ingratitude, self-absorption, fear & desperation.”

D. Where are you in your spiritual journey?

1. At the base of Sinai marveling at God’s holiness & soaking in His word?

2. Are you perched on the edge of the Promise Land, eager to push ahead & take possession of all God has promised you?

3. Maybe you’re in some Wandering times, taking the long way home, the hard way to God; the trip lengthened by your disobedience or desire for something besides God?

   a) Good news: God has signed on for your whole trip!
b) He doesn’t abandon us just because we wander.

c) He’s with us in our wanderings: guiding, prompting, disciplining, sustaining, forgiving, & renewing us.

(1) What seems like *aimless wanderings* to us has **purpose & direction** if God is in it.

E. Where are you in your spiritual journey? - Sitting under Sinai? Poised at the Promise Land? Or Wandering in the Wilderness?

1. Do you sense that **God is with you** on the journey?
2. What **evidence** do you have of His presence?

   a) Deut.31:6 Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.


G. Invite up for prayer!