Outline of the Book of Numbers
“wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?”
(Numb. 12:8b).

Overview of Genesis

The book of Genesis covers a span of approximately 2,450 years. The word “Genesis” means “origin” (Smith’s Bible Dictionary pp. 211). Genesis gives the origins of creation, sin, and death in the first three chapters. A history of mankind is examined in the book with great emphasis being placed upon future redemption through Jesus and the development of various characters. The promised seed of Genesis 3:15 is the theme of the entire book. The promised seed is mentioned again in Genesis 12:1-4; 22:18; and 49:10. This promised seed is identified as Jesus Christ at Galatians 3:8, 16. Matthew records, “And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21).

Overview of Exodus

The book of Exodus covers a span of approximately 360 years from the death of Joseph (Ex. 1:6) to the erecting of the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai (Ex. 40:1ff). The name “Exodus” means “a going out, a marching out, military expedition... a way out, outlet” (LS 275). Exodus records the Hebrews (descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) mass exit out of Egypt by the help of God. God’s mercy and care for His people appears to be the theme of the book (cf. Ex. 19:4).

Overview of Leviticus

Leviticus is the third book in the Bible and set at a time when man’s history had spanned approximately 2,800 years. Leviticus is simply a continuation of Exodus. The entire book covers a duration of about fifty days (cf. Ex. 40:17 and Numb. 10:11). Moses now receives more information regarding the laws and priesthood from the tabernacle instead of from Mt. Sinai (cf. Ex. 40:34-36). Leviticus sets forth the holy nature of God. Not only is God holy, but all those who would be in fellowship with him must be holy as well. The Lord states, “For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy” (Lev. 11:44; cf. also 20:7; 21:8; 22:32).

The Book of Numbers

The book of Numbers gets its title from the Greek word arithmoi. This is the word assigned by the LXX (The Septuagint {a Greek translation of the OT}), due to the two numberings of the people in chapter 1 and 26. Numbers is the fourth of five books commonly called the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy).

Author and Date of Numbers

Moses appears to be the author of the book due to passages such as Numbers 33:1-2 where God tells him to write. Numbers records events that take place during the first month of the second year after coming out of Egypt (Numb. 9:1). Israel had left Egypt in the beginning of their months (Ex. 12:2). Three months latter they arrive at Sinai (cf. Ex. 19:1). Israel remains at Sinai until the second year, second month, and twentieth day (Numb. 10:11-13). Approximately 12 months are spent at Sinai receiving instructions and laws. Thirty eight years latter Israel finds themselves at the plains of Moab (Numb. 33:38). Deuteronomy opens with the date given at the “fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month...” (Deut. 1:3). The book thereby covers a span of nearly 40 years (1445-1406 B.C.).
Theme of Numbers

The book of Genesis reveals God’s promises, Exodus God’s mercy, and Leviticus God’s holiness. Numbers reveals God’s wrathful disposition toward sin. To achieve reverence and respect for Jehovah the Lord identifies sin and its consequences to Israel. Sin is identified as being “unclean” (Numb. 5:2; 8:21 / Lev. 16:16, 30), “defiled” (Numb. 5:3, 27 / Lev. 18:30), guilty of “trespassing against Jehovah” (Numb. 5:6), and being impure (Numb. 8:21). The message of the book of Numbers is that man will not go unpunished for sin. Moses warned Israel that if they would not follow God’s instructions regarding the taking of Canaan then “ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out” (Numb. 32:23).

The book of Numbers records a multitude of examples of times when Israel’s sin found them out. God’s wrath consumed the wicked complainers at Numbers 11:1 by fire and plague at 11:33. Miriam was struck with leprosy at Numbers 12:9. When the ten spies came back with an evil report about Canaan God determined to kill the whole congregation as one man (Numb. 14:8ff). Numbers 14:26ff reveals God’s wrath in that He caused the wicked to wander in the wilderness for forty years until their dead bodies littered the land. During this time of wandering Korah and many of the Reubenites rebelled against God and the Lord opened the earth to swallow them up. Furthermore He caused fire to rain down from heaven to consume 250 princes that had been involved in the sin of Korah (Numb. 16:29-35). Again, Israel complained at Numbers 16:43-46 and 14,700 people died by plague. The people again complain about the manna at Numbers 21:4-6 and God killed them with snakes. Numbers 25:1-5 reveals Israel joining themselves to Baal-peor and thereby God killed 24,000 by plague (Numb. 25:9). Time and time again Israel exercised a spirit of rebellion against the sovereign will of God and they paid a high price (cf. Numb. 14:8-9; 17:10; 20:10). God continued to press them with plague, fire, and death for their error.

Practical Application

Each time Israel rebelled “against Moses” or Aaron they were really turning against God’s will. When Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses’ position among the people God said, “wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?” (Numb. 12:8b). When Israel complained about the lack of water at Kadesh they blamed Moses (Numb. 20:2-5). The hard journey and loathsome manna was Moses’ fault (Numb. 21:4-6). Israel’s irritation at their hardships was not really against Moses or Aaron but rather God (cf. Numb. 17:5, 10). It took many horrid events for Israel to gain an understanding of the truth that God demands man’s respect, reverence, fear, and obedience. A turning point in the people’s spirit of rebellion seems to take place at Numbers 21. The people had sinned by complaining about the way of their journey and the manna that God gave them to eat. God caused fiery serpents to bite and kill them. The people respond by saying, “We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee (i.e., Moses); pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us” (Numb. 21:7). Said spirit was all that God had ever required of the people (cf. Numb. 5:6-7) and all that God requires of His people today (Acts 17:30; II Cor. 7:9-10; I Jn. 1:9).

You and I will learn to fear, reverence, respect, obey, and submit ourselves to God “through many tribulations” (Acts 14:22). We ought to be joyous over these times of difficulties (cf. James 1:1ff) and be content (Phil. 4:12ff). May we all identify our sin with a spirit of humility and learn to look to Jesus for the remedy. Jesus said, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believes in him have eternal life” (cf. John 3:14-16).
Overview of Numbers:

Chapter 1  Men of war numbered.
Chapter 2  Order of March and encampment.
Chapter 3  Selection and numbering of the Levites as God’s priests.
Chapter 4  Duties of the Sons of Levi.
Chapter 5  The Law of Jealousy
Chapter 6  The Law of the Nazirite Vow.
Chapter 7  The Princes of Israel offer Dedication Sacrifices for the Altar of Burnt Offering.
Chapter 8  Levites are separated and cleansed for the work God ordained for them.
Chapter 9  Israel charged to keep the Passover Feast / instructions given to follow God through the wilderness by a cloud in the day time and a pillar of fire at night.
Chapter 10 Israel commanded to leave Sinai on the 20th day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year. According to Exodus 19:1 it is apparent that Israel remained at Sinai receiving instructions for one year (twelve months).
Chapter 11 God’s anger is kindled against Israel because they begin to complain about the journey and manna.
Chapter 12 Miriam and Aaron question Moses’ authority and thereby sin against Jehovah.
Chapter 13 12 spies sent into Canaan. Joshua and Caleb display a spirit of faith whereas the other ten spies display an unfaithful spirit of defeatism.
Chapter 14 The spirit of unfaithfulness spreads to the whole congregation of God’s people and they begin to murmur against God. The Lord’s anger is kindled again and he pronounces a forty year period of wandering that all the complainers may die in the wilderness.
Chapter 15 God reveals the two sided nature of mankind. First, there is the man who sins with an unwitting spirit and secondly there is the one who sins with a high handed spirit. All sin yet God desires man to take advantage of His gracious offer to forgive through one’s obedience.
Chapter 16 Korah’s rebellion against God’s sovereign choice of Aaron and Moses.
Chapter 17 God makes it known to all Israel that His sovereign choice for the priesthood was the sons of Aaron. The Lord request that the 12 tribes bring a staff before the Lord and the one that buds would be God’s choice for the priesthood. The Lord caused Aaron’s rod to bud.
Chapter 18 The Levites were to receive a tithe through the heave offerings to be their physical portion. The Levites would not participate in work like the rest of the tribes and were to thereby be supported by the others to do the work of the tabernacle. God would be their portion and inheritance much like He is to all Christians today.
Chapter 19 As Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years they often came in contact with the dead. Said contact defiled them and they were commanded to go through a procedure to be clean. Those unwilling, through a spirit of rebellion, to go through the cleansing process were to be separated from the congregation.
Chapter 20 After the years of wandering in the wilderness the people return to Kadesh-Barnea and there is no water to drink. The congregation complains to Moses and Aaron yet on this occasion God tests the spirit of Moses and Aaron. The two leaders fail and God determines to lead the Israelites into Canaan by the leadership of another.
Chapter 21 People complain against Moses and God due to the journey and manna. God causes snakes to bite the people and many die. They repent and re-gain God’s favor. Israel then defeats Ammon.
Chapter 22 The King of Moab fears Israel and thereby sends for Balaam that he may curse Israel. Balaam is rebuked by his own donkey.
Chapter 23 Balaam blesses Israel.
Chapter 24 Balaam blesses Israel a third time and Balak is angered.
Chapter 25 Bothered by not receiving the rewards and honor offered by Balak Balaam causes Israel to be cursed. Twenty four thousand Israelites die due to their being joined to Baal-peor. Phinehas displays a spirit of conviction.
Chapter 26 God commands Moses to number the people again for the purpose of dividing Canaan.
Chapter 27 Laws concerning inheritance of land and the choosing of Joshua to replace Moses as leader or shepherd over God’s people.
Chapter 28 Laws regarding sacrifices and set feasts days.
Chapter 29 Laws regarding sacrifices and set feasts days.
Chapter 30  Laws regarding vows or oaths.
Chapter 31  Israel wars with the Midianites at the request of Jehovah.
Chapter 32  Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manassæh request the land east of the Jordan due to it being good for livestock.
Chapter 33  The Lord commands Moses to write down all the travels of Israel from Egypt to Moab.
Chapter 34  The Lord reveals to Moses the boundaries of the land of Canaan.
Chapter 35  Laws regarding Levitical cities and murder.
Chapter 36  Addendum law on inheritance of land.

Outline of Numbers

Chapter 1

I. Moses is commanded to number the men of war (1 all):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, every male, by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel, thou and Aaron shall number them by their hosts” (1:1-3),
   1. Israel had now been at Sinai for about 10 months receiving the law, erecting the tabernacle, and consecrating the priest for service thereof. The time for their departure into Canaan had come.
   2. The first duty to perform was numbering the men of war from age 20 and above. The very act suggest that there would be fighting in the near future for this mobile nation. It remains a valuable point to consider that though God said that he would give the land of Canaan to Israel. God’s promises; however, are always conditioned upon the individual’s willingness to obey Him.
B. “And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of his fathers' house. And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you. Of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur. Of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. Of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab. Of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar. Of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon. Of the children of Joseph: Of Ephraim: Elishama the son of Ammihud. Of Manassæh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. Of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni. Of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. Of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ochran. Of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel. Of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan. These are they that were called of the congregation, the princes of the tribes of their fathers; they were the heads of the thousands of Israel” (1:4-16),
   1. Jehovah instructs Moses and Aaron to take the “princes of the tribes” (i.e., heads of the families) with them in the task of numbering the men of war.
   2. Each of these 13 men would go to their respective families, count the men, and report back to Moses and Aaron.
C. “And Moses and Aaron took these men that are mentioned by name: And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month; and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls. As Jehovah commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai” (1:17-19),
   1. A great assembly was conducted on the first day of the second month.
   2. The chosen men mentioned above were publicly identified and the numbering process began.
D. “And the children of Reuben, Israel's first-born, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. Of the children of Simeon, their
generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, those that were numbered thereof, according
to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that
were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty
and nine thousand and three hundred. Of the children of Gad, their generations, by their families,
by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward,
all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Gad, were
forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty. Of the children of Judah, their generations, by their
families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and
upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of
Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred. Of the children of Issachar, their
generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from
twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Zebulun, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of
the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred. Of the children of Manasseh, their generations, by their families,
by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward,
all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. Of the children of Joseph, [namely], of the children of Ephraim, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred. Of the children of Manasseh, their generations, by their families,
by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward,
all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred. Of the children of Manasseh, their generations, by their families,
by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward,
all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Manasseh,
were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. Of the children of Joseph, [namely], of the children of Ephraim, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. Of the children of Dan, their
generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. Of the children of Asher, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. Of the children of Naphthali, their generations, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; those that were numbered of them, of the tribe of Naphtali, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. These are they that were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes
of Israel, being twelve men: they were each one for his fathers' house. So all they that were
numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, all
that were able to go forth to war in Israel; even all they that were numbered were six hundred
thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty” (1:20-46).

1. Reuben numbered 46,500 (vs. 21)
2. Simeon numbered 59,300 (vs. 23)
3. Gad numbered 45,650 (vs. 25)
4. Judah numbered 74,600 (vs. 27)
5. Issachar numbered 54,400 (vs. 29)
6. Zebulun numbered 57,400 (vs. 31)
7. Ephraim numbered 40,500 (vs. 33)
8. Manasseh numbered 32,200 (vs. 35)
9. Benjamin numbered 35,400 (vs. 37)
10. Dan numbered 62,700 (vs. 39)
11. Asher numbered 41,500 (vs. 41)
12. Naphtali numbered 53,400 (vs. 43)
13. Total number of men of war was 603,550 (vs. 46)
E. “But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them. For Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Only the tribe of Levi thou shalt not number, neither shalt thou take the sum of them among the children of Israel; but appoint thou the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all the furniture thereof, and over all that belongeth to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the furniture thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle. And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, according to their hosts. But the Levites shall encamp round about the tabernacle of the testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of the testimony, Thus did the children of Israel; according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses, so did they” (1:47-54).

1. The Levites were the only men not counted due to the fact that their service would be to the tabernacle rather than war.

2. The Levites would be responsible for setting up and taking down the tabernacle each time the people traveled. While camping, the Levites alone would be camped round about the tabernacle.

Chapter 2

I. Jehovah instructs Moses and Aaron regarding the order in which Israel would camp while traveling (2 all):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, The children of Israel shall encamp every man by his own standard, with the ensigns of their fathers’ houses: over against the tent of meeting shall they encamp round about” (2:1-2).

