

# Numbers Chapter 1

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[ 0 : 00 ]     You think I'm in charge? Not by any chalk. Is that the case? No. Welcome. Good evening. It's lovely to see you. Lovely that you can join with us and share with us.

Great to have some folk from the second best county in the country, Devon, according to the Yorkshiremen, but according to Devon people, it's the other way around, but we won't argue the toss over that.

Great to have you with us, and of course it's always lovely to have you guys with us every time we see you. I'd like you to turn with me in the Psalms to Psalm 91. Psalm 91.

It's always a place to turn in the scriptures when you're feeling a little bit, and just not got that oomph about you spiritually, and you're feeling like, I don't know, I'm finding it hard to pray, I'm finding it hard to worship.

Always go back to the Psalms because they are this songbook of the Bible, and they really speak to us wonderfully. And Psalm 91 is a great psalm of faith and encouragement, and hopefully we'll set the tone as well for the hymns that we will sing as we come to God's word a little later on.

[ 1 : 21 ]     So just follow with me as I read this psalm. Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust. Surely He will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

If you say, The Lord is my refuge, and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you. No disaster will come near your tent, for He will command His angels concerning you to lift you in all your ways.

[ 2 : 32 ]     Sorry, to guard you in all your ways. They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. You'll tread on the lion and the cobra.

You'll trample the great lion and the serpent. Because He loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue Him. I will protect Him, for He acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer Him.

I will be with Him in trouble. I will deliver Him and honor Him. With long life, I will satisfy Him and show Him my salvation. What do that psalm shout out to us?

Shouts out to us this, that we have a mighty Savior, and we shall never fall. We shall never be lost. No matter what the world throws at us, no matter what difficulties come our way, no matter how far the world slips, no matter how much we struggle, the Lord Himself is the one who saves.

The Lord Himself is the one who keeps and guards you, dear Christian, and will bring us safely into that salvation of eternal life.

[ 3 : 47 ] Our Lord Jesus in prayer together. Let us pray. Oh, Father God, we come to you this evening with a sure and certain confidence that our salvation is secure and safe, and can never be taken away, or removed, or lost.

Not because we are strong in our faith, not because we are godly and righteous, not because, oh Lord, we trust in our own ability, but, oh Lord, this evening again, we come and gladly, joyfully, humbly acknowledge that you are our mighty Savior, and that you are the one who has saved us, and is saving us, and will save us.

We thank you, oh Lord, that we know that all those who put their trust in you shall not be put to shame, that those who say, the Lord is my refuge, just as we read in your word, those who make you their dwelling, Lord, nothing can overtake us, nothing can lead us away from you, nothing can take away the wonderful grace and love that you have towards us, even our own sin, even our own failings, even our own faults, and we're full of them, Lord, even they cannot prevent you from finishing the work that you've begun, for, oh Lord, you are faithful.

Lord, the devil can't steal us away. He can tempt us, he can cause us to make all sorts of fools of ourselves. He can deceive us and lie to us, but he cannot snatch us out of your hand.

The world in which we live around about us may roar, and it may shout, and it may mock, and it may ridicule, and it may pull, but it too cannot move us from the rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, upon whom we are stayed.

[ 5 : 51 ] Thank you, oh Lord our God, that Jesus is mighty to save. Thank you, that oh Lord, even though perhaps this evening we feel ourselves to have knocking knees and limp arms, that we feel ourselves to be weak, we feel ourselves to be ineffective, we feel ourselves perhaps even through the terrors and the difficulties and the struggles of life to be clinging on by our fingernails to the edge of the cliff, we thank you that underneath are the everlasting arms, and you will never let us fall.

Oh, we come again and renew our faith in you and our trust in you. We come again and say, you are my God, you are my fortress, you are my refuge, just as the psalmist of old could say, in whom I put my trust.

And oh Lord, we know that all who've put their trust in you throughout the ages of history, from the very beginning of time, have never been let down, and neither will you let us down.

Oh Lord, we ask that again, that we might worship you and adore you from this position of safety, as it were, from this position of security, that we might love you.

You've said, because he loves me, I will rescue him. And Lord, we want to say again this evening, we do love you because you first loved us. We love you because you loved us to the cross.

