



Reading of the book of Numbers

DID YOU KNOW ?

1. The Book of Numbers, which begins with a manifestation of joy, ends with murmurs. Weeks, months, and then years spent in an arid desert have managed to extinguish the spirit of adventure. The Israelites were acting like people who went astray. Numbers recounts in great detail a journey marked by murmurs and acts of rebellion.
2. The two censuses of the army of Israel (Nu. 1:26) are the origin of the name of this book. It should also be noted that the Levites were not counted at the same time as the other Israelites because they were not part of the military service (Nu. 1:2-3; 1:48-49).
3. Only the Levites could be in charge of the tabernacle. They were to take care of the furnishings of the tabernacle (Nu. 1:50), take down, carry and set up the tabernacle (Nu. 1:51), encamp around the tabernacle (Nu. 1:53) and take charge of it (Nu. 1:53).
4. The census of the Levites began at the age of one month (Nu. 3:15), while the census of other Israelites began at the age of twenty years (Nu. 1:2-3).
5. The census of the Levites was done especially according to the responsibilities that God assigned to each family leader and his family to take care of a specific part of the tabernacle (Nu. 5:17-39).
6. The Nazarite, also called Nazarene (the one who is separated), was entirely consecrated to the Lord (Nu. 6:1-21). Samson and John the Baptist are the two most famous Nazirites in the Bible. But the excellent example of a Nazarite would later be Jesus Christ “holy, innocent, without blemish, separated from sinners” (He. 7:26), entirely devoted to his Father (Jn 1:18, 6:38), detached from any natural bond that would distract him from his mission (Mt. 12:46-50).
7. Arriving one step from the Promised Land, the Israelites lost faith and abandoned the journey as a result of the report of the spies who explored Canaan (Nu. 14). Their fear provoked an open rebellion and the entire nation formed a conspiracy against Moses. So, God decided to wait for a new generation of Israelites to enter the land of Canaan, for all those who were over 20 years old perished in the wilderness.
8. The 40 years of the Israelites’ wandering in the wilderness was God’s judgment on the rebel generation that had been numbered, except for Caleb and Joshua, (Nu. 14:29-34).

9. The tribe of Levi had special privileges. They owned no land. God Himself was their share and their inheritance (Nu. 18:20). Their food came mainly from the offerings and tithes of other tribes (Nu. 18:20-24).
10. The tithe of tithes was tenth of the tithe received, which the priests themselves were to give to the LORD as their offering (Nu. 18:26).
11. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother (Ge. 36:1). Thus, Moses addressed the king of Edom as the brother of Israel (Nu. 20:14).
12. Aaron, the first priest of Israel, had died on Mount Hor and was replaced by his son Eleazar (Nu. 20:23-28).
13. The Israelites sought permission from King of Edom and King of Sihon to pass through their territory. But it was refused to them. As a result, the Israelites fought against the inhabitants of Sihon (Nu. 21:21-26) while they stepped down at the refusal of the land of Edom (Nu. 20:18-22). This is because both the Israelites and the Edomites were descendants of twin brothers, Jacob and Esau (Ge. 25:19-28, 36:1).
14. Balaam was not a prophet of God. He was a diviner or magician who had been paid by Balak to curse the people of Israel. However, God compelled him to bless his people (Nu. 22 :5-7, 12 ; 23 :8).
15. God's wrath was kindled against the Israelites who indulged in sexual debauchery and idolatry with the Moabites (Nu. 25:9). God sent a plague that killed 24,000 Israelites. The plague stopped because Phinehas, son of Eleazar, had killed Zimri (an Israelite) and Kozbi (a Midianite) with a spear during their sexual intercourse (Nu. 25:10-11).
16. The second census was made by Eleazar the son of Aaron and Moses in the plains of Moab twenty years later. It did not include the first generation of Israelites who had been counted by Aaron and Moses in the wilderness of Sinai (Nu. 1). For they were all to die in the wilderness – except Caleb and Joshua – because of their rebellion (Nu. 26: 63-65).
17. In the case of murder, the death sentence of the murderer should be based on the testimony of at least two witnesses (Nu. 35: 30).