1. As Israel traveled about they would need to stop and camp for rest and food. When the people camped there was to be order in the process. All twelve tribes of Israel would be divided into four sections and assembled by a designed “standard” or flagging system that three tribes would rally around. Each family had their own flag (ensign) to assemble their kindred. It is likely that the ensign flag of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan were the “standard” by which the remaining tribes assembled behind.

2. “According to rabbinical tradition, the standard of Judah bore the figure of a lion, that of Reuben the likeness of a man or of a man’s head, that of Ephraim the figure of an ox, and that of Dan the figure of an eagle; so that the four living creatures united in the cherubic forms described by Ezekiel were represented upon these four standards” (Keil and Delitzsch v. 1, pp. 660).

B. “And those that encamp on the east side toward the sunrising shall be they of the standard of the camp of Judah, according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Judah shall be Nahshon the son of Amminadab. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were three score and fourteen thousand and six hundred. And those that encamp next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar: and the prince of the children of Issachar shall be Nethanel the son of Zuar. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred. And the tribe of Zebulun: and the prince of the children of Zebulun shall be Eliab the son of Helon. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Judah were a hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six hundred, according to their hosts. They shall set forth first. On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred. And those that encamp next unto him shall be the tribe of Simeon: and the prince of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. And the tribe of Gad: and the prince of the children of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and six...
hundred and fifty. All that were numbered of the camp of Reuben were a hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, according to their hosts. And they shall set forth second. Then the tent of meeting shall set forward, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place, by their standards. On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty thousand and five hundred. And next unto him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the prince of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. And the tribe of Benjamin: and the prince of the children of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were a hundred thousand and eight thousand and a hundred, according to their hosts. And they shall set forth third. On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan according to their hosts: and the prince of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. And those that encamp next unto him shall be the tribe of Asher: and the prince of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ochran. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred. And the tribe of Naphtali: and the prince of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan. And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. All that were numbered of the camp of Dan were a hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall set forth hindmost by their standards. These are they that were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses: all that were numbered of the camps according to their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and fifty. But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as Jehovah commanded Moses. Thus did the children of Israel; according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses, so they encamped by their standards, and so they set forward, every one by their families, according to their fathers' houses” (2:3-34).

1. Those camping on the East side of the Tabernacle (2:1-9):
   a. Levites  
   b. Judah  
   c. Issachar  
   d. Zebulun

2. Those camping on the South side of the Tabernacle (2:10-16):
   a. Levites  
   b. Reuben  
   c. Simeon  
   d. Gad

3. Those camping on the West side of the Tabernacle (2:17-24):
   a. Levites  
   b. Ephraim  
   c. Manasseh  
   d. Benjamin

4. Those camping on the North side of the Tabernacle: (2:25-31):
   a. Levites  
   b. Dan  
   c. Asher  
   d. Naphali
I. Jehovah selects the Levites as his chosen people to serve Aaron and his sons in the work of the Tabernacle (3:1-13):

A. “Now these are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that Jehovah spake with Moses in mount Sinai. And these are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the first-born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests that were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. And Nadab and Abihu died before Jehovah, when they offered strange fire before Jehovah, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children; and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the presence of Aaron their father. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him. And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. And they shall keep all the furniture of the tent of meeting, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him on the behalf of the children of Israel. And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall keep their priesthood: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” (3:1-10).

1. The Lord had ordained Aaron and his sons as the priesthood. Two of Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, had been struck dead due to offering strange fire before Jehovah (cf. Lev. 10:1ff). The two remaining sons of Aaron were Eleazar and Ithamar. These three men served as priests (Aaron being the high priest).

2. Now we see that the Levites were not numbered for war because their duty was to be in assisting Aaron and the priesthood with the tabernacle service.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the first-born that openeth the womb among the children of Israel;
and the Levites shall be mine: for all the first-born are mine; on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast; mine they shall be: I am Jehovah” (3:11-13).

1. Jehovah made a sovereign choice to pick out the Levites from among the Israelites to serve in the tabernacle with the priests.

2. These would belong unto Jehovah as all first born are consecrated unto him.

II. Moses is commanded to number the Levites (3:14-39):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, Number the children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them. And Moses numbered them according to the word of Jehovah, as he was commanded. And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari” (3:14-17).

1. Moses numbers all male Levites from one month old and upward.

2. The Levites were divided into three sections according to the three sons of Levi; i.e., Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

B. “And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei. And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram, and Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' houses. Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites. Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred. The families of the Gershonites shall encamp behind the tabernacle westward. And the prince of the fathers' house of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael. And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting shall be the tabernacle, and the Tent, the covering thereof, and the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof” (3:18-26).

1. The Gershonites numbered 7,500.

2. The Gershonites were to encamp behind the tabernacle (i.e., westward).

3. The prince of the Gershonites was to be Eliasaph.

4. The duty of the Gershonites was the curtains and covering of the tabernacle with its doors.

C. “And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites. According to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, there were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary. The families of the sons of Kohath shall encamp on the side of the tabernacle southward. And the prince of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the screen, and all the service thereof. And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be prince of the princes of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary” (3:27-32).

1. The Kohathites numbered 8,600.

2. The Kohathites were to encamp on the South side of the tabernacle.

3. Elizaphan was to be their prince.

4. Their duties included the upkeep of the furniture and vessels of the tabernacle.

5. Eleazar, Aaron’s son, is named prince of the princes of the Levites.

D. “Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari. And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred. And the prince of the fathers' house of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail: they shall encamp on the side of the tabernacle northward. And the appointed charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the instruments thereof, and all the service thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords” (3:33-37).
1. The Merarites numbered 6,200.
2. The Merarites were instructed to encamp upon the North side of the tabernacle.
3. The prince of the Merarites was to be Zuriel.
4. The work of the Merarites involved the responsibility for the tabernacle’s boards, bars, pillars, and sockets (the hardware for constructing the tent).

E. “And those that encamp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrising, shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death. All that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of Jehovah, by their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand” (3:38-39).

1. The East side of the tabernacle was to be taken by Moses, Aaron, and his sons the priests.
2. Their duties were known as the “charge of the sanctuary;” i.e., they performed all the works listed in the book of Leviticus to atone the people of their sins.
3. The total number of Levites males one month and older equaled 22,000.

III. Moses is charged with numbering all the first born of the children of Israel (3:40-51):

A. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Number all the first-born males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names. And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am Jehovah) instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel: and Moses numbered, as Jehovah commanded him, all the first-born among the children of Israel” (3:40-42).

1. Moses makes a calculation of the first born among all Israel (aside from the Levites) and an exchange was to be made. The 22,000 male Levites were to be an exchange for the first born among Israel.
2. The firstborn cattle that were to be consecrated unto the Lord were to be exchanged for the all the Levite cattle.

B. “And all the first-born males according to the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am Jehovah. And for the redemption of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first-born of the children of Israel, that are over and above [the number of] the Levites, thou shalt take five shekels apiece by the poll; after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them (the shekel is twenty gerahs): and thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons” (3:43-48).

1. When Moses numbered the firstborn of Israel he found 22,273 (273 more than the male Levites appointed to Aaron and his sons).
2. To compensate for the 273 (the 22,000 were traded equally) the Lord places a 5 shekel toll upon each of these extra individuals and gives the money to Aaron and his sons no doubt for the service of the tabernacle.

C. “And Moses took the redemption-money from them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites: from the first-born of the children of Israel took he the money, a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: and Moses gave the redemption-money unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of Jehovah, as Jehovah commanded Moses” (3:49-51).

1. The five shekels per first born child in Israel amounted to 1,365 shekels.
2. Moses gave this money to Aaron and his sons as God directed.
I. Duties of Aaron, his sons, and the Kohathites when Moving the Tabernacle (4:1-20):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter upon the service, to do the work in the tent of meeting. This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting, about the most holy things: when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall go in, and his sons, and they shall take down the veil of the screen, and cover the ark of the testimony with it, and shall put thereon a covering of sealskin, and shall spread over it a cloth all of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof. And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls and the cups wherewith to pour out; and the continual bread shall be thereon: and they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in the staves thereof. And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and its lamps, and its snuffers, and its snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it: and they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of sealskin, and shall put it upon the frame. And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of sealskin, and shall put in the staves thereof: and they shall take all the vessels of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of sealskin, and shall put them on the frame. And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon: and they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, the firepans, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of sealskin, and put in the staves thereof. And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the furniture of the sanctuary, as the camp is set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch the sanctuary, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting” (4:1-15).

1. All Levites from the age of 30 to 50 were charged with the work of the tabernacle.
2. Aaron and his sons had the following duty when moving the tabernacle:
   a. First, they were to take down the veil screen that separated the holy place from the most holy place and use it to cover the Ark of the Covenant. Over this covering they were to cover the ark with seal skins and then place the wooden staves through the rings that are designed to carry the ark.
b. Secondly, Aaron and his sons were to cover the table of showbread with blue cloth and overlay this with seal skins.

c. Thirdly, they were to cover the candlestick holder with blue cloth and then seal skins.

d. Fourthly, they were to cover the altar of incense with blue cloth and overlay it with seal skins.

e. Fifthly, all the vessels of ministry were to be wrapped in blue cloth and then in seal skins. The package was then to be placed upon the altar of incense. Finally, Aaron and his sons were to spread another blue cloth over the whole thing. The ashes of the altar were to be taken away.

3. When Aaron and his sons have covered all the furnishings of the tabernacle the Kohathites were to then take hold of them and move them to the next destination.

B. “And the charge of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the continual meal-offering, and the anointing oil, the charge of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, the sanctuary, and the furniture thereof. And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; but thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden; but they shall not go in to see the sanctuary even for a moment, lest they die” (4:16-20).

1. Eleazar was to supervise the Kohathites presence in the hauling away of the tabernacle’s furnishings.

2. The Kohathites would die if they actually went into the sanctuary to see the insides.

II. The Duties of the Gershonites when moving the Tabernacle (4:21-28):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers’ houses, by their families; from thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to wait upon the service, to do the work in the tent of meeting. This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and in bearing burdens: they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tent of meeting, its covering, and the covering of seal skin that is above upon it, and the screen for the door of the tent of meeting, and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and whatsoever shall be done with them: therein shall they serve” (4:21-26).

1. Those who served in the family of the Gershonites were between the ages of 30-50 too.

2. The duties of the Gershonites would involve carrying the curtains of the tabernacle, hangings of the court, screen for the door of the gate, and all the instruments of service.

B. “At the commandment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burden, and in all their service; and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burden. This is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest” (4:27-28).

1. The Gershonites, like the Kohathites, were to be at the service of Aaron and his sons.

2. Ithamar, the son of Aaron, was to be in charge of the Gershonites work.

III. The Duties of the Merarites when moving the Tabernacle (4:29-33):

A. “As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them by their families, by their fathers' houses; from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth upon the service, to do the work of the tent of meeting. And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tent of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall appoint the instruments of the charge of their burden” (4:29-32).

1. All those age 30 – 50 of the family of Merari were to serve in the work of the tabernacle.

2. Their work included moving the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, cords, and instruments.

B. “This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tent of meeting, under the hand of Ithamar the son ofAaron the priest” (4:33).
1. The family of Merari thereby had their prescribed work to do when moving the tabernacle.
2. The family of Merari were also under the direction of Ithamar.

IV. Numbering of the men of age to do the work of the Tabernacle among the families of Levi (4:34-49):
A. “And Moses and Aaron and the princes of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families, and by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entered upon the service, for work in the tent of meeting; and those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. These are they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that did serve in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses” (4:34-37).
   1. God commands Moses and Aaron to number all the families of Levi who were of age 30 – 50 (i.e., those able to do the work of the tabernacle).
   2. The family of the Kohathites numbered 2,750 men.

B. “And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, their families, and by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entered upon the service, for work in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them, by their families, by their fathers' houses, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty. These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, all that did serve in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Jehovah” (4:38-41).
   1. Moses, Aaron, and the princes of the people also counted the sons of Gershon that were between the ages of 30 – 50.
   2. The Gershonites numbered 2,630 men.

C. “And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, by their families, by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entered upon the service, for work in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them by their families, were three thousand and two hundred. These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses” (4:42-45).
   1. Moses, Aaron, and the princes of the people numbered the sons of Merari who were between the ages of 30 – 50 as well.
   2. The Merarites numbered 3,200 men.

D. “All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the princes of Israel numbered, by their families, and by their fathers' houses, from thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entered in to do the work of service, and the work of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting, even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore. According to the commandment of Jehovah they were numbered by Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as Jehovah commanded Moses” (4:46-49).
   1. Moses, Aaron, and the princes of the people did all God commanded them in that they numbered all three families of Levi who were of the ages 30 – 50.
   2. The final count of all men of the three families who were between the ages of 30 – 50 was numbered at 8,580.

Chapter 5

I. The Law of being restored once sin had Occurred (5:1-10):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is unclean by the dead: both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camp, in the midst whereof I dwell. And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp; as Jehovah spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel” (5:1-4).
   1. The book of Leviticus defined the leper as unclean (Lev. 13-14 all) as well as a host of other things that make one unclean. To be “unclean” was to be in sin (see Lev. 16:16, 30) (see study
# 1; The Identity of Sin). One interesting point is that when a man or woman became a leper or a woman had a child and so forth they were recognized as “unclean.” When a woman has a baby or a man has leprosy it is really no fault of their own yet they are considered unclean until either healed or given a period of time for a mother who has given birth. The point being that God is the law giver, he is pure in all since of the word, and holy. Moses writes, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am Jehovah your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am Jehovah who sanctifies you” (Lev. 20:7-8).

2. The sovereign and all holy God determined that a leper and other unclean things not only causes the individual to be unclean but also “defiles” any other person who comes in contact with them. The idea of being “defiled” is revealed as being guilty of sin (cf. Lev. 18:30) (see study # 1). These things being so, God instructs Moses to separate all unclean people from the camp so that the rest are not defiled by their uncleanness.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, so as to trespass against Jehovah, and that soul shall be guilty; then he shall confess his sin which he hath done: and he shall make restitution for his guilt in full, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him in respect of whom he hath been guilty” (5:5-7).