[ 7 : 21 ] You loved us to death. You loved us to the tomb. You loved us, oh Lord, so that you tasted of death itself and endured the very wrath of God against our sins.

We love you, Lord Jesus, that you did all that for us, all that for me. Oh Lord, we praise you and thank you that that love of yours for us has melted our hard and stony hearts so that this evening we cannot help but say, Lord, we love you and we want to love you more.

We want to love you more, Lord. We want to love you with that same sort of love with which you loved us and love us still. That love which is willing to pay the price, that love which is willing to sacrifice, that love which is willing to endure difficulty and pain and hurt because of the one that we love.

Oh Lord, come and change us, transform us, meet with us and bless us, we ask in this time together for we ask these things in and for the glory and the praise of Jesus.

Amen. If you'd like to turn to chapter one, we did a little bit of an overview and a little bit of an introduction to Numbers but we're going to start in earnest, God willing, with chapter one this week and when you turn it up, don't worry, I'm not going to read all the names.

[ 8 : 43 ] We're going to be a bit selective but I would encourage you, those of you who are here with us Sunday by Sunday, please make time in your weekly Bible study to read through Numbers, at least the first few chapters to get an idea of where we're going or where we're heading.

So I'm going to read and I'll tell you when I'm going to start. I'm going to read first of all verses one to four and then I'll do a jump and read a few more verses, then we'll do a jump and read to the end.

So we're going to miss out all these very difficult names and those of you who are regular here will know why we're missing out all those names because I can't pronounce them properly. That's the real reason. Okay, I'm pretending that it's all to spare time but really, no, they're important and vital but are very repetitive.

So Numbers chapter one verses one to four. Here is God's word. The Lord spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt.

He said, take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families listing every man by name one by one. You and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel who are 20 years old or more and able to serve in the army.

[ 10 : 08 ] One man from each tribe each of them the head of his family is to help you. Onto verse 16. These were the men appointed from the community the leaders of their ancestral tribes.

They were the heads of the clans of Israel. Moses and Aaron took these men whose names had been specified and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month.

The people registered their ancestry by their clans and families and the men 20 years old or more were listed by name one by one as the Lord commanded Moses and so he counted them in the desert of Sinai.

Then we're going to jump over now to verse 44 and read to the end of the chapter. These were the men counted by Moses and Aaron and the 12 tribes sorry 12 leaders of Israel each one representing his family.

All the Israelites 20 years old or more who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted according to their families. The total number was 603,550.

[ 11 : 15 ] The ancestral tribe of the Levites however was not counted along with the others. The Lord had said to Moses you must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites.

Instead appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the covenant law over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings.

They are to take care of it and camp around it. Whenever the tabernacle is to move the Levites are to take it down. Whenever the tabernacle is to be set up the Levites shall do it.

Anyone else who approaches it is to be put to death. The Israelites are to set up their tents by divisions. Each of them in their own camp under their standard.

The Levites however are to set up their tents round the tabernacle of the covenant law so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community. The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the covenant law.

[12:18] The Israelites did all this just as the Lord commanded Moses. So we're going to start Numbers chapter 1 proper this evening.

As I said last week we began with a bit of an introduction and even there we saw that the title Numbers which in itself is not really what you call exciting isn't the original Hebrew name for this portion of God's word.

The original name in Hebrew means in the wilderness. and that's exactly what this book is about. It's about the adventures of God's people as they travel from Sinai a year after they'd been released and set free from Egypt and as they travel then onto the promised land that country that God had promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob all those years before traveling and journeying and their journeys were the inspiration of course for people like John Bunyan to write his book Pilgrim's Progress in which he entitles the book the journey from this world to that which is to come and I said last week that that's the chief similarity that's why we study this portion of God's word and we looked at reasons why we did because many of the events in numbers reappear later on in New Testament teaching and we're told that we're to learn lessons from them and avoid their bad example in some ways and be encouraged by their faith in others but we too dear friends as Christians are journeying we're travelers we're sojourners we're pilgrims we're heading towards that eternal city that heavenly country that the writer of the Hebrews talks about that God has given us as he has given them the country of Canaan was but just a picture of that just a symbol of that just like much of the Old Testament it was pointing to something spiritual heavenly which could only be completed with the coming of Christ but there's two other themes as well and they appear here in chapter 1 in embryo form that I want us to think about as well this evening and again they resemble our own experiences in the Christian life and the first of them that's spoken of or hinted at certainly is the reality of warfare warfare now hopefully as we read through the portions of chapter 1 as we did you'll notice that God gives a reason for the census that he has called

