

# Numbers for grumblers



## Materials for group meetings

### 11th Meeting      **THEME: The day of judgement prefigured**

**Prepare** in prayer. Read Chapter 31.

**Icebreaker** Someone says: not only the Quran, but also the Bible, if taken too literally, can inspire people to violence and motivate them to be violent. How do you respond?

**Pray** Ask God for His Holy Spirit to speak to you through His Word today.

**Bible passage** **Read Numbers 31:1-12**

Some explanation to understand what this chapter is all about and why it is here in Numbers:

Soon Gods people would live in Gods land. However, at many tables someone was missing. Due to God's plague that came upon Israel, because Israel had been deceived to serve other gods (See Numbers 25:1-9). God had punished his own people. But what about those who had caused them to sin? In this chapter, they face the Lord's judgement. The chapter consists of four parts:

- Vs. 1-12 The Lord's vengeance, on God's command, executed by a small army, led by the priest's son Phinehas.
  - Vs. 13-24 More judgement. Moses and Eleazar withhold the warriors from walking in into the camp with the spoil. The men have to purify themselves. And many of those whom they have brought with them may not enter the camp, but also face judgement. What is brought in also needs purification.
  - Vs. 25-47 The spoil is counted and divided.
  - Vs. 48-54 When the officers have counted their men, they discover none of them is missing. They realise they need atonement. As the Midianites had faced vengeance, so could God have punished them, but God had spared them. Deeply grateful they offer more than they have already given.
- This is not an easy chapter. What do you want to ask / discuss / share?

The purpose of this whole chapter is not to prescribe how future generations must avenge themselves. For Christians this is even forbidden (see Romans 12:19-21), though a government has still the role to punish those who do wrong (see also Romans, 13:1-4). The purpose is to see how this prefigures the things that are still to come.

See how much time you still have, and decide how many of the following questions you will discuss:

- Compare vs. 1-12 with Matthew 18:6,7. What do you learn?
- Compare vs. 1-12 with II Thessalonians 1:6-9. What do you learn?
- Compare vs. 13-24 with I Corinthians 3:11-15. What do you learn?
- Compare this chapter with Revelation 19:1-8. What do you learn?

### Digging deeper

We must know God is merciful and kind. We must also know that God is righteous and severe. We see this, when we look at the cross, where Jesus died for our sins. We will see this, when he returns in glory. How is this knowledge important for us, for you, now at this moment? Take some moments to think and pray about this. Share &

**End** with prayer.