



April 6-7 2013
Numbers 1
"Life by the Numbers"
Pastor Gary Hamrick

Thirteen months into their journey out of slavery in Egypt, the Israelites had made their way into the Sinai Peninsula and were encamped at the base of Mt. Sinai,¹ where they stayed about one year. The book of Exodus covers about 12 months, the book of Leviticus covers about one month, and the book of Numbers covers 38 ½ years. The Jews call this book, Bamidbar, which means, in the desert. The English title comes from the Latin Vulgate (Liber Numeri) because two censuses are recorded.² God instructed Moses to take the first census to count the number of fighting men in Israel age 20 and up, which totaled 603, 550.

Pastor Gary's message reveals four things we can learn from the first two chapters of Numbers: God will take care of us, he knows our name, he wants us to keep our lives centered on Jesus, and he wants us to make our lives a living witness for his glory.

God Will Take Care Of You

1. The first census did not count women, children, and teens.
 - a. If you multiply 603,550 times four or five, the total Jewish population would be somewhere between 2.5 and 3 million!
 - b. To provide some local perspective, the population of Washington, D.C., Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties in Virginia has approximately the same population according to the 2010 U.S. Census.

¹ For half of the book of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and the first ten chapters of Numbers, the Israelites are encamped at Mt. Sinai.

² Two census are recorded, the first in chapter one, and the second in chapter twenty-six.

2. The amazing thing is that God fed, sustained, and cared for every single person!
 - a. To provide some local perspective, the Fairfax County Water Authority, which services Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William Counties, and Alexandria City, produces 160 million gallons of water every day to service about 1.7 million customers.³
3. The amount of food and drinking water needed to sustain 2 to 3 million people has been estimated at 1,500 tons of food and 11 million gallons of water every single day!
4. **Psalm 78:14-16, 23-29** - *“He guided them with the cloud by day and with light from the fire all night. He split the rocks in the desert and gave them water as abundant as the seas; he brought streams out of a rocky crag and made water flow down like rivers... He gave a command to the skies above and opened the doors of the heavens; he rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat. He let loose the east wind from the heavens and led forth the south wind by his power. He rained meat down on them like dust, flying birds like sand on the seashore. He made them come down inside their camp, all around their tents. They ate till they had more than enough...”*
5. **Nehemiah 9:19-21** - *“Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take. You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. For forty years you sustained them in the desert; they lacked nothing, their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet become swollen.”*
6. **Matthew 6:25-26, 31-33** - *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

³ http://www.fcwa.org/about_us/ - This total accounts for all kinds of water usage, including drinking, bathing, cleaning, flushing toilets, and recreation.

7. Christians today need to be reminded of the compassionate, providing nature of our Father in Heaven, and he takes care of us.
 - a. Through thick and thin, God will be there and he will take care of us.
 - b. Through good times and bad, God will be there and he will take care of us.
 - c. Whether it's the mountaintop or the valley below, God will be there and he will take care of us.

8. **Psalm 46:1-7** - *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."*

God Knows Your Name

9. God's instructions to Moses included the fact that no one was to be left out of the census.
 - a. **Numbers 1:18-19a** - *"... and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. The people indicated their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, as the Lord commanded Moses."*
 - b. No one was left out, no one was overlooked, no one was forgotten, and no one was considered to be insignificant.

10. We can take comfort in knowing that we are never just a "number" to God, even though there are 7 billion people on the planet.

11. Hallelujah, we are "somebodies" to God! (Emphasis added)

12. **Psalm 139:1-4** - *"O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord."*

13. **Luke 12:6-7** - *"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."*

14. [Isaiah 43:1b-3a](#) - *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior...”*

Keep Your Life Centered On Jesus

15. The 12 Tribes of Israel are mentioned in [Numbers 2:1-10a](#), as well as their specific place in camp.
- a. It's important to note that there may be some confusion about the naming of the tribes.
 - i. One of Jacob's sons, Levi, is not on the list because they were priests set apart exclusively for God.
 - ii. Another of Jacob's sons, Joseph, was taken from the list and his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, were added.
 1. The reason is that Jacob gave a double blessing to Joseph because his brothers mistreated him.
 - b. Moving clockwise, starting from the east: Judah, Issachar, Zebulon, Reuben, Simeon, Gad, Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin, Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.
16. The Tribes were set up around the Tabernacle, because the Tabernacle was to be central to their lives.
17. Pastor Gary, in the message he did in Exodus, mentioned that the Tabernacle pointed to Jesus Christ
- a. [John 1:14](#) - *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*
 - i. The Greek word for *“made his dwelling,”* is skenoo, which means that Jesus *“tabernacled”* among us.
18. Every aspect of our lives should revolve around Jesus, including the way we talk, the way we do business, the way we live, the way we act, the way we treat others; everything should be governed by Jesus because our lives are to be centered on him.

Display Jesus For Others To See

19. The population of the tribes includes:
 - a. 186,400 on the east - [Numbers 2:9](#)
 - b. 151,450 on the south - [Numbers 2:16](#)
 - c. 108, 100 on the west - [Numbers 2:24](#)
 - d. 157,600 on the north - [Numbers 2:31](#)

20. The layout of the camps on each side of the Tabernacle provides an interesting aerial picture of the cross!

21. [2 Corinthians 4:7-10](#) - *“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”*

22. [2 Corinthians 5:19b-20a](#) - *“And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.

2. Read [Numbers 1:1-4, 20-23, and 44-46](#) to provide an overview for this study.

3. Read and discuss [Matthew 6:25-26, 31-33](#).
 - a. Allow the people in the group to share specific examples of ways the Lord has provided and cared for them.
 - b. Review and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments in #7a-c above.

4. Read and discuss [Luke 12:6-7](#) and [Psalm 139:1-4](#).
 - a. Read the lyrics to Tommy Walker’s song, *He Knows My Name*. (Page 6)
 - b. Are you encouraged by the fact that God knows your name?
 - c. How does the enemy try to convince you that you are a “nobody”?
 - d. How have you come to understand that you are a “somebody” to the Lord?

5. Would you say that you are completely or partially centered on the Lord?
 - a. What changes have you seen as you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
 - b. Do you find that you are often in need of a life adjustment?
 - c. Do you rely on the Holy Spirit to help you stay centered on Christ?

6. When people observe your life, would you say they see Christ in you?
 - a. In what ways does your life reflect Christ?
 - b. What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit is changing you into the image of Christ?

7. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: rejoice in the fact they are important in the eyes of the Lord; keep their life centered on Christ; live their life in such a way that they are a living witness to the love, mercy, grace, goodness of God; (have someone ready to read [Psalm 46:1-7](#)) close your prayer time by “praying” the Scripture to encourage people to always trust in the presence, care, and provision of the Lord.

“He Knows My Name”

Songwriter: WALKER, TOMMY

*I have a Maker
He formed my heart;
Before even time began
My life was in his hands*

*Chorus: He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call*

*I have a Father
He calls me His own
He'll never leave me
No matter where I go*

*Chorus: He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call*

*He knows my name
He knows my every thought
He sees each tear that falls
And He hears me when I call*

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).