Moses and Aaron to count the people it's there in verse first of all in verse 3 you and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel were 20 years old or more and able to serve in the army and then over again into chapter chapter 1 verse 45 all the Israelites 20 years old or more were able to serve in Israel's army were counted so this census wasn't of every single man, woman and child but only those who were 20 years old and fit enough and strong enough to serve in the Lord's army and each of the tribes and that's the bit that we sort of jumped through the 12 tribes was counted their men and we're given that total there in verse 46 the total number was 603,550 and of course if that doesn't include people under the age of 20 and women and children and as we'll find out later it doesn't include the whole of the

Levites as well then we're talking almost certainly millions of people now an army of 603,550 is not is a large army if you put all the armed forces together in the UK I think it's around about 80,000 or so that's not much is it compared to 600,000 the largest army as far as I understand though it's a bit of a secret is of course the North Korean army about a million soldiers at arms but it was an immense army in comparison to the nations around about them a great number of fighting men now why does God do that why is he called the census we thought about some of those reasons before but again as we've read there it's clear that God is instilling into the people this reality that they will have to fight he's the one who saved them and rescued them out of Egypt he's the one that's going to take them into the promised land but there will be battles ahead battles before they reach the promised land in fact they've already had one when we were studying Exodus in chapter 17 they had a bit of a skirmish with the Amalekites but there wasn't a lot of people there not a lot of men who were involved in that battle certainly not 600 thousand and the Lord gave them the victory but God by calling the men as it were to arms by counting them is warning them that much bigger conflicts are on the horizon much bigger battles will be fought and in that sense that all these men were to be conscripted into the army there was no one who was allowed out of it as it were did anybody here do national service anybody old enough who did national service here you're all too young all right okay or you had a or you baby you had a a special job as it were but conscription national service as it's called was something that the UK had between 1947 not long after the second world war right through to 1960 there's always the possibility the fear that another war would take place and of course in 1950 51 there was the

[ 18 : 29 ] Korean war that the UK was involved with there there's many battles we're going to we're going to meet them as we go through numbers of course especially that battle at Jericho that's probably the most famous battle but other battles as well will come through as they fight their enemies over a very long period of time in fact of course as we know 40 years they were in the wilderness now in our journey dear friends to heaven though as we've been rejoicing in and celebrating in the Lord's our refuge our strength he's our protector he's the one who will get us to heaven we need not fear that we will fall away he is the one who perseveres with us he's the one who saves us the reality is that if you are a Christian this evening you too will be involved in spiritual warfare in battle that's why particularly Ephesians 6 which really that hymn of Wesley's picks up on tells us in Ephesians 6 verse 12 for our struggle our wrestling our battle our fight it's not against flesh and blood against the rulers against the authorities against the powers of this dark world against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms we are all called to fight so it's four truths

