

CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

It's Time to Celebrate—Not Complain

Numbers 10:11–17; 11:1–6; 12:1–4, 9–10



LET'S BEGIN HERE

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, provided water and manna to sustain them, wiped out the ruthless Egyptian pharaoh and his army, established a covenant so that He would be their God and they would be His nation, and then He dwelt among them in the tabernacle.

All of this occurred within the span of about two years. Despite all these miraculous events, the Israelites let their glass-half-empty mentality drag them into complaining just after they departed Mount Sinai.

Today, we'll explore this scene and more with Chuck Swindoll, so we can guard against a sour heart and live with gratitude for God's provision in our lives.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

First, review the timeline of events between the Israelites' departure from Egypt and their departure from Mount Sinai.¹ Notice the number of blessings in such a short period of time.

Year	Month	Day	Event	Biblical Reference
1	1	14	Exodus: departure from Egypt	Exodus 12:1–50
1	3	14	Arrival in Sinai Desert	Exodus 19:1
2	1	1	Tabernacle erected	Exodus 40:17
2	1	1–12	Israelite tribe dedication offerings	Numbers 7:1–89
2	1	14–22	Passover and unleavened bread celebration	Numbers 9:1–14
2	2	1	First tribal military census	Numbers 1:1–46
2	2	14	Passover alternative for unclean and distant	Numbers 9:6–13
2	2	20	Departure from Sinai Desert	Numbers 10:11

Quotable

Complaining impacts the complainer, those around the complainer, and the leaders. Instead of complaining, let us be grateful for what God has done and trust Him for what He will do.

— Charles R. Swindoll





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Numbers 10–12 documents the spiral of discord and faithlessness displayed by the Israelites. This study combines observation and interpretation because our text extends across multiple chapters. Refer to *Lumina* or your *Bible dictionary* for help during interpretation. But before we begin, record a prayer below asking God's Spirit to quiet your heart before Him and open your mind to understand His truth so that you may be more conformed to the image of His Son through this study.



Pack 'Em Up and Move 'Em Out Numbers 10:11–28	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Slowly observe <i>Numbers 10:11–28</i>, and record your core findings below.</p>	<p>2a. What one word would you use to capture the theme of this section and why?</p> <p>2b. How does this passage reflect the faithfulness of the Israelites in the beginning of their journey?</p>

The Israelites were off to a promising start. They demonstrated the nature of God through their march: “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33).



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The Lord's Leading Numbers 10:29–36	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Read <i>Numbers 10:29–36</i>, and record your key observations below.</p>	<p>2a. On what basis did Moses promise Hobab that Israel would treat him well (Numbers 10:29)?</p> <p>2b. What does 10:32 tell us about the nature of God?</p> <p>2c. How does 10:33–36 reflect what God continually did for Israel after leaving Egypt?</p>

The Israelites needed only to remember what God had done for them and tend to His Word because He promised to take care of them as His children. But that's not what happened.





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Desiring Cucumbers More Than the Creator Numbers 11:1–15	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Observe <i>Numbers 11:1–15</i>, and note below the core components of this text.</p>	<p>2a. How did the people disobey God in this passage, and what led them to do so?</p> <p>2b. How did the Lord respond to the people in this passage?</p> <p>2c. Put yourself in Moses' sandals in 11:10–15. How did he feel about their complaint?</p>

As the Israelites marched along, they let their minds hone in on their dry tongues. This led them to focus on the “good ole days” when they were slaves instead of the future bliss promised by God.





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Timely Advice and a Spiritual Rebuke Numbers 11:16–30	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Slowly observe <i>Numbers 11:16–30</i>, and summarize your key findings below.</p>	<p>2a. How did Moses display a lack of faith in this passage, and how did the Lord respond?</p> <p>2b. Did Moses respond positively or negatively to God's rebuke (Numbers 11:23–24)?</p> <p>2c. How did Moses demonstrate humility in 11:25–30?</p>

How easy it is for leaders to let complaints or criticism dishearten them! But Moses let the Lord's strength lift him back up. What's more, Moses even shared the load of responsibility rather than hoard his power. He simply wanted to serve God's people.





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The Lord Vindicates Himself and Moses Numbers 11:31–12:16	
 Observation	 Interpretation
<p>1a. Lastly, read <i>Numbers 11:31–12:16</i>, and document your essential observations below.</p>	<p>2a. The Lord sent a plague upon His own people in 11:31–35, and they called the place Kibroth-hattaavah. What does this mean, and why did they need to remember what happened there?</p> <p>2b. How and why does 12:1–16 emphasize the Israelites' faithlessness?</p> <p>2c. How did the Lord demonstrate grace and mercy according to 12:10–16?</p>

Immediately after departing Mount Sinai, the Israelites' gratitude ceased, and they stopped celebrating. Instead, they focused on petty inconveniences and forgot God's grace and faithfulness.



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Correlation

In the Old Testament narratives, Paul read about God's past work to understand God's more recent work through the gospel of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–13, Paul mentioned the Israelites' complaining along with other events from the exodus.

According to Paul's teaching in *1 Corinthians 10:1–13*, how do Christians today learn from God's work in the Old Testament?

What did Paul say in 10:12–13 that God will do for us when we're tempted?



Application

During application, we incorporate into our lives the truths and promises of God's Word. As Paul said to the believers in Colossae,

Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.
(Colossians 3:16)

For this study, reflect on what you've learned and how it relates to your current season of life. Simply pause. Don't rush. Churn the passage over in your mind and pray in light of what you read. Ask God to seal His Word in your heart.



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Below are three questions to help you create your own takeaways from this portion of Scripture.

What's one thing you want to remember from Numbers 10–12?

What's one thing you want to remember about God?

How can you very specifically apply to your life what you learned in this study?



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I trust You are working in me, giving me both the desire and the power to do what pleases You. I long to live as a bright light in this crooked and dark world—to do everything without complaining or arguing. Thank You for shining the light of Your Word in my life. Help me hold fast to it until the day I die or Christ returns. In His name, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. R. Dennis Cole, *Numbers*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000), 172.



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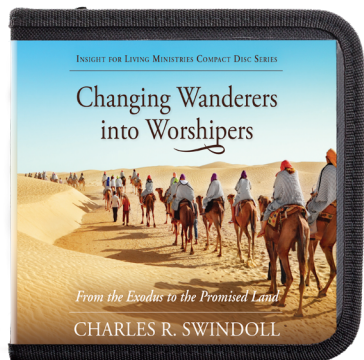
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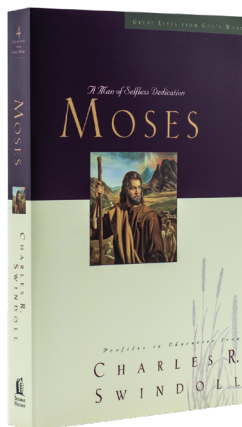
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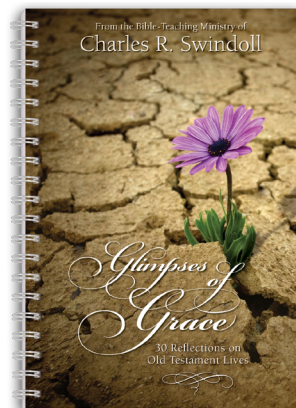
Tools for Digging Deeper



Changing Wanderers into Worshipers: From the Exodus to the Promised Land
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For the 2018–2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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