1. Here we have sin defined. Sin is defined as a trespass against Jehovah (see study # 1). The guilty man or woman is instructed to “confess his sin which he hath done” (see study # 2; A History of the Remedy for Sin). When one confesses sin in their lives they are indicating to God a heart of humility and earnest desire to follow His laws. Those who will not confess their sins illustrate a hard heart that has no desire to follow God’s laws (cf. Ex. 5:1-2; 7:16, 22; 8:20; 10:3) (see study # 3; Hard Hearts). Moses had earlier instructed the people of God to “confess” their sins to God and thereby illustrate a heart that desired God’s mercy (cf. Lev. 5:5; 26:40). All those today who would show forth a humble, contrite, and submissive to God’s laws heart shall confess their errors and repent to God (cf. Acts 8:22; I Jn. 1:8-9). Said attitude is all God has ever demanded from His people (cf. Ps. 51:3; Isa. 57:15; Jer. 3:13; Hos. 5:15) (see study # 2).

2. Not only should the man or woman confess their sins but they should also restore any thing that was damaged or lost in their act of sin.

C. “But if the man have no kinsman to whom restitution may be made for the guilt, the restitution for guilt which is made unto Jehovah shall be the priest's; besides the ram of the atonement, whereby atonement shall be made for him. And every heave-offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they present unto the priest, shall be his. And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his” (5:8-10).

1. There may be cases where one’s sins caused property loss yet there was no one to pay the restoring monies to.

2. In said case, the sinner was to pay the priests the restitution fees.

II. The Law of Jealousy (5:11-31):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, and a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, and she be not taken in the act; and the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and shall bring her oblation for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is a meal-offering of jealousy, a meal-offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance” (5:11-15).

1. When a man or woman was caught in the act of adultery the case was clear and simple. Each received the death penalty (Lev. 20:10). What about cases where no one, but the guilty and the omniscient God, knows about the incident? It may be that the husband would become suspicious and his suspicion drives him to have a “spirit of jealousy.” Incidentally, here is
another case where the word “spirit” is used to indicate a disposition, way of thinking, or character (see study # 4; Use of the word “spirit” in the Bible)

2. The proverb writer writes, “He that commits adultery with a woman is void of understanding: he doeth it who would destroy his own soul” (Prov. 6:32). It seems fascinating that Jesus said that adultery would be the only legal cause for a divorce and remarriage at Matthew 19. These studies indicate God’s abhorrence for the man or woman who would cast off their mate for another. Such a one does not consider the intense hurt done to their mate, harm to their own souls, and damage to the family as a whole (see study # 5; Adultery).

3. Moses thereby deals with a case where a woman has committed adultery behind her husband’s back. First, note that the woman who commits such a crime is now viewed as “defiled” (i.e., unclean, in sin, and rejected of God).

4. The suspicious husband is to bring his wife before the priests and offer a meal offering of jealousy.

B. “And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Jehovah: and the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water. And the priest shall set the woman before Jehovah, and let the hair of the woman's head go loose, and put the meal-offering of memorial in her hands, which is the meal-offering of jealousy: and the priest shall have in his hand the water of bitterness that causeth the curse. And the priest shall cause her to swear, and shall say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou have not gone aside to uncleanness, being under thy husband, be thou free from this water of bitterness that causeth the curse. But if thou have gone aside, being under thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee besides thy husband: then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, Jehovah make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when Jehovah doth make thy thigh to fall away, and thy body to swell; and this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, and make thy body to swell, and thy thigh to fall away. And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen” (5:16-22).

1. A test of innocence is administered unto the woman suspected of adultery. The inference is that she is denying having committed adultery with another man. After, thereby, the woman is brought to the priest and the meal offering of jealousy rest in her hands the priest is to gather “holy water,” likely water from the laver in front of the tabernacle that the priests use to wash themselves (cf. Ex. 30:18). This holy water is mixed with dirt from the floor of the tabernacle. The priests would then request that the woman swear her innocence.

2. The woman was then to drink the water that causes the curse and if she was guilty her thigh would fall away and her body would swell. It seems that those parts of the body involved in the act of adultery would be the parts to suffer.

C. “And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness: and he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that causeth the curse; and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her and become bitter. And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the meal-offering before Jehovah, and bring it unto the altar: and the priest shall take a handful of the meal-offering, as the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water” (5:23-26).

1. The order of events is now given.

2. First, the jealous husband brings his wife to the priest due to his suspicion of adultery. Secondly, the priest takes holy water (likely from the laver) and then places dirt from the tabernacle into it as a mixture. Thirdly, the woman is caused to swear her innocence or confess her fault. If she proclaims her innocence she is to drink the mixture. The priest takes a meal offering and offers it to Jehovah. If the woman’s thigh rots away then she was guilty and the priest records the event in “a book.”

D. “And when he hath made her drink the water, then it shall come to pass, if she be defiled, and have committed a trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her
and become bitter, and her body shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away: and the woman shall be a curse among her people” (5:27).

1. Note that being “defiled” equals “committing a trespass (i.e., sin)” (see study # 1).
2. Two consequences to her lies and sin against her husband. First, her thigh shall fall away in rot and secondly the woman will be unclean and a curse among her people.

E. “And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, being under her husband, goeth aside, and is defiled; or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon a man, and he is jealous of his wife; then shall he set the woman before Jehovah, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. And the man shall be free from iniquity, and that woman shall bear her iniquity” (5:28-31).

1. Note that when an individual is “not defiled” they are viewed as “clean” (see study # 1).
2. It seems that God would miraculously enable the woman to conceive seed of her true husband if she was innocent. The wounds of jealousy would likely be healed with the conception of a child between the husband and wife. Bearing children was considered a blessed and joyous occasion for the Jews.
3. Note again the position of the wife to the husband. She is “under her husband.” The idea is that she belongs to him alone and is subject to his headship. When the apostle Paul spoke of the submissive nature of women “as saith the law” at I Corinthians 14:34 it is likely that he took into consideration such passages as these (see study # 6; The Role of Women in the Home).
4. These passages bring to light the power of jealousy on the part of a spouse. Most men that I have ever talked to about the subject of adultery confess that they would rip the head off of another man who is caught with his wife. We ought to trust each other as man and wife. There should never be flirting or any kind of gestures made toward another that is not your spouse. The sin of adultery holds heavy consequences in the law of God. Under this Mosaic system it was punishable by death. Under the law of Christ is would mean that said guilty individual may be divorced and never able to marry another again (cf. Matt. 19:3-9).

Chapter 6


A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself unto Jehovah, he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or dried. All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the grape-vine, from the kernels even to the husk” (6:1-4).

1. The Lord reveals the ordinances for the Nazirite vow that may be taken by either man or woman.
2. The Nazirite vow was done to “separate oneself unto Jehovah.” Said separation or consecration was a sanctifying of one’s self from all that would be revealed as unclean or sinful. This state of mind illustrates the purpose of an individual to be of that priestly order that God intended for his people (cf. Ex. 19:5-6). Said mindset is opposed to the “spirit of whoredom” that Israel would latter portray (cf. Hos. 5:4).
3. Note the distinctions between wine and strong drink, vinegar of wine, vinegar of strong drink, and juice of grapes. Every product of the grape vine was to be avoided likely because it stood out in history as a product associated with sensuality.

B. “All the days of his vow of separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in which he separateth himself unto Jehovah, he shall be holy; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long” (6:5).

1. Another restriction was the cutting of one’s hair.
2. Hair has been shown to be a sign of one’s strength and thereby the Nazirite would be one with an outward show of inner spiritual strength (cf. II Sam. 14:25-26).
C. “All the days that he separateth himself unto Jehovah he shall not come near to a dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because his separation unto God is upon his head. All the days of his separation he is holy unto Jehovah. And if any man die very suddenly beside him, and he defile the head of his separation; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it. And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tent of meeting: and the priest shall offer one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make atonement for him, for that he sinned by reason of the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day. And he shall separate unto Jehovah the days of his separation, and shall bring a he-lamb a year old for a trespass-offering; but the former days shall be voided, because his separation was defiled” (6:6-12).

1. The third separation of consecration is that the Nazirite be free from the defilement of the dead. The Nazirite would not be able to attend to his dead father, mother, brother, or sister. Said contact with the dead would defile him.

2. Note that even if one were to “suddenly die beside him” the Nazirite would be defiled. Said defilement meant that “he sinned by reason of the dead” (Num. 6:11). Due to this sin the Nazirites’ previous days of separation were voided and he had to offer a sin-offering to make atonement.

3. This reminds us of the nature of God brought out in the book of Leviticus. So many things may involuntarily cause one to be unclean (such as the delivery of a child and a woman’s monthly menstrual cycle). These cases help us to understand the perfect and holy nature of God. The dead are no part of God’s holy nature. Thereby such contact made the sanctified defiled. Death will thereby not have a place in the holy heavens where lives Jehovah God (cf. Rev. 21:4) (see study # 7; The Nature of God) (see study # 8; What will Heaven be Like?).

D. “And this is the law of the Nazirite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tent of meeting: and he shall offer his oblation unto Jehovah, one he-lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt-offering, and one ewe-lamb a year old without blemish for a sin-offering, and one ram without blemish for peace-offerings, and a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their meal-offering, and their drink-offerings. And the priest shall present them before Jehovah, and shall offer his sin-offering, and his burnt-offering: and he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto Jehovah, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offerings thereof. And the priest shall wave them for a wave-offering before Jehovah; this is holy for the priest, together with the wave-breast and heave-thigh: and after that the Nazirite may drink wine. This is the law of the Nazirite who voweth, and of his oblation unto Jehovah for his separation, besides that which he is able to get: according to his vow which he voweth, so he must do after the law of his separation” (6:13-21).

1. The order of Nazirite sanctification is as follows. First, the one desiring to be sanctified unto Jehovah by a Nazirite vow is to bring a burnt-offering, sin-offering, peace-offering, meal-offering, and a drink-offering.

2. The one making the Nazirite vow was to then shave off his or her head and burn it in the fire of the peace offering.

II. Moses instructed on how to bless the children of Israel (6:22-27):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel: ye shall say unto them, Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them” (6:22-27).
1. God instructs Moses to bless Israel.
2. To bless another can simply mean to wish their happiness or it can mean to be a recipient of God’s promises. The blessing instructed here indicates a twofold purpose. First, the blessings includes a physical sustaining and secondly it indicates spiritual benefits (see study # 9; Bible Blessings).

Lessons learned from Numbers 5 and 6

- To be “defiled” or “unclean” is to be guilty of sin (cf. Numb. 5:3, 13, 27; 6:9-11).
- Sin is committing a trespass against God. The guilty man or woman is depicted as “guilty” (Numb. 5:6).
- God demands that the sinner “confess” their sins (Lev. 5:5; 26:40; Numb. 5:7). The guilty sinner will only confess when an acknowledgement of sin has been made on their part (cf. Isa. 57:15; Jer. 3:13; Hos. 5:15).
- God does not view lightly the sin of adultery. Under the Mosaic system it was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10). The Proverb writer said, “He that commits adultery with a woman is void of understanding he doeth it who would destroy his own soul” (Prov. 6:32). Note that any actions associated with adultery can cause extreme jealousy, destruction of the marriage, and destruction of the home. Those who do so are subject to judgment and can in no way, if divorced, ever marry again (cf. Matt. 19:3-9).
- The Nazirite vow was accomplished by those who purposed to separate themselves from all things that would defile or cause them to be unclean (i.e., in sin). Such a spirit or mindset revealed the desire of one (man or woman) to fulfill that priestly request of Jehovah God for his people (cf. Ex. 19:5-6). This mindset would be opposed to the “spirit of whoredom” (Hos. 5:4; Eph. 2:1-3). The “spirit” of the Christian today is to fulfill his or her duty as a royal priesthood unto God (cf. I Pet. 2:9-10; Rev. 1:6).
- Lastly, we learn of the holy nature of God (Numb. 6:6, 9, 11). God and death do not go together. Death will thereby not exists in heaven (I Cor. 15:53ff; Rev. 21:4).

Numbers 7

I. The Princes of Israel bring gifts of wagons and oxen to the Levites so that they may move the tabernacle with greater Ease (7:1-9):

A. “And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle” (7:1-3).

1. Note that at this point in history, the tabernacle has been constructed and set up near Mount Sinai. The tabernacle (with its furnishings and utensils), priests, and people have been sanctified (cf. Leviticus). The time for Israel’s departure from Mount Sinai and trek to Canaan has come.

2. We gain a clear understanding here of the identity of the “princes of Israel.” Moses identifies the princes as “heads of the house of their fathers.” The princes were thereby men who stood as representatives of each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

3. The princes seem to make a voluntary offering for transporting the tabernacle and its furnishings.

B. “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service. And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites. Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service: And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders” (7:4-9).
1. Two wagons and four oxen were given to the sons of Gershon for their help in moving the curtains of the tabernacle, hangings of the court, screen for the door of the gate, and all the instruments of service (cf. Numb. 4:21-26).

2. The work of the sons of Merari involved moving the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, cords, and instruments (cf. Numb. 4:29-32). Merari was thereby given four wagons and eight oxen for this work.

3. Carefully note that the sons of Kohath were given neither wagons nor oxen “because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders” (cf. Numb. 4:1-15). God’s commands, regarding moving the holy furnishings of the tabernacle, were that the sons of Kohath would bear these things “upon their shoulders.” When Uzzah was latter struck dead for his error in moving the Ark of the Covenant there was certainly no excuses to be given for God had clearly instructed them (II Sam. 6:1-7) (see study # 10; Bible Authority).

II. The Princes of Israel offer Dedication Sacrifices for the Altar of Burnt Offering (7:10-83):

A. “And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar. And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah: And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab” (7:10-17).

1. Each of the twelve princes that represented the twelve tribes of Israel was to bring an offering that the altar might be dedicated. To “dedicate” indicates “a ceremony of dedicating... to set apart for a deity or for religious purposes; consecrate... to set apart for special use” (AHD 373).

2. The first prince to bring offerings of dedication was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah (first day of dedicating the altar). Nahshon brought silver, fine flour, oil, gold, and incense. Furthermore he brought one bullock, ram, and lamb for a burnt offering. Nahshon brought a goat for a sin offering and seventeen animals for peace offerings.