I want us to think about in connection with this reality that we are in a state of war or readiness for war or in a spiritual battle first of all clearly as Christians each one of us is a soldier here in Israel it was just the men over 20 who were to fight but we are in a spiritual battle not a physical battle as we read there not flesh and blood spiritual battle and that means all of us now of course in Moses' day men would have been all sorts of shapes and sizes like they are here some would have been big and butch and brawny and you think well that would make good soldier material some of them would have been a bit nine stone weakish as it were and think well how can I be in the battle but there was no exception yep young and old frightened and courageous all of them were in the battle and again that was the case when there was conscription during the first world war and the second world war men were called up to go to fight unless they had a reserved occupation a job which was so important that they needed to stay and do that job perhaps in munitions or in some other aspect which contributed to the war effort and so it was here the only ones who were exempt were the Levites they were the only ones who weren't to go to war but here in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ ladies you are soldiers you are warriors not just warriors worrying but you are warriors fighting and you're engaged in that spiritual warfare too and if you've been a Christian for any length of time you'll know that's the case that you've had to endure battles and conflicts and difficulties we are all one in Christ and we all fight now again as in an army there are all differing roles for us to play in any army or air force or navy there were different roles there were logistics and radio operators and medics and so forth and so in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ that we're all called to battle and to fight we all have very different roles but we're still fighting in the same war it's quite fun to look at some of the old posters that they used to make all sorts of propaganda posters that went up during the second world war in particular you know loose lips sink ships and these sort of things one poster that sort of emphasised this sense of fighting together was of a woman working in a factory with the tagline underneath it's our war too so dear Christians it's our war as soon as you sided with the Lord Jesus Christ as soon as you came as it were under his command you immediately were enlisted into his army you were immediately involved in spiritual warfare you have left the devil's army in one sense and you have joined the Lord's army and the devil is our enemy he's not discriminatory he's not concerned about keeping the Geneva Convention or human rights doesn't matter whether you're young or old man or woman boy or girl the devil is always looking for a target 1 Peter in chapter 5 we're told that we're to be careful because he's like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour and he will devour us he will attack us he will seek to rob us he will seek to destroy us undermine us weaken us in some way make us ineffective in the Christian life therefore dear friends the first thing is this or the second thing is this we are all soldiers therefore we are all to be alert we are all to be alert we're all to be on guard we're not to think that somehow

the devil will miss us by or that it will never happen to us we need to be very much alert when Peter writes to the Christians who are struggling with all sorts of spiritual battles he tells them in 1 Peter chapter 4 dear friends do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you as though something strange were happening to you now we are very fortunate as Christians here in the UK in this time that we suffer very little opposition we suffer very little persecution that may change we don't know we suffer very little of the difficulties that our brothers and sisters in Christ do around the world in real spiritual satanic attack but dear friends we still must be on the alert the devil is very clever he's not foolish

Paul talks about his schemes and his devices he knows how to attack he knows the chinks in your armour and mine our weaknesses he knows where to get us we need to be aware of him and on guard from him we're not to think that just some of the things that happen in our lives are just part of the difficulty of life we have an enemy who will seek to undermine us we need to be wise and most of all dear friends we need to be ready because when spiritual warfare comes and attack comes we need to be ready so that we don't run away caught off guard we need to be alert above all of course we need as well to make sure that we are clothed in the armour of God that's really that hymn as I say that we sang of Wesley there's that lovely word take take to arm you for the fight the panoply of God panoply what's a panoply you got one in your garden panoply means the armour the covering as it were over us so when you sing that again you'll know what it means the armour of God he says as he explains later on in that hymn and so

Ephesians 6 as well we're told therefore put on the full armour of God not just a bit here or there the full armour of God so that when the day of evil comes as surely it will it doesn't say if the day of evil comes when the day of evil comes we are in a spiritual battle and therefore the warfare the battle we're engaged in means that we use spiritual weapons it's not like the world we don't use guns and swords and tanks and rockets and aeroplane we are involved in a spiritual battle so we need spiritual armour spiritual weapons Paul writes about this in 2 Corinthians 10 he says this for though we live in the world we do not wage war as the world does the weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world on the contrary they are divine they have divine power to demolish strongholds spiritual weapons and they come out here in Ephesians in chapter 6 particularly we have the sword of the spirit which is the word of

[ 27 : 30 ] God we know that the sword of the spirit the word of God is as Hebrews tell us living and active sharper than any two edged sword able to separate bone from marrow and we have prayer as well James tells us that prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective they are the two weapons we don't fight violence with violence we don't fight in the way that the world does prayer and God's word they are our weapons so we're in a battle spiritual warfare perhaps you're feeling that maybe in a particular way at this time perhaps you're struggling in your Christian life at this time you're saying well why are things so difficult why are you finding it so hard it may well be dear friends that there is a spiritual reason for those things there's a battle that's going on perhaps inwardly in your own heart and life

Paul talks about that doesn't he about the flesh and the spirit within us we're praying reading the word taking the word of God seriously acting upon the word of God as we thought this morning the importance of obeying God's word surely if we are in the army we must obey the commands of our commander we can't just go our own way and say well I fancy sort of going this way to see if I can find an enemy we must be directed and led in the way that Christ would have us to go if we are to be effective in that warfare there's something else as well not only do we find here in chapter 1 of numbers God hinting at and pointing to the reality that his people will be involved in warfare but also we find something else as they journey through the promised land of Canaan there was something else that God was preparing them for something which in one sense seemed to be very much the opposite of battle and warfare but something which was very necessary for them that they might overcome in those battles and that thing is worship warfare and worship and that's why we have I think verses 47 through to 54 God speaking about the importance of the ministry of the Levites the descendants of Aaron and others they were excluded from the army as we saw and mentioned why because they were to care for and look after the tabernacle that complex of tents as it were in which offerings and sacrifices were made for the people to worship God and to walk in a right relationship with him they had to ensure that wherever the people went the tabernacle went and was put up so that God's worship could continue day after day after day that their relationship with

God could be kept strong so as we go through the book of numbers we'll find popping up here and there God speaking about offerings and sacrifices about holiness of life about the Passover and so on now it may seem on the surface that the worship of God is really sort of secondary to the major problem of getting two million people through the desert into the promised land surely they should be more concerned with finding food and water looking for safe areas to travel in dealing with the logistics of it surely that would be much better than spending their time worshipping God each day no worship is not a secondary matter not something which comes beneath warfare rather both are intrinsic for God's people both then and now they are we're to worship God and we are to worship

God we worship God alright notice that God is very very strong isn't he he speaks about this anyone else who approaches the tabernacle is be put to death and the Levites are to set their tents around the tabernacle of the covenant law so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community in other words they had to get things right in their relationship with God if they were to get through the desert if they were to overcome their enemies it all hung if I can put it that way upon their relationship with the Lord and their worship of the Lord so it is with us dear friends the spiritual battles that we face the struggles that we deal with in our Christian life will be greatly and vastly affected by how we worship the Lord and relate to him our relationship with him is the key to us being as the scriptures tell us more than conquer us through Christ

Jesus our Lord and again we see similarities but differences in the Old Testament it was the Levites and them only who were to offer the sacrifices and to worship the Lord on behalf of all the people but in the New Testament in this wonderful relationship that we have in Christ with God we are all priests we are all men and women engaged in the worship and the service of God again in Peter 1 Peter in chapter 2 in verse 9 where he makes this remarkable declaration concerning us and the Old Testament church you he says Christians today in the New Testament you are a chosen people a royal priesthood a holy nation God's special possession that's what we are those are the very same language that he spoke of with the Israelites now it's true of the church we're to be engaged in this ministry of worshiping the Lord of serving him bringing sacrifices to him but they're spiritual sacrifices again the Old

[ 34 : 05 ] Testament was the shadow wasn't it those animals that were slaughtered and put to death they were a picture of pointing to the final sacrifice the full sacrifice of Jesus the last sacrifice for sin but there are other offerings as well grain offerings and thanks offerings and peace offerings the first fruit offerings now the sacrifices for sin have ended we don't sacrifice or offer to God our our sacrifices and offerings so that he might atone for our sin or take away our sin or to make us right with God but we are to bring worship to him we are to make sacrifices to him and the sacrifice that God wants from us is our very lives themselves in Romans in chapter 12 and verse 1 listen to this I urge you says Paul I urge you brothers and sisters in view of

God's mercy in other words in view of what he's done for you in the Lord Jesus Christ in the salvation he's given you in light of that to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God this is your true and proper worship worship you see we don't worship God when we come to church on a Sunday and sing hymns to him that's not all we don't worship God when we put our collection in the offering that's not all here Paul is making it clear that the worship of God is the whole of our lives it's everything that we do and it's everything that we are the offering that God wants from you is not just your time or your money or your love or your service it's you for you've been purchased with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus you belong to him you are his special people his remember possession so we are to bring our finances to God we are to worship him with the gifts that he's given us



Philippians 4:18 talks about that we are to praise him and worship his name we are to tell of all the great things he's done for us but we're to do all things to bring him glory and praise every part of your life is to be an act of worship when we get up in the morning when we go to school when we go to work whatever we are doing in the menial tasks of life they are to be part of our worship to the Lord we are to do everything as unto the Lord Paul has much to say doesn't he about those Christians who are in the workplace he talks about them there as being slaves we may feel like we're slaves to our bosses but they really were and what did he say to them serve them as if you're serving Christ see beyond the material the temporal the here and now see beyond that what you are involved in is a spiritual act of worship worship warfare warfare and worship as long as the people of

God in numbers as we see and in the Old Testament worship the Lord things went well in the battles that they faced later on in numbers in chapter 21 they faced one of their first battles they wanted to pass through a particular portion of land that belonged to Sion king of the Amorites they said let us just pass through we aren't going to take anything we won't take any of your water and so on and the king said no you're not going to he mustered his army against them and we're told Israel fought with them and put them to the sword they had a victory a wonderful victory because they were in a right relationship with the Lord because at that point they still were seeking to honor him but as soon as their worship turned sour as soon as they began to follow other gods and allow their worship to drift from the Lord they put themselves in grave grave danger and so when we get to numbers in 25 just a little later on we find that this happens while Israel was staying in Shittim the men began to indulge in immorality with Moabite women who invited them to the sacrifice to their gods people ate and bowed down to and the

Lord's anger burned against them see their worship was wrong their hearts had gone cold they'd begun to seek after other gods and immediately they got into a great deal of trouble so we find that that is the sad process as it were almost to the whole of the history of God's people particularly in the book of Judges where again and again God's people kept making that mistake they'd walk with the Lord they'd worship him with a good judge then when that judge died or leader died they'd slip back into idolatry and the worship of false gods what would happen an enemy would come up and defeat them and overpower them until at last they cried out and a new judge would come and set them free and a deliverer and so on they were on this constant roller coaster spiritually dear friend in our worship of

[ 39 : 49 ] God it is there that we will win the battles in our worship of God it is there that we will overcome the enemy do we do we do we want to see men and women rescued from the dominion of darkness then we need to have a right relationship with God and worship him as he has commanded us do we long to overcome temptation with sin in our own lives and be that example that light and salt in the world well it's because of our relationship with God our worship of him as soon as that is out of place as soon as that is wrong we will find that temptations increase their power we will find that our hearts and our struggles become all the more difficult because we are no longer taking refuge in the Lord our God but we are outside of his wings when we live lives of dependent faith in him then we receive the grace and the help we need to keep on going but when we become forgetful self-indulgent wonder from that life of worshipful faith then we weaken our position we weaken as it were the ramparts of our refuge and our castle we expose ourselves spiritually to the enemies arrows and fiery darts us we will experience spiritual warfare that's not a question but whether we overcome whether we continue in that whether we see it through to the end or are driven back that's the question remember we read at the very beginning of our worship this evening from psalm 91 let me just remind you of the last portion of that wonderful psalm which had much to say about the lord's keeping and protection in the struggles of life psalm 91 14 and 15 because he loves me says the lord i will rescue him i will protect him for he acknowledges my name he will call upon me and i will answer him i will be with him in trouble i will deliver him because he loves me do you love the lord jesus christ daily is your desire that you should live a life of worship daily is he the center of your very existence daily or is he just the occasional add-on only you can answer that question let's pray together once more oh lord our god we give you thanks that your word is practical relative up to date speaking to us where we are in our lives we thank you for the promise you've held out for us of an everlasting and eternal home we thank you that it is certainly ours because of what christ has accomplished for us and we know oh lord that just like your people of old you will bring us into that promised land but lord it's not just that we

shall get there but it's the journey that matters too we long that in our lives in the journey that you have laid before us whether that be still many more years or decades or even just a short time we don't know yet lord we pray that you would help us as we travel day by day through the wilderness of this world help us oh lord to always make you the center of our worship and help us oh lord that as we take you as our refuge and as we look to you and trust in you that oh lord when we face those battles those enemies those difficulties which we must and will face that oh lord we may know that you are the one who strengthens us who keeps us and who gives us the victory help us then we pray in these days difficult days at times help us oh lord to walk with you as you walk with us amen the god of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in christ after you have suffered a little while will himself restore you and make you strong firm and steadfast to him be the power and the glory forever and ever amen amen oh oh