

chapter you see a census of the Levites. At the end of the book you will find another census of the people. So you have found a few numbers in the book, but you take out the beginning and the end and there are practically none left anywhere in the book. There are two censuses taken in the book. And that may be four chapters out of thirty-six. The other thirty-two have absolutely nothing about taking a census, and yet they called the whole book Numbers. It is much more misleading than to call Exodus "And these are the names." It is a title which gives you a description of the first chapter rather than a quotation of the first word, and therefore it is more misleading because you can get the idea that it describes the book which it does not really do at all. The numbers are almost incidental, whereas the rest of the book gives a most interesting account of the wilderness wanderings of the children of Israel.

The Hebrews probably did better than they realized when they named the fourth book, "In the Wilderness." This is as perfect a description as we have for any book in the Bible. The title tells us what the book of Numbers is about. It is the account of the Israelites in their wilderness journey. It is the story of their experiences as they journeyed from Sinai to the Promised Land. That is what the book is really about. I am afraid that even today many a Christian is led by this unfortunate and misleading title "Numbers" to pass by the book with little attention, thinking that it is merely a lot of statistics, and thus they miss the rich blessings that the book should give them.

There is a special blessing for the Christian as he studies the book of Numbers. If he has received Christ as his Savior he has passed through the experiences typified by the book of Exodus, with its accounts of the Passover sacrifice and the escape from what Egypt symbolized: the power of sin. He has now begun his wilderness journey. He may easily imagine that he has reached the promised land, but he will soon discover that he is wrong. Sin still has power in his life and in that of the people around him. He still has the long journey of sanctification to go through. When new Christians find that they are not fully sanctified, and that the people around them are not perfect, they tend to become dissatisfied and are sometimes tempted to go back into Egypt. They need to realize that in this life we are like the Israel-