B. “On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer: He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar” (7:18-23).

1. The prince for the tribe of Issachar was Nethaneel.

2. Nathaneel, upon the second day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

C. “On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, did offer: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon” (7:24-29).

1. The prince of the tribe of Zebulun was Eliab.

2. Eliab, upon the third day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

D. “On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer: His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of
seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur” (7:30-35).

1. The prince of the tribe of Reuben was Elizur.
2. Elizur, upon the fourth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

E. “On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, did offer: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai” (7:36-41).

1. The prince of the tribe of Simeon was Shelumiel.
2. Shelumiel, upon the fifth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

F. “On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered: His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel” (7:42-47).

1. The prince of the tribe of Gad was Eliasaph.
2. Eliasaph, upon the sixth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

G. “On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering.  And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud” (7:48-53).

1. The prince of the tribe of Ephraim was Elishama.
2. Elishama, upon the seventh day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

H. “On the eighth day offered Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh: His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering.  And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur” (7:54-59).

1. The prince of the tribe of Manasseh was Gamaliel.
2. Gamaliel, upon the eighth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

I. “On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, offered: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for
a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni” (7:60-65).

1. The prince of the tribe of Benjamin was Abidan.

2. Abidan, upon the ninth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

J. “On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, offered: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai” (7:66-71).

1. The prince of the tribe of Dan was Ahiezer.

2. Ahiezer, upon the tenth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

K. “On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, offered: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran” (7:72-77).

1. The prince of the tribe of Asher was Pagiel.

2. Pagiel, upon the eleventh day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

L. “On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, offered: His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense: One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan” (7:78-83).

1. The prince of the tribe of Naphtali was Ahira.

2. Ahira, upon the twelfth day of dedicating the altar, brought the same burnt, sin, and peace offerings as did Nahshon the prince of Judah.

III. God speaks directly to Moses (7:84-89):

A. “This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold: Each charger of silver weighing an hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels. All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve. And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed” (7:84-88).

1. The anointing and dedication of the altar was accomplished by the means provided by the princes of the twelve tribes of Israel.

2. Moses gives the sum of the sacrifices.

B. “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him” (7:89).
1. Note that Moses has entered into the most holy place (i.e., the place beyond the veil that separates the Ark of the Covenant from the other furnishings of the tabernacle).

2. God speaks directly to Moses from between the two cherubs that faced each other atop of the Ark of the Covenant. Between these two cherubs was the mercy seat and here God communed with Moses just as He had promised at Exodus 25:21-22. Later, God would communicate with his prophets through visions and dreams (cf. Dan. 7:1; Ezek. 1:1 etc) (see study # 11; Divine Inspiration).

Chapter 8

I. Separation of the Levites from Israel for the Service of God (8:1-20):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof so as to give light in front of the candlestick, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And this was the work of the candlestick, beaten work of gold; unto the base thereof, [and] unto the flowers thereof, it was beaten work: according unto the pattern which Jehovah had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick” (8:1-4).

1. God had given Moses the “pattern” for the candlestick at Exodus 25:31-40.

2. God spoke with Moses from the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant and gave him instructions regarding the duty of the high priest and Levites’ cleansing. Aaron’s duty, as high priest of the people, was to light the seven lamps upon the candlestick.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of expiation upon them, and let them cause a razor to pass over all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and cleanse themselves. Then let them take a young bullock, and its meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil; and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering. And thou shalt present the Levites before the tent of meeting: and thou shalt assemble the whole congregation of the children of Israel:” (8:5-9).

1. Moses is divinely instructed to “cleanse” the Levites (i.e., those three families of Merai, Gershon, and Kohath) / the priests have already been cleansed (cf. Lev. 8-9).

2. The Levites were to cleanse themselves (sanctify as holy) (cf. Lev. 11:43-45 / Numb. 8:12 below) by:
   a. Sprinkling the water of expiation upon them.
   b. Causing a razor to pass over the entire bodies.
   c. Washing their clothes and flesh.
   d. Offering a meal-offering and sin-offering.

3. After these cleansing steps have been taken the whole congregation of God’s people were to assemble themselves at the tabernacle.

C. “and thou shalt present the Levites before Jehovah. And the children of Israel shall lay their hands upon the Levites: and Aaron shall offer the Levites before Jehovah for a wave-offering, on the behalf of the children of Israel, that it may be theirs to do the service of Jehovah. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and offer thou the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, unto Jehovah, to make atonement for the Levites. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for a wave-offering unto Jehovah. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tent of meeting: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for a wave-offering. For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of all that openeth the womb, even the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me” (8:10-16).

1. The purpose for the great assembly was the presenting of the Levites unto Jehovah God for the service of the tabernacle. The people laid their hands upon the Levites and the Levites laid their hands upon the sin-offering and burnt-offerings so that the Levites may be atoned from their sins (i.e., clean).
2. The Levites would actually be symbolically offered unto Jehovah upon the altar for a wave-offering to Him.

D. "For all the first-born among the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself: And I have taken the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel; that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary. Thus did Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the Levites: according unto all that Jehovah commanded Moses touching the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them" (8:17-20).

1. The Levites stand as God’s gift of the firstborn of Israel. God has taken that which belongs to Him and has given it to Aaron and his sons. Said statement signifies a clear distinction between the Levites and the priests (cf. Numb. 10:8).

2. The services that revolved around the tabernacle were a very important part of Israel’s existence. Their atonement was dependant upon the condition of those who served the tabernacle. If they were unable, through uncleanness, to perform their sacrifices then there would be nothing but “plagues” to look forward to.

II. Purification and Work of the Levites (8:21-26):

A. “And the Levites purified themselves from sin, and they washed their clothes: and Aaron offered them for a wave-offering before Jehovah; and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them” (8:21).

1. Note again the associations between “purification” and “sin.” Moses clearly identifies “atonement” with “purification from sin” and being “cleansed.” Those not pure were deemed unclean and unfit for service (see study #1). Over and over the idea of being morally defiled is reiterated. The defiled (unclean and spotted) are those who have sinned (i.e., have not submitted themselves to God’s laws). Sin in one’s life is thereby identified as having the law of God absent from the mind. One who is governed by self laws or various religious laws that do not represent truth are in sin (cf. I Jn. 3:4).

2. Aaron did as God commanded and offered the Levites for a “wave-offering.”

B. “And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron, and before his sons: as Jehovah had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, This is that which belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service in the work of the tent of meeting: and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the work, and shall serve no more, but shall minister with their brethren in the tent of meeting, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charges” (8:22-26).

1. After the Levites were cleansed, purified, and atoned of their sin they were able to do their prescribed labor of moving the tabernacle.

2. There appears to be another discrepancy between the instructions at Numbers 4:3, 47 and here. Moses had said that those from 30 to 50 years of age were responsible for the Levitical labor yet now states that it should be 25 to 50 years of age. There may be a simple explanation or it may not be so simple... some things are left unsaid (for a plausible explanation read Keil and Delitzsch’s commentary on the Pentateuch pp. 682).

Lessons Learned from chapters 7-8

• Sin is clearly identified in the book of Numbers as being guilty of transgressing God’s laws (Numb. 5:6). God gave a direct commandment regarding how the Kohathites were to move the furnishings of the tabernacle (cf. Numb. 7:9). When Uzzah of II Samuel 6:1-7 moved the Ark of the Covenant with ox and wagon God’s command was violated and he died. Those who sin today are guilty of violating God’s laws (I Jn. 3:4). The consequence of sin today is spiritual death (cf. Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1ff).
• We learn about God’s laws through divine revelation. God spoke directly to Moses (Numb. 7:8-9), to Daniel by dreams (Dan. 7:1), to Ezekiel by visions (Ezek. 1:1), and to us today through His beloved Son Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 1:1). When man stands before the Lord and is judged by the word of God he will not be able to say that God did not tell him what manner of life to live (Jn. 12:44).
• A grand benefit of divine revelation is that it instructs man on how to rid himself of the guilt of sin (Numb. 8:21). The New Testament explains that sins are washed away through the act of baptism (cf. Heb. 9:11-15; I Pet. 3:18-22).

Chapter 9

I. The Lord’s Charge to keep the Passover Feast (9:1-14):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Moreover let the children of Israel keep the passover in its appointed season. In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in its appointed season: according to all the statutes of it, and according to all the ordinances thereof, shall ye keep it. And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover. And they kept the passover in the first [month], on the fourteenth day of the month, at even, in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel” (9:1-5).
1. Apparently the instructions and events of Numbers chapters 1 – 8 occurred after the following Day of Passover (cf. date at Numbers 1:1).
2. Thirteen months had passed since they had left Egypt. The time of Passover was upon them (i.e., the 14th day of the first month of the year).
3. God spoke to Moses about keeping the Passover feast and Moses spoke to the people.
B. “And there were certain men, who were unclean by reason of the dead body of a man, so that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day: and those men said unto him, We are unclean by reason of the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer the oblation of Jehovah in its appointed season among the children of Israel? And Moses said unto them, Stay ye, that I may hear what Jehovah will command concerning you. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your generations shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto Jehovah. In the second month on the fourteenth day at even they shall keep it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs: they shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break a bone thereof: according to all the statute of the passover they shall keep it” (9:6-12).
1. After Moses commands the people to keep the feast of Passover there were certain men who approach Moses with a question. These men had been defiled and made unclean by their contact with a dead body. They wanted to know if they could still participate in the Passover feast. Moses consults the Lord on the question and God answers. The Lord tells Moses that such people could wait until the 14th day of the second month of the year to partake of Passover.
2. Moreover, if one were traveling in a far country and was unable to participate in the Passover feast he may celebrate it on the 14th day of the second month. Overall, it seems that the question took into consideration the people’s desire to comply with God’s laws.
C. “But the man that is clean, and is not on a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, that soul shall be cut off from his people; because he offered not the oblation of Jehovah in its appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto Jehovah; according to the statute of the passover, and according to the ordinance thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one statute, both for the sojourner, and for him that is born in the land” (9:13-14).
1. Those who have not been defiled and neither are they traveling in a far country have no acceptable excuses for not partaking in the feast of Passover.
2. Likewise, today, we are commanded to assemble ourselves together as the church of Christ on the first day of the week (cf. Acts 20:7). Those without a valid excuse for missing the assembly will have to answer to God. One’s judgment as to why they missed services is between them and God unless their absence is public knowledge.

II. The Lord used His cloud and fire to guide Israel through the Wilderness (9:15-23):

A. “And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, even the tent of the testimony: and at even it was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until morning. So it was always: the cloud covered it, and the appearance of fire by night. And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the Tent, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel encamped” (9:15-17).
1. The Lord gives instructions regarding when and where Israel would camp as they made their way to Canaan.
2. When the pillar of cloud raised up off the tabernacle it was time for Israel to move. When the cloud descended upon the tabernacle Israel was to camp and rest.

B. “At the commandment of Jehovah the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of Jehovah they encamped: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they remained encamped. And when the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of Jehovah, and journeyed not. And sometimes the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; then according to the commandment of Jehovah they remained encamped, and according to the commandment of Jehovah they journeyed. And sometimes the cloud was from evening until morning; and when the cloud was taken up in the morning, they journeyed: or if it continued by day and by night, when the cloud was taken up, they journeyed. Whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, abiding thereon, the children of Israel remained encamped, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed. At the commandment of Jehovah they encamped, and at the commandment of Jehovah they journeyed: they kept the charge of Jehovah, at the commandment of Jehovah by Moses” (9:18-23).
1. There were times when the cloud that signaled Israel’s movement would only rest for one day. Other times the cloud remained several days and sometimes months and even a year.
2. The emphasized point is that they never moved unless Jehovah commanded them to do so by use of the cloud and Moses. God was training His people to obey His commands and submit to his governing ways at all points of life. God gives His people direction today through His word (cf. Jer. 10:23).

Chapter 10

I. Instructions regarding the two Silver Trumpets (10:1-10):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of beaten work shalt thou make them: and thou shalt use them for the calling of the congregation, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow them, all the congregation shall gather themselves unto thee at the door of the tent of meeting. And if they blow but one, then the princes, the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. And when ye blow an alarm, the camps that lie on the east side shall take their journey. And when ye blow an alarm the second time, the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys” (10:1-6).
1. Two silver trumpets were to be made of beaten work for a variety of uses.
2. First, the two silver trumpets were to be sounded as a signal for the congregation to assemble together at the door of the tent of meeting.
3. If only one were blown the princes of the tribes of Israel were to meet with Moses.
4. The “alarm” sound signaled Israel to begin their journey.

B. “But when the assembly is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and they shall be to you for a statute for ever throughout your generations. And when ye go to war in your land against the adversary that oppresseth you, then ye shall sound an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before
Jehovah your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings; and they shall be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Jehovah your God” (10:7-10).

1. The call to assemble the congregation was not to be the sound of “alarm.”
2. The trumpet blowers were to be “the sons of Aaron, the priests.”
3. When Israel found themselves in war with another nation they were to sound the alarm with the silver trumpets.
4. When Israel observed the set feasts of Jehovah they were to blow the silver trumpets over the burnt-offerings and various sacrifices.

II. Israel commanded to break camp and leave the area of Sinai in an Orderly Fashion (10:11-28):

A. “And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel set forward according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran. And they first took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses” (10:11-13).

1. Moses records that it was on the second year in the second month and 20th day that Israel was commanded to take up the camp from Sinai and move. Interestingly, we look back to Exodus 19:1 and read “in the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai.” These verses help us determine that Israel had remained at Sinai receiving law from God for a period of 11 to 12 months. They had now been removed from Egypt for 14 months.

2. The signal for their move was the cloud’s ascension from the tabernacle. This act of God was a direct command for the Levites to disassemble the tabernacle and begin their journey.

B. “And in the first place the standard of the camp of the children of Judah set forward according to their hosts: and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon. And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who bare the tabernacle, set forward. And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their hosts: and over his host was Elizur the son of Shedeur. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel. And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the others did set up the tabernacle against their coming. And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their hosts: and over his host was Elishama the son of Ammihud. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni. And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan, which was the rearward of all the camps, set forward according to their hosts: and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Pagiel the son of Ochran. And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher was Ahira the son of Enan. Thus were the journeyings of the children of Israel according to their hosts; and they set forward” (10:14-28).
1. Let us recall the camping order as revealed at Numbers 2 and 3 (see maps above and to the right).

2. Seeing the camping order and now reading the order of marching from the camp we can envision the orderly manner in which Israel left the camp at God’s command.

3. First, the tribe of Judah vacated the premises. Secondly, Issachar and then the tribe of Zebulun. Note that these three tribes camped upon the East side of the tabernacle behind Moses and the priests. After these three tribes took their place in the march the Gershonites (the Levites camped to the West of the Tabernacle) gathered their prescribed portion of the tabernacle and fell in line. After the Gershonites would be the Merarites (Levites who camped North of the Tabernacle). The Merarites would gather their portion of the tabernacle and fall in line behind the Gershonites.

4. Following the two Levitical families with the tabernacle parts would come the three tribes that camped on the South side of the tabernacle; i.e., Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. The Kohathites, Levites who camped South of the tabernacle and were responsible for all the holy furnishings, would fall in behind the tribe of Gad.

5. After the Kohathites, the three tribes camping West of the tabernacle fell in place; i.e., Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. The next in line of exit would be the three tribes that camped to the North of the tabernacle; i.e., Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.

III. Israel travel’s three days into the wilderness (10:29-36):

A. “And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever Jehovah shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee” (10:29-32).

1. Moses makes request of his brother-in-law to come on the journey to Canaan. The name Reguel is used for Moses’ father-in-law Jethro (Ex. 18). Hobab was Jethro’s son, and Moses’ brother-in-law. Moses pleads with Hobab to stay and journey with them for the following reasons:
   a. He knew the land and where to pitch the tents.
   b. He would be a guide and leader of the Israelites through the desert.

2. This raises questions in the mind of the prudent student. We have studied for several chapter how that God would lead the Israelites by the cloud in the day and pillar of fire by night (Numb. 14:14; Ex. 33:13). Why would Moses need a guide? Keil and Delitzsch have this to offer: “Although Jehovah led the march of the Israelites in the pillar of cloud, not only giving the sign for them to break up and to encamp, but showing generally the direction they were to take; yet Hobab, who was well acquainted with the desert, would be able to render very important service to the Israelites, if he only pointed out, in those places where the sign to encamp was given by the cloud, the springs, oases, and plots of pasture which are often buried quite out of sight in the mountains and valleys that overspread the desert” (pg. 691).

B. “And they set forward from the mount of Jehovah three days’ journey; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them three days’ journey, to seek out a resting-place for them. And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel” (10:33-36).
1. As Israel began their journey it appears by this reading that the Ark of the Covenant went before all (i.e., immediately behind the cloud that they followed by day).

2. This interpretation is confirmed in the reading of Joshua 3:15. Note that at Joshua 3:15 the priests are found carrying the ark. Moses said nothing above about the whereabouts of the priests in the march. It may be that the priests went before the tribe of Judah (directly behind God’s cloud) and carried the Ark of the Covenant on its staves.

Chapter 11

I. Israel Complains and God’s Anger is Kindled (11:1-)

A. “And the people were as murmurers, speaking evil in the ears of Jehovah: and when Jehovah heard it, his anger was kindled; and the fire of Jehovah burnt among them, and devoured in the uttermost part of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and Moses prayed unto Jehovah, and the fire abated. And the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of Jehovah burnt among them” (11:1-3).

1. The people of Israel had taken their very first steps toward Canaan (i.e., 3 days from Mount Sinai / cf. Numb. 10:33).

2. Israel begins to complain almost as soon as the leave Sinai. We are not told why Israel began their complaining. It could very well be that the journey was very laborious and they did not have adequate supplies and so forth. We just do not know. What we do know is that God struck down the complainers with fire.

3. When the people saw the anger of Jehovah they cried out unto Moses that he may pray unto God on their behalf. Moses did and the Lord halts his punishment.

B. “And the mixed multitude that was among them lusted exceedingly: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all save this manna to look upon. And the manna was like coriander seed, and the appearance thereof as the appearance of bdellium. The people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in mortars, and boiled it in pots, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it” (11:4-9).

1. The “mixed multitude” would be the Egyptians that had left Egypt and followed the Jews into the wilderness (cf. Ex. 12:38). These mixed people had an intense desire for the luxuries of Egypt and were not well adapted for the rugged travel and food that they were experiencing. Like spoiled children these mixed multitudes cried out for the pleasantries of Egypt (forgetting, of course, all the suffering that took place in Egypt and how God delivered them from the enemy).

2. Not long after these former Egyptians began to complain the Jews too whined about their condition. God had blessed them with manna yet they grew weary with it and desired the luxuries of Egypt. Manna was first discussed at Exodus 16:15 as a gift from God to Israel to sustain their hunger. Manna was a food substance that fell every morning from heaven except upon the Sabbath day. Manna was a small seed looking food that tasted like fresh oil or wafers made with honey.

3. To complain about food that they did not have to work for, other than gathering it up for free, was to display a character of ungratefulness. It seems odd how man can complain about good things that God blesses us with. Often times we find ourselves doing the same thing today. We grow weary of the good blessings of life and desire more and can thereby rest assure that God is not pleased with our behavior (see study # 12; Ungratefulness). Often times man displays this spirit with God’s word. Truth reveals instructions whereby man may be forgiven of sins; however, man grows weary with all the good laws and determines to do things differently.

C. “And Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, every man at the door of his tent: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled greatly; and Moses was displeased. And Moses said unto Jehovah, Wherefore hast thou dealt ill with thy servant? And wherefore have I not found favor in
thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I brought them forth, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing-father carrieth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? For they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness” (11:10-15).

1. First, the people complain about their journey and God consumed many of them with fire. Secondly, Israel now complains about their food. God had blessed them with bread from heaven yet they were tired of it and desired meat. They began to complain and thereby kindled the anger of Jehovah. Moses knew that the Lord would be angered by the people’s murmuring and thereby called out unto the Lord.

2. Moses may have felt somewhat trapped between the ungrateful and complaining people and Jehovah God. While the people complained to Moses as a child would a father the prophet knew that such talk would kindle God’s anger.

3. Moses replies to God saying that he felt overwhelmed that God had placed upon his shoulders all these people as though they were his children. The people whine for meat to eat. What was Moses to do? Moses determines that it is more than he can handle. He asks the Lord to kill him and put him out of his wretched misery (see study # 13; Moses / Overwhelmed).

D. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone” (11:16-17).

1. Though God was angry with the people’s complaint He was not disappointed or angered with Moses’ complaint. There was just too much on Moses. One man could not possibly take the responsibility of such a multitude of people.

2. Jehovah recognizes Moses’ plight and gives the prophet relief. The Lord calls upon 70 elders of the people that he may “take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them” so that they shall be able to bear the burden of the people with Moses instead of him doing it all alone.

3. God often placed his “Spirit” upon men in these Bible days that they may, with courage, perform His will and miraculously defeat various enemies (Judges 6:34 etc.). See more on this topic at Numbers 11:26ff.

4. The Lord plans a ceremony for such an event to take place.

E. “And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, and ye shall eat flesh; for ye have wept in the ears of Jehovah, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt: therefore Jehovah will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you; because that ye have rejected Jehovah who is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?” (11:18-20).

1. The gift of meat (flesh) to Israel due to their complaining was not necessarily a blessing. Let us recall that their weeping over not having flesh angered Jehovah. Israel’s fond remembrance of Egypt was at the expense of all that God had accomplished for them at this point. Israel had “rejected Jehovah” by their complaining of the manna and thinking fond thoughts of Egypt.

2. Jehovah would stuff the meat into the mouths of the complainers until it came out of their nostrils. They were ungrateful for God’s great help out of Egypt and more importantly they had lost sight of God’s promises to Abraham that would have eternal consequences in their lives. They were looking more to the here and now rather than to eternity (see study # 12).

F. “And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? And Jehovah said unto Moses, Is Jehovah's hand waxed short? Now shalt thou see whether my word
shall come to pass unto thee or not. And Moses went out, and told the people the words of Jehovah: and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the Tent” (11:21-24).

1. How God would stuff the people’s faces with an overabundance of meat was perplexing to Moses (oddly enough Moses had experience many previous mighty works but now is questioning how God would do such a thing). God replies by saying, “is Jehovah’s hand waxed short?” The Lord is basically telling Moses that He has done and will do many mighty works.

2. The conversation between the Lord and Moses ends. Moses obeys God’s request to gather 70 elders so that his work load may be lessened. These elders came to the tent of meeting as God had requested.

G. “And Jehovah came down in the cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and put it upon the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did so no more. But there remained two men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but had not gone out unto the Tent; and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the minister of Moses, one of his chosen men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbide them. And Moses said unto him, Art thou jealous for my sake? Would that all Jehovah’s people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them! And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel” (11:25-30).

1. Now we see clearly what having the “Spirit” placed upon them means. Having the “Spirit” indicated God’s revealing His mind to them so that they might prophecy. They were enlightened to God’s mind and ways (see study # 11). One may draw the conclusion that being filled with the Spirit of God is to be filled with the knowledge of God (see study # 14; Filled with the Holy Spirit).

2. Two men, Eldad and Medad, were apparently not part of the 70 elders that the Spirit of God was given to on this ceremonial occasion; however, the Spirit of God they received. Joshua, through a spirit of jealousy for Moses (i.e., Moses should be the only one doing such things), asked Moses to forbid such activity. Moses responds by saying, “Would that all Jehovah’s people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them.” Truly God’s Spirit is upon and in all today who live by faith and make God’s word a regular part of their diet (cf. Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 3:2).

H. “And there went forth a wind from Jehovah, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, about a day's journey on this side, and a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and about two cubits above the face of the earth. And the people rose up all that day, and all the night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah smote the people with a very great plague. And the name of that place was called Kibrothhattaavah, because there they buried the people that lusted” (11:31-34).

1. The omnipotence of Jehovah was once again displayed to Israel. God caused a wind to miraculously bring to the people a multitude of quail from the sea. The lustful people ran to gather the quail that they may eat meat. The Lord observed the wicked people lunge upon the flesh gathering more that they were able to possibly eat and again His anger was kindled. Due to their lustful mind and acts of ungratefulness the Lord brought a “very great plague” and he smote the lustful men and women.

2. Question: was the Lord unfair in doing such a thing? Let us recall that the manna from heaven was to be their prescribed food. Moses recorded, “It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat” (Exod. 16:15). Furthermore commandments were given regarding the gathering and eating of it (Ex. 16:16ff). The gift of manna was to teach Israel to be completely dependant upon Jehovah God for all His guidance and blessings (cf. Deut. 8:2-3). The Psalmists tells us that the people’s desire for flesh was sinful because it indicated their lack of faith in God’s
promises and ungratefulness for his mighty works on their behalf (cf. Ps. 78:24-33). No, the Lord was not unfair nor cruel in his punishing the sinful people (see study # 12).

I. “From Kibrothhattaavah the people journeyed unto Hazeroth; and they abode at Hazeroth” (11:35).

1. This verse gives us a geographic location of the people of God at this point of their journey to Canaan. Hazeroth is located “thirty miles northeast of Mt. Sinai” (ISBE; v. 2, pp. 636). Nothing is known of Kibrothhattaavah and must thereby be somewhere between Mt. Sinai and Hazeroth.

2. Consider the map below:

Chapter 12

I. Miriam and Aaron display a lack of fear toward God (12 all):

A. “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman. And they said, Hath Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? Hath he not spoken also with us? And Jehovah heard it” (12:1-2).

1. Miriam and Aaron, in a surprise turn of events, make two accusations against Moses. First they accuse him of sin due to his marriage to a Cushite woman and secondly they bring out the fact that Moses is not the only one God has spoken with. Evidently Miriam and Aaron were jealous of Moses’ exalted place with God. Notice that Miriam’s name is mentioned before Aaron’s
which may imply that she was the leader in this complaint. Aaron proves himself a man easily swayed by others.

2. Moses had broken no marital laws of God. Jehovah had only commanded that Israel not take wives of the daughters of the Canaanites (cf. 34:15-16). Aaron was the High Priest of the people; appointed by God (Ex. 28:30). Miriam, both Aaron’s and Moses’ sister, was a prophetess (Ex. 15:20). The two sibling’s complaint was that if the “Spirit” of God had rested upon them as Moses why should they depend or follow after him?

3. Note that “Jehovah heard it.”

B. “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they three came out. And Jehovah came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house: with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?” (12:3-8).

1. Moses is identified as be meek “above all the men that were upon the face of the earth” (see study # 13).

2. The Lord calls out Moses, Miriam, and Aaron that He may speak to them about this accusation against Moses. To question God’s use of Moses was to question the sovereignty of God. God had chosen Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to bring forth His seed promise (cf. Gen. 12:1ff; 22:18 etc.). The apostle Paul states that such decisions on the part of the Lord were made “that the purpose of God according to election might stand” (Rom. 9:11) (see Rom. 9 all).

3. The Lord explains to Miriam and Aaron that prophets are men or women whom God reveals His mind to through visions and dreams. Moses, however, “is not so.” By God’s sovereign choice He spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth.” God did not visit Moses in a dream as He later would do Daniel (cf. Dan. 7:1ff). God did not visit Moses with visions as He later does Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:1ff). God spoke directly to Moses as a man speaks to another man face to face. This was God’s sovereign choice (see study # 14; The Sovereignty of God).

4. This mode of communication differentiated Moses from other prophets. Miriam and Aaron ought to have looked back in time and noted how Moses was saved as a baby from the edict of Pharaoh. The siblings ought to have taken careful note how that God used Moses in Egypt to make known his power through out the world by performing mighty signs. Jehovah thereby concludes to Miriam and Aaron, “wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?” God had ordained and approved of Moses.

5. How can man today not be “afraid to speak against” any of the Lord’s divine revelation? (see study # 15; Fear of God). Where is man’s fear of God when he speaks out against an elder in the body of Christ without two or more witnesses? Where is a man’s fear of God when he speaks out against the church’s exercising God ordained discipline against the persistent sinner? Where is man’s fear of God when he proclaims that men have not love when exposing error. Where is a man’s fear of God when he proclaims that we cannot know truth alike? Where is man’s fear of God when he refuses to call a man a false teacher when God so ordains? Where is a man’s fear of God when speaking to parents in a disrespectful way? Where is a man’s fear for God when he or she sins against any commandments of God? Have we not enough examples of the outpouring of God’s wrath to strike terror into our hearts if we set ourselves against the Almighty God? Miriam and Aaron surely took note of God’s striking the lustful meat eaters as revealed at Numbers 11:33. Certainly Miriam and Aaron took careful note of God’s fire that consumed the complainers of Numbers 11:1-3. Brethren when God commands we have no right to quibble, test, or be dissatisfied. The Lord has granted us the greatest blessing the world has ever known and ever will know. God grants us the forgiveness of our sins!
C. “And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud removed from over the Tent; and, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. And Aaron said unto Moses, Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned. Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb” (12:9-12).

1. Note that when Miriam and Aaron questioned Jehovah’s sovereign choices they “sinned.” Questioning the sovereignty of God was equated to having a lack of fear toward God. God’s anger was thereby kindled against the two and Miriam was struck with leprosy (see study #1, #14, and #15).

2. Aaron, now seeing Moses for God’s sovereign choice that he was, respectfully addresses Moses requesting that he pray on behalf of himself and Miriam for their sin. The prayerful and repentant request of Aaron was that this sin would not be their death.

D. “And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, Heal her, O God, I beseech thee. And Jehovah said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut up without the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again. And Miriam was shut up without the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again” (12:13-15).

1. Moses grants Aaron request; however, Miriam’s sinful thoughts and actions were cause of great shame.

2. The Lord would answer Moses’ prayer but only after Miriam dealt with the shame of her sin for seven days. It may be that Miriam would not have been as fully convinced, as was Aaron, of the grave error they were in without the seven day shameful experience with leprosy.

E. “And afterward the people journeyed from Hazeroth, and encamped in the wilderness of Paran” (12:16).

1. Israel has traveled from Mount Sinai to Kibrothhattaavah and then to Hazeroth. Leaving Hazeroth, after Miriam’s seven day period of being unclean, they travel to the wilderness of Paran.

2. See map: The trip from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea took eleven days (cf. Deut. 1:2).

Lessons from Numbers 11-12

- Ungratefulness: God had blessed Israel with manna yet they now say, “our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all save this manna to look at” (Numb. 11:6). Let us recall that Moses recorded at Exodus 16:15 that the manna “is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.” Note: God has no pleasure in man’s ungratefulness (Numb. 11:10). Secondly, God punishes the ungrateful (Numb. 11:1-3; 11:33-
34. Today there is no change in God regarding His displeasure and punishment of ungratefulness (Rom. 6:23). Do you grow weary with God’s blessings? Have you displayed a spirit of ungratefulness? (see study # 12)

- Moses’ character is one that you and I can certainly learn to immolate. Moses, at times like us, felt overwhelmed in this life with the work God had delegated to him (Numb. 11:11-15). God helped Moses at his time of distress and He will certainly help us (cf. I Pet. 5:7). Secondly, the word of God states that “the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth” (Numb. 12:3). Jesus tells us that the “meek shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5). The word “meek” (praus) = “meek, gentle, kind, forgiving” (Moulton 340). “Mild, soft, gentle, meek” (LS 666). “Showing patience and humility; gentle” (AHD 782). Both Jesus (cf. Matt. 11:29) and Moses (cf. Numb. 12:3) are said to be meek. The thought seems to be that one who is meek knows his or her place. They know that they are sinners, they beg God to forgive them, they have deep sorrow over their sins, and they are thereby humbled by the human experience of sin. Such a one is thereby meek in the since that he or she is brought low by their sin. They realize that all sin and thereby have a gentle and kind disposition toward others. Humanity has a common plight and that is that we sin. The meek have a proper disposition or spirit in this experience. Though Jesus never sinned he nonetheless understood the sin man went through (cf. Heb. 4:15) (see study # 13).

- The anger of Jehovah is against those who question or seek to change His sovereign will. Miriam and Aaron question God’s choice of Moses as the leader of Israel (Numb. 12:1ff). The Lord hears their complaint and makes a memorable statement at Numbers 12:9 saying, “Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses? And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them.” To question God’s special use of Moses was to question His sovereignty. Miriam and Aaron should have looked back at past events (i.e., God’s initial saving of Moses as a baby from the death edict of Pharaoh, God choosing Moses to perform His might signs through, God choosing Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, God speaking directly to Moses at Sinai, etc.) and determined that Moses was God’s man of the hour. God distinguished Moses from all other prophets before him (Numb. 12:7). Thereby the penetrating question: “wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant?” How can people today not be afraid to speak out against God’s sovereign will? God ordained elders in the church yet some speak out against them. God has given His complete revelation (Jude 3) yet some lay claims to being apostles and the power to reveal new truths. Others take the place of God as law giver by teaching doctrines that never came from the mind of God (i.e., false teachers) (cf. II Thess. 2:4ff). Where is the FEAR of God within when man reasons to do anything contrary to the will of God? God put fear back into Miriam and Aaron by striking Miriam with leprosy. Miriam was to feel the sting of her shame for the wicked thoughts “against” God’s sovereign will. Brethren, if false teachers today to do not feel the sting of their sin (i.e., by the faithful referring to them as false teachers / II Pet. 2:1ff) then they never will change (see study # 16; False Teachers). Whether I am a small or great person in this world God demands my sorrow over sin (cf. II Cor. 7:8ff).

Chapter 13

I. The Lord sends forth spies into Canaan (13:1-26):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a prince among them. And Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran according to the commandment of Jehovah: all of them men who were heads of the children of Israel. And these were their names: Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur. Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori. Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph. Of the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu. Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi. Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi. Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli. Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael. Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the
son of Vophsi. Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. These are the names of the men that Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua” (13:1-16).

1. Israel had now traveled far enough northward to enter into the promised land of Canaan. Before they go into the land to take it the people request that spies be sent out into the land to assess the land and people (cf. Deut. 1:22). The book of Numbers reveals that apparently God accepted their request and thereby instructs Moses to send in 12 spies. This appears to be a test of faith on the part of God toward His people. Would they put their faith and trust in His power to save?

2. The name of each of the 12 men sent is given (a prince from each tribe of Israel).

B. “And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way by the South, and go up into the hill-country: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, whether they are few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it is good or bad; and what cities they are that they dwell in, whether in camps, or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes” (13:17-20).

1. Moses gives specific instructions to the 12 (i.e., their mission).

2. The twelve are to go into Canaan from the South. They are to examine the land as to its fruitfulness and wood producing capabilities. Moses instructs them to look upon the people to determine whether they are strong, weak, many or few.

C. “So they went up, and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, to the entrance of Hamath. And they went up by the South, and came unto Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two; they brought also of the pomegranates, and of the figs. That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down from thence. And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land” (13:21-27).

1. Verse 26 reveals that Israel had traveled as far north as Kadesh from their last encampment at (see map) (it took them 11 days to reach Kadesh from Mount Sinai (cf. Deut. 1:2).

2. Forty days pass while the 12 spies explore and gather a report for Moses and all Israel. They bring back pomegranates, figs, and a cluster of grapes so large that it had to be carried by two men.

II. The Evil Report (13:27-33):

A. “And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South: and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill-country; and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan. And
Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (13:27-30).

1. The twelve men give their report. The land of Canaan “surely flowed with milk and honey” and they brought fruit before the people to prove it. There is one problem. The inhabitants of the land are reported as strong and they occupy great cities that are fortified. When the multitudes of the congregation heard the news there was an apparent clamor of murmuring to the point that Caleb had to still the people.

2. Caleb then makes one of the most memorable statements in the scriptures. He said in the midst of the people clamoring in fear, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (see study # 17; Caleb). Note the lessons learned from this statement:
   a. To do a work that God commands though it may seem impossible is to act in faith (cf. Deut. 1:36).
   b. Caleb’s actions illustrated urgency. He said, “let us go up at once” (i.e., without delay).
   c. Caleb’s words illustrated confidence in God. God’s people can defeat the workers of Satan if they would be have a sense of faith, confidence, and urgency.

B. “But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (13:28-33).

1. Note the difference between Caleb (along with Joshua / cf. Numb. 32:12) and the other 10 men’s attitude toward God’s command to take Canaan. The other ten spies said, “we are not able... they are strong... the people are of great stature... we are like grasshoppers in their sight.” This defeatist and unfaithful reveal an attitude deemed “evil” by divine revelation.

2. The ten men who gave the “evil report” were in sin due to their refusal, through fear and weakness of faith, to fulfill God’s will for them regarding taking Canaan. To say that we cannot teach the lost, bring back the erring, and expose the wicked deeds and teaching of others is to not only lack faith but it is to be sinful (see study # 18; The Spirit of Defeat).

Chapter 14

I. Israel’s Rebellion against God’s Will (14:1-19):

A. “And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would that we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore doth Jehovah bring us unto this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be a prey: were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (14:1-4).

1. The contagious spiritual disease of discouragement, fear, and complaining spreads throughout “all the children of Israel.” It seems odd that the people have not been very far removed from the consequential death days of Numbers 11. The complaining and ungrateful people died because of their lack of faith in God (see study # 19; The Contagious Disease of Sin).

2. Israel considers it better to have died in Egypt or the wilderness they were now in rather than to suffer at the hands of the mighty men of Canaan.

3. The people then do the unthinkable. Israel requested that a captain, someone different than Moses, lead them back to Israel. Were they through with God’s man Moses? Did they not consider the events that took place with Miriam and Aaron at Numbers 12? God had said, “Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses” (Numb. 12:8). Later Aaron recognized his actions as sinful (cf. Numb. 12:11). The point being that this complaining and going against God’s will for Israel is none other than sinful. Let the world forever learn the lesson. God’s will must be done else one is in sin. Jesus said, “not my will but thine” (Lk. 22:42). The people were not given an option in this matter. God’s will was to
give them the land of Canaan (cf. Gen. 13:14-16). To reject God’s gifts are to loose out on His eternal promises as is evidenced by Moses and Aaron’s response below (cf. Acts 2:38-39) (see study # 20; God’s Gifts are not to be Rejected). This proves that those who desire to opt out of this life of sin and righteousness are rejecting God’s gift of salvation. The condition of being neutral does not exist with God.

B. “Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were of them that spied out the land, rent their clothes: and they spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land. If Jehovah delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it unto us; a land which floweth with milk and honey” (14:5-8).

1. The “rending” of one’s clothing indicated great sorrow of heart. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb could not believe their ears. The people were rebelling against the Lord’s will.

2. God will certainly give the land to them “If Jehovah delight in us.” Jehovah’s “delight” is never with the sinner (cf. Heb. 10:38). God delights only in the obedient (I Sam. 15:22-23).

C. “Only rebel not against Jehovah, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is removed from over them, and Jehovah is with us: fear them not. But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel” (14:9-10).

1. Joshua displays the spirit of conviction that Caleb had earlier (See study # 21; Character study of Joshua). Now we see clearly that Israel’s fear of man, lack of confidence in God, and purpose to set up a leader to return to Egypt is termed “rebellion.” So hardened in rebellion were the Israelites that they were about to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb (see study # 22; Rebellion).

   a. When the prophets (Isa. 31:6) and apostles (Rom. 8:16) referred to God’s people as His children there may be more to this than what we see on the surface. Children do what their parents tell them to do. To rebel against a parent’s will is to exercise a lack of respect and gratefulness for their care and concern (cf. Eph. 6:1ff).

   b. Christians are God’s children and thereby subject to His rules. We are to humbly submit to all his will. There may be things that don’t fit our liking or wishes; however, God knows what is best for us and thereby we do His will else find ourselves in sin (cf. Matt. 18:1ff).

2. The omniscient eye and ear of God was on all the words that Israel spoke against Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. He appears before them in the tent.

D. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, How long will this people despise me? and how long will they not believe in me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a nation greater and mightier than they. And Moses said unto Jehovah, Then the Egyptians will hear it; for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them; and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that thou Jehovah art in the midst of this people; for thou Jehovah art seen face to face, and thy cloud standeth over them, and thou goest before them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness” (14:11-16).

1. The rebellion, lack of fear, unwillingness to do God’s will is now termed “despising God.” As Esau once despised his birthright (cf. Gen. 25:34) even so Israel now despises (i.e., counts as God’s gifts as worthless). The people of God were not looking up to Him as the mighty God and one who truly cares and loves them but rather they looked down on God in disrespect and hatred. God had performed many signs in their sight yet they continue to rebel.

2. Jehovah determined to destroy the nation of Israel as “one man.” The two fold meaning of this is that God is powerful enough to stroke the people all at once to death and secondly they were one mind in their rebellion.
3. Moses intercedes for the rebellious people and reminds the Lord that if He kills all Israel then the enemies of God will say that He must not have been powerful enough to bring them into Canaan so He killed them (see study # 13).

E. “And now, I pray thee, let the power of the Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, Jehovah is slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. Pardon, I pray thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy lovingkindness, and according as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (14:17-19).

1. The “power of the Lord” is equated to God’s character of being “slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression.” God’s great power is illustrated in His ability to forgive man of sins (his love and kindness) and remain the just God (cf. Rom. 1:16; 3:21-22). Jonah understood this trait and power of God (cf. Jonah 4:2) (see study # 7).

2. The “pardon” that Moses prayed for regarding Israel was not a forgiveness and forgetting of the people’s sins but rather that God would be appeased by the prophet’s prayer on the people’s behalf and for His great name’s sake. Moses clearly expresses, “that will by no means clear the guilty” indicating that their sins would only be forgiven through their faith in the promised seed of Christ (cf. Heb. 10:1ff.).

II. The Lord responds to Moses’ Prayer (14:20-35):
A. “And Jehovah said, I have pardoned according to thy word: but in very deed, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah; because all those men that have seen my glory, and my signs, which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that despised me see it: but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it. Now the Amalekite and the Canaanite dwell in the valley: tomorrow turn ye, and get you into the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea” (14:20-25).

1. The witness of God’s miraculous works placed responsibility upon Israel to follow and obey much like the availability of God’s word to us today demands our responsibility to obey. Those who failed in their responsibilities would die because of their unfaithfulness and God would make the nation of Israel from their seed. God’s longsuffering and patience with the rebellious people is depicted in the fact that he allowed this ten times (the last was their final).

2. Caleb; however, had another “spirit” in that he fully followed God’s commands, feared God, respected, trusted, and had confidence in the Lord (see study # 4).

3. Jehovah commands Moses to take the people southward, away from Canaan, toward the Red Sea due to the fact that their present location posed a danger from the Amalekites.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, that murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, that have murmured against me, surely ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I spake that I would make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, that ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected. But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness” (14:26-32).

1. The harsh consequences of the people’s rebellion; i.e., “your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness” indicates the seriousness of God’s demand that man follow His ways. As a loving father He is directing the people in the paths of life that they might spend eternity with Him (cf. Ex. 19:4-5).

2. The consequences of rebellion today are no different!

C. “And your children shall be wanderers in the wilderness forty years, and shall bear your whoredoms, until your dead bodies be consumed in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye spied out the land, even forty days, for every day a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even
forty years, and ye shall know my alienation. I, Jehovah, have spoken, surely this will I do unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men, whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up an evil report against the land, even those men that did bring up an evil report of the land, died by the plague before Jehovah. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, remained alive of those men that went to spy out the land” (14:33-38).

1. Israel was to wander in the wilderness one year for every day that the spies were in Canaan (i.e., forty years). During these forty days they would die and “bear your whoredoms.” The spirit of whoredom among the Israelites was their ungrateful disposition and lack of fear, reverence, and respect toward God. During the latter days of Israel they would again have the “spirit of whoredom” (cf. Hos. 4:12).

2. God calls out Israel as an “evil congregation gathered against me (God).”

3. The first to die were the 10 spies who delivered the wicked report. Note that these men “made all the congregation to murmur.” This helps us understand that not only the false teacher but those who receive the words of a false teacher shall be condemned (see study # 16)!

D. “And Moses told these words unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly. And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up to the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we are here, and will go up unto the place which Jehovah hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of Jehovah, seeing it shall not prosper? Go not up, for Jehovah is not among you; that ye be not smitten down before your enemies. For there the Amalekite and the Canaanite are before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned back from following Jehovah, therefore Jehovah will not be with you. But they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. Then the Amalekite came down, and the Canaanite who dwelt in that mountain, and smote them and beat them down, even unto Hormah” (14:39-45).

1. One can understand the grief and sorrow that Israel must have now felt. They had made a great mistake. We often times want to do all we can do to repair the damage we have done. Israel decides to now go to war with Canaan without understanding that it was now God’s will that they did not do this. He would not be with them in such a battle because they had already proved themselves to have a spirit of whoredom against Him.

2. Moses warns the people but it is of no avail. Many in Israel go out to war and are soundly defeated. Their stubborn and rebellious heart led them to continue in disobedience until they died.

Lessons from Numbers 13-14

- Attitudes of the faithful (Joshua and Caleb) and unfaithful (the other ten spies and people): The faithful have a “spirit” that is willing to “follow me (God) fully” (Numb. 14:24). The unfaithful have spirit of “whoredom” (Numb. 14:33; Hos. 4:12; Eph. 2:1-2) (see study # 4).

- Caleb’s memorable statement of faith: “Let us go up at once, and posses it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Numb. 13:30). Caleb displayed four golden traits (see study # 17):
  - He understood that God does not give man tasks that are too difficult to accomplish (cf. I Cor. 10:13).
  - He understood that God’s command to take Canaan was not something He was indifferent about (cf. Numb. 13:32; 14:1-10).
  - Caleb’s statement revealed a since of urgency to follow God’s will (cf. I Jn. 3:4; II Jn. 9).
  - Caleb’s statement indicated a since of confidence in God’s help. With the help of God Christians can accomplish any and all spiritual tasks (Phil. 4:13).

- The memorable statement of the unfaithful spies: “We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Numb. 13:31). The unfaithful spies did not take into consideration the great power of Jehovah God that was put on display at Egypt (see Rom. 9:17). Consider the effects of such a “spirit” today (see study # 18):
  - The unfaithful today will be heard saying “we are not able” to be perfect (cf. Matt. 5:48).
o “We are not able” to know all truth (Eph. 5:17).
o “We are not able” to teach the lost in our communities and throughout the world because they just don’t want to hear the gospel (Matt. 28:18ff).
o “We are not able” to expose brethren’s sinful deeds because they are not a part of our local work (cf. Eph. 5:11).
o “We are not able” to exercise discipline upon the unfaithful of our church because they have already withdrawn from us (cf. I Cor. 5:1ff; II Thess. 3:6ff).

The problem with these brethren is not that they are unable but rather unwilling to follow the instructions of God. Like the ten spies of old they have no confidence in God’s ways.

- A great lesson that we learn from these chapters is that God’s will must be followed else we find ourselves in sin (cf. I Jn. 3:4). God is a Father to all of us as His Children (cf. Isa. 31:6; Rom. 8:16). As God’s children we ought to give reverence, respect, and obedience to His sovereign will. God’s sovereign will was that Israel take Canaan (cf. Gen. 13:14-16). To reject God’s sovereign will is to “rebels” (Numb. 14:9), “despise” (Numb. 14:11), and “not believe” in the power of God (Numb. 14:11). God’s “delight” is that man would be faithful to His will (cf. Numb. 14:8; I Sam. 15:22-23). God is never pleased with the fearful and unbelieving (Heb. 10:38).

Chapter 15

I. Laws Concerning Offerings (15:1-21):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you, and will make an offering by fire unto Jehovah, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or as a freewill-offering, or in your set feasts, to make a sweet savor unto Jehovah, of the herd, or of the flock; then shall he that offereth his oblation offer unto Jehovah a meal-offering of a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of oil: and wine for the drink-offering, the fourth part of a hin, shalt thou prepare with the burnt-offering, or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meal-offering two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with the third part of a hin of oil: and for the drink-offering thou shalt offer the third part of a hin of wine, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah” (15:1-7).

1. According to Deuteronomy 1:45; 2:1, the Israelites went back South in the direction of the Red Sea. The lists of their encampments are given in Numbers 33:19-30 of which their geographical location is somewhat obscure.

2. Meal and drink-offerings were to accompany the burnt-offerings offered unto Jehovah.

B. “And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt-offering, or for a sacrifice, to accomplish a vow, or for peace-offerings unto Jehovah; then shall he offer with the bullock a meal-offering of three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour mingled with half a hin of oil: and thou shalt offer for the drink-offering half a hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah. Thus shall it be done for each bullock, or for each ram, or for each of the he-lambs, or of the kids. According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number. All that are home-born shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever may be among you throughout your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah; as ye do, so he shall do. For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you, a statute for ever throughout your generations: as ye are, so shall the sojourner be before Jehovah. One law and one ordinance shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you, then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up a heave-offering unto Jehovah. Of the first of your dough ye shall offer up a cake for a heave-offering: as the heave-offering of the threshing-
floor, so shall ye heave it. Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto Jehovah a heave-offering throughout your generations” (15:8-21).

1. Note that there is only “one law” that man is to answer to in relation to the eternity of the soul; i.e., God’s law. Once again this proves that not only is God the Lord of all flesh (Jer. 32:26) but that all will give answer to Him based upon their relation to this one law (Acts 24:15).

2. The following instructions were to be followed when making a burnt-offering unto the Lord:
   a. If a lamb was offered: A meal offering was offered and a drink offering of ¼ hin of wine.
   b. If a Ram was offered: A meal offering was offered and a drink offering of 1/3 hin of wine.
   c. If a Bullock was offered: A meal offering was offered and a drink offering of ½ hin of wine.

II. Man’s Attitude regarding Law and Sin (15:22-31):
   A. “And when ye shall err, and not observe all these commandments, which Jehovah hath spoken unto Moses, even all that Jehovah hath commanded you by Moses, from the day that Jehovah gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations; then it shall be, if it be done unwittingly, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt-offering, for a sweet savor unto Jehovah, with the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof, according to the ordinance, and one he-goat for a sin-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and they shall be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their oblation, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah, and their sin-offering before Jehovah, for their error: and all the congregation of the children of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; for in respect of all the people it was done unwittingly” (15:22-26).
   1. First, note that to “not observe all God’s commandments” is to “err.”
   2. The “unwittingly” committed sin is defined as error “without the knowledge of the congregation.” Apparently the people as a whole have erred in a matter that they were not familiar with. The whole congregation must thereby offer a burnt-offering with its meal and drink-offering to appease God. The priest shall make the offering on behalf of the congregation and thereby they are atoned.
   3. Such an act on the part of the congregation as a whole will not only bring atonement but evidence to God their humble willingness to seek His favor.

B. “And if one person sin unwittingly, then he shall offer a she-goat a year old for a sin-offering. And the priest shall make atonement for the soul that erreth, when he sinneth unwittingly, before Jehovah, to make atonement for him; and he shall be forgiven” (15:27-28).
   1. The Lord gives instruction for one man’s sins as opposed to the whole congregation.
   2. An individual who sins “unwittingly” (without knowing or unintentionally) is commanded to make his sin offering that he may be forgiven (i.e., appease God / we know that these sacrifices never removed one sin cf. Heb. 10:1ff).

C. “Ye shall have one law for him that doeth aught unwittingly, for him that is home-born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them. But the soul that doeth aught with a high hand, whether he be home-born or a sojourner, the same blasphemeth Jehovah; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because he hath despised the word of Jehovah, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him” (15:29-31).
   1. There is an apparent difference between individuals who sin “unwittingly” and those who sin with a “high hand.” The “unwittingly” (Heb. bishgagah) sin is one committed with a “not knowing or unaware” spirit (AHD 1327). One who was unaware of a law violation was no doubt an individual ignorant of some laws. Said one never intended to sin but rather just did not know that a matter was sinful. The Psalmists said, “Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: Let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be clear from great transgression” (Ps. 19:12-13).
   2. While we may be satisfied with this English definition it seems that the Hebrew word is not limited to sins of ignorance. Strong’s defines the Hebrew root word shagag as “deceived, err,
3. The other side would be the man or woman who sins in a “high handed” fashion. This person has no intentions of following God’s laws of atonement and is thereby to be “cut off from among his people.” Such a one has “despised the word of Jehovah and hath broken his commandment.” Jesus and the apostle John tells us that the only sin that one cannot be forgiven of is the sin a man will not ask God’s forgiveness of (cf. Mark 3:29; I Jn. 1:9-10; 5:16). One represents the humble man of faith and the other the proud man of fleshly will.

4. Those today who sin with a high hand are to be disciplined in the body of Christ (cf. I Cor. 5:1ff; II Thess. 3:6ff). Such a disposition of “despising” the word of God is not to be tolerated lest the faithful find themselves with the same infectious attitude toward God’s commandments. Once again we note that the Lord God Almighty is the sovereign God whose will must be followed. There are those in this life willing to submit to His will and others whose will is to follow their own ways. Herein lies the great divide in humanity (i.e., the submissive, humble, and faithful as opposed to the self willed, proud, and arrogant) (see study # 23; Two spirits in the World).

III. God’s will or death (15:32-41):

A. “And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And Jehovah said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him to death with stones; as Jehovah commanded Moses” (15:32-36).

1. With the issue of one’s attitude toward God’s laws before us Moses gives an actual incident of a man sinning with a high hand. Here was one who “despised” the law of Jehovah God regarding not working upon the Sabbath day (cf. Ex. 20:9ff).

2. There were some laws whereby if violated carried with it the death penalty.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of each border a cord of blue: and it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of Jehovah, and do them; and that ye follow not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to play the harlot; that ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am Jehovah your God” (15:37-41).

1. This blue fringe that was to be sewed into the people’s garments would be a reminder of all God’s commandments as well as their obligation to keep His laws. This is likely what the Pharisees wore as discussed at Matthew 23:5-7 yet in an exaggerated manner.

2. Please note that when one follows “your own heart and your own eyes” that God refers to this as “harlotry” and such a state of mind is opposed to the revealed will of God. God’s people are sanctified from the world because they have purposed to follow His ways rather than their own ways.

Lessons Learned from chapter 15

• There is one moral or spiritual law for all peoples of all time (Numb. 15:29). The prophet Jeremiah explained that the Lord was God of all flesh (Jer. 32:26). When any one violates God’s spiritual revealed laws they have “erred” (Numb. 15:22). Law reveals sin (cf. Rom. 5:13; 7:7-8). Those who sin err against God’s laws (I Jn. 3:4).
• While it is true that every last one of us sin (cf. Rom. 3:23) the big issue with God is how we handle our sin. Numbers 15 reveals that people have one of two attitudes regarding their sin. When we sin we either sin with an “unwitting” (Numb. 15:24, 29) or “high handed” (Numb. 15:30) spirit or disposition of heart. To sin with an “unwitting” spirit is to “not know or be unaware” of a sin (AHD 1327). If we stopped here it would appear that the unwitting sin is one done purely in ignorance. However, when we examine the Hebrew meaning of the word it means “deceived, err, go astray, sin ignorantly” (Strong’s). That which distinguishes the unwitting sinner from the high handed sinner is the attitude displayed when the error is pointed out. The unwitting sinner is willing to offer sacrifices to God because he or she realized that they have erred against God and do not wish to be in ill favor with the Lord. A spirit of humility is exhibited (cf. Psalms 51 all; Isa. 57:15). The high handed sinner is unwilling to admit error and thereby he or she will not make their sacrifices. Like the sinner of the NT times who refuses repentance through a spirit of humility toward God and His laws this man receives no forgiveness (cf. Mk. 3:28-29; I Jn. 5:16). Such in the church today are subject to discipline (1 Cor. 5:1ff; II Thess. 3:6ff) (see study # 23).

• Lastly, God’s laws should always be separated in my mind from my human reason (cf. Numb. 15:37-41; see also Rom. 8:1ff; II Cor. 1:12) (see study # 24; Fleshly Reasoning).

Chapter 16

I. Korah’s Rebellion (16 all):

A. “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, called to the assembly, men of renown; and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah?” (16:1-3)

1. Korah was a Kohathite responsible for moving and setting up the holy furnishings of the tabernacle (cf. Numb. 4:4-20, 16:1). Apparently Korah was not satisfied with this lower position in relation to the work of leading the people and speaking directly to God. He finds others, three Reubenites, who have the same gripe. Interestingly, the Reubenites were encamped next to the Kohathites according to God’s pattern. The close proximity of their camps gave way to their common complaint against Moses and Aaron (cf. Numb. 2). These Reubenites used the fact that they had not yet received the land flowing with milk and honey, as was originally promised by Moses, to stir the people up against Moses. Again they willfully forgot the pronouncement of God’s punishment in Numb. 14:32-35

2. It seems amazing that Korah would attempt such a scheme after all that has recently taken place. When Israel murmured by “speaking evil in the ears of Jehovah” the Lord consumed them with fire (cf. Numb. 11:1-3). When Israel complained over not having flesh to eat God brought a plague upon Israel and many died (Numb. 11:33). When Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses’ leadership desiring a part of what he had God struck Miriam with leprosy (Numb. 12 all). When the ten spies came back from Canaan with an evil report and caused the whole congregation to murmur against Moses and Aaron God determined to kill all Israel as one man (Numb. 13:30 – 14:19). Due to Israel’s spiritual “whoredom” God determined that they were to wander in the wilderness for 40 years (cf. Numb. 14:26-34). These incidents prove that to speak against Moses was to speak against God and His sovereign choices (cf. Numb. 12:7-8). Why? Hard hearts are dulled to sin and its consequences. Like the sex, drug, alcohol, and or tobacco addict they will continue in their addiction at the cost of their families, health, and soul because it is their need.

3. Korah (along with the three sons of Reuben), a man hardened in sin, decides to challenge God’s sovereign choice by “rising up before Moses.” These men charge that Moses and Aaron “take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them.” Korah appeals to the law of Exodus 19:5-6 where the Lord referred to all of his
people as a kingdom of priests. The charge Korah places against Moses and Aaron is that they have lifted themselves above the assembly rather than it being God’s choice. The question to settle thereby was whether Moses and Aaron were chose by God to do their work or did they set their own selves up in this position.

B. “And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: and he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, In the morning Jehovah will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he shall choose will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire in them, and put incense upon them before Jehovah to-morrow: and it shall be that the man whom Jehovah doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi” (16:4-7).

1. Moses responds to Korah’s rebellious statement by falling upon his face in both fear and disbelief. Fear because he knew what the consequence of such rebellion would be and disbelief in that Korah has foolishly overlooked the past examples of such disobedience. We can confidently refer to Korah’s challenge to Moses as a rebellion against the sovereign God because this is what the Lord called the 10 spies evil report (cf. Numb. 14:8-11). It was God’s sovereign will that Israel take Canaan. To reject God’s will is to rebel and despise God. Korah now rebels and despises God’s sovereign will.

2. Moses thereby presents a test for Korah, the Reubenites, and the 250 princes that have gone along with Korah’s rebellious statement against Moses and Aaron. All were to appear before Jehovah the next morning and God would make His choice.

3. Moses then charges Korah and the Reubenites as taking too much upon their own selves. God’s sovereign choice was Moses and Aaron yet Korah has decided to do things differently. Does Korah consider himself a god / lawgiver? Should Korah’s word be adhered to above Jehovah’s? Korah has certainly overstepped his God appointed bounds.

4. Many today take too much upon their own selves by choosing to worship God as they please rather than as God instructed. Some choose to change the work of the church and individual Christian. Some make it a law to spiritually accept any and all faiths. Many things are done in the name of religion by man; however, its thoughts are no where found in the word of God. Such cases indicate one’s spirit of antichrist (cf. II Thess. 2:1-12) (see study # 22).

C. “And Moses said unto Korah, Hear now, ye sons of Levi: seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them; and that he hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee? and seek ye the priesthood also? Therefore thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah: and Aaron, what is he that ye murmur against him?” (16:8-11).

1. At Numbers 4:4-20 the Word of God reveals the important work of the Kohathites. Moses asks Korah if he has considered this most important work as a “small thing” (i.e., insignificant). Is it not well enough that God has entrusted you with these great things? Will you now demand that God give you the priesthood as well?

2. Not only is Korah presenting himself as a lawgiver but his demands amount to commanding God to give him the priesthood as well as his original duties in the tabernacle (see II Thess. 2:1ff). Korah has displayed a spirit of ungratefulness and disrespect for God’s sovereign will (see study # 12). Moses tells him that his problem is with Jehovah when saying, “thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah.” Moses and Aaron were only spokesmen for God. To levy a complaint against Moses or Aaron was to complain about God’s will (cf. Numb. 12:7-8).

D. “And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and they said, We will not come up: is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, but thou must needs make thyself also a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: will thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up” (16:12-14).

1. It seems that a full blown mutiny was forming against Moses and Aaron. The sons of Reuben were disgruntled over Moses’ leadership. They had high hopes of being given a land flowing
with milk and honey. Indeed it was to be a gift from God. The people, however, did not like the way God’s gift system worked. They wanted to receive things without having to give in return. God’s gifts do not work like that (see study # 20). The Reubenites defiantly reply to Moses’ command to come to him saying, “We will not come.”

2. The Lord demands man’s obedience and when they show Him their willingness to humbly submit to His sovereign will then He freely gives to man. Moses was the one viewed as responsible for Israel not having the land of promise and no inheritance of fruitful land as they were promised by God. Since Moses has withheld these blessings from the congregation it may be that he plans on putting out the eyes of any who would rebel against his leadership.

The Reubenites thereby refuse to assemble as Moses has requested.

E. “And Moses was very wroth, and said unto Jehovah, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before Jehovah, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow: and take ye every man his censer, and put incense upon them, and bring ye before Jehovah every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each his censer. And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood at the door of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. And Korah assembled all the congregation against them unto the door of the tent of meeting: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the congregation” (16:15-19).

1. The moment for God to show forth His sovereign choice had come. Korah gathered all those who shared a kindred complaint against Moses at the tent of meeting with their censers burning.

2. The very presence of Korah and the other disgruntles indicates their sincere belief that God would choose them over Moses. Their hardened hearts had blinded the reality of the eternal dangerous situation that they had placed themselves in. One may say that they were confident to a fault (see study # 16).

3. Moses, in a spirit of rage, prays to God that He would not give respect to their offering and that he has never done anything amiss to the people as they have so charged.

F. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?” (16:20-22).

1. The Lord’s response indicates His displeasure with Korah’s spirit of rebellion. The Lord determines once again to destroy the entire congregation for this error.

2. Moses replies to God saying, “shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?” Moses indeed was a meek man (see Numb. 12:3). He recognized his own weaknesses and thereby had compassion upon those who were not involved with Korah’s rebellion and thereby asks the Lord to spare them.

G. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat them up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones. And Moses said, Heretofore ye shall know that Jehovah hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind” (16:23-28).

1. The Lord refers to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram’s challenge as “sin.” Sin is a violation of God’s sovereign will (cf. Numb. 5:5-7). All those who do not want to be associated with such a spirit were called upon to separate themselves from these men’s family tents. These men came out and simply stood at the doors of their tents looking upon Moses. Moses now proclaims that their deaths will prove that he does not work of his “own mind” but by the instructions of Jehovah God.

2. When one does spiritual things by his or her “own mind” it is certainly contrary to God’s sovereign will (Col. 3:17). Though we do not have miracles to prove the validity of our
H. “If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then Jehovah hath not sent me. But if Jehovah make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into Sheol; then ye shall understand that these men have despised Jehovah. And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into Sheol: and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up. And fire came forth from Jehovah, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense” (16:29-35).

I. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are holy, even the censers of these sinners against their own lives; and let them be made beaten plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before Jehovah; therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, which they that were burnt had offered; and they beat them out for a covering of the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, to the end that no stranger, that is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to burn incense before Jehovah; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as Jehovah spake unto him by Moses” (16:36-40).

J. “But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of Jehovah. And it came to pass, when the congregation was assembled against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tent of meeting: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of Jehovah appeared” (16:41-42).

K. “And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take thy censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense thereon, and carry it quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from Jehovah; the plague is begun” (16:43-46).

There was no praying for forgiveness for a people who did not desire it. God sent out a plague to destroy the wicked people even as He spoke with Moses and Aaron.
2. Moses commands Aaron to quickly take fire from the altar of burnt offering and make atonement for the people’s sins.

L. “And Aaron took as Moses spake, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on the incense, and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. Now they that died by the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, besides them that died about the matter of Korah. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tent of meeting: and the plague was stayed” (16:47-50).

1. 14,700 people died (in addition to all the people and princes that appertained to Korah’s rebellion) by the plague sent forth by Jehovah for their rebellious and despising spirit.

2. Though many died in God’s wrath the Lord proves his side of mercy by stopping the plague as an offering of atonement is made on the sinful people’s behalf. We are thankful to God today that the plague is stayed while we humbly submit to the Lord in asking for His gracious forgiveness (cf. Numb. 5:6-7).

Lessons Learned from Numbers 16

- The camp arrangement explains the joining of the Reubenites with the Kohathites (camped next to each other by God’s divine ordinance). A common spirit of dissatisfaction over not receiving the land of promise and the duties that Moses had given the Kohathites to do gave way to a defiant move by the people. The common gripe was that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves. Korah appeals to the Exodus 19:5-6 which states that God’s people would make up a kingdom of priests. All, thereby, are seen as holy. What has made Moses and Aaron so special? Like Satan, Korah twists the scriptures to his own destruction (cf. Matt. 4:1ff) (see study # 16). Korah further reasons that it must be that Moses and Aaron have lifted their selves above the congregation of their own will. The lesson to learn is that when God’s people begin to grumble by expressing a common complaint about the Lord’s ordained offices in the church a factious movement has formed (I Cor. 11:17). Let us beware and be aware of the possibilities of such events in the Lord’s church.

- The second lesson we learn is in relation to hardened hearts being deluded in sin (cf. II Thess. 2:8-12). When we consider the fact that the Lord had consumed the people by fire (Numb. 11:1-3) and plague (Numb. 11:33) it would seem that the complainers would watch their step. Furthermore the Lord had struck Miriam with leprosy due to her and Aaron’s sin of pitting themselves “against” Moses (Numb. 12:1-12). Then we think about what has caused them to be in their current geographic location. Ten spies were sent into Canaan to spy out the land and its inhabitants and they brought back an evil report (Numb. 13:30-33). The Lord pronounced the punishment of wandering in the wilderness for forty years for their rebellion (Numb. 14:26-34). After all these events (we could also look back to what these people experienced in Egypt as the were witnesses to God’s great power in the ten plagues... furthermore the Lord opens the Red Sea and swallows the whole Egyptian army). What more did these people need to see in relation to God working through Moses? They should have clearly recognized and reverenced God’s sovereign choice of Moses. Speaking “against” Moses had already been established as a blasphemous deed against Jehovah due to Moses being His sovereign choice to lead the people (cf. Numb. 12:6-8). Korah and the Reubenites were guilty of rebellion (Numb. 14:9), having a defiant spirit (Numb. 16:12-14), and despising Jehovah (Numb. 16:30). When Korah, the Reubenites, and the 250 princes show up with their censers burning they displayed a heart deluded in sin. They truly thought that God would choose them over Moses. Truly, Korah had “taken too much” upon his own self (Numb. 16:7). Let none of us today take too much upon our selves by rebelling against His sovereign will.

- The Reubenites misunderstood the workings of God’s free gifts like many of our denominational friends do today (cf. Numb. 16:12-14). God’s gifts are truly freely given (cf. Rom. 5:16; Eph. 2:8). Note that the “free gift” that Paul speaks of leads one to righteousness and justification (Rom. 5:17). When one examines the identity of justification (Eph. 1:7) and righteousness (Rom. 6:19) and their relationship to God’s grace one will soon realize that God’s free gifts are attained by following His will (cf. Acts 2:38-39) (see study # 20).
The most difficult lesson to swallow is that some people are just simply not going to wake up out of their deluded state of sin. Many so-called Christians live in sin and through their delusion will never experience heaven (cf. II Tim. 3:1-7).

Chapter 17

I. Aaron’s Rod Buds (17:1-13):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of them rods, one for each fathers’ house, of all their princes according to their fathers’ houses, twelve rods: write thou every man’s name upon his rod. And thou shalt write Aaron’s name upon the rod of Levi; for there shall be one rod for each head of their fathers’ houses. And thou shalt lay them up in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. And it shall come to pass, that the rod of the man whom I shall choose shall bud: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against you” (17:1-5).

1. Korah’s problem with Moses and Aaron was that he thought that any of God’s people should be able to serve as priest among the people rather than just the seed of Aaron (cf. Numb. 16:3, 10). This issue spread among the Reubenites and 250 other princes among the people (cf. Numb. 16:2).

2. The Lord now presents a test for all Israel that no man or woman may complain or murmur about God’s sovereign choice of the priesthood. The Lord proposes that each tribe bring a rod with its prince’s name upon it (a representative of the tribe). Upon the rod of Levi would be Aaron’s name. God would cause one rod among the twelve to bud. The rod that buds represents the tribe and individual through whom the priesthood was to come.

B. “And Moses spake unto the children of Israel; and all their princes gave him rods, for each prince one, according to their fathers’ houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. And Moses laid up the rods before Jehovah in the tent of the testimony. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and bare ripe almonds. And Moses brought out all the rods from before Jehovah unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod” (17:6-9).

1. The sovereign choice of God has been made evident to all now. The Lord miraculously caused the rod of Levi and Aaron to bud and put forth blossoms and almonds.

2. There was no doubt now that it was God’s will that Aaron and his sons occupy the priesthood.

C. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the children of rebellion; that thou mayest make an end of their murmurings against me, that they die not. Thus did Moses: as Jehovah commanded him, so did he. And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. Every one that cometh near, that cometh near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah, dieth: shall we perish all of us?” (19:10-13).

1. Moses had asked Korah and the other rebellious people, “And Aaron, what is he that ye murmur against him?” (Numb. 16:11). Not only was it Aaron that the people murmured against but it was Moses too (cf. Numb. 17:5). The people’s grumbling against Moses and Aaron was in relation to their place as priest over the people. Said murmuring was not really against Moses and Aaron but against Jehovah God (cf. Numb. 17:10). Furthermore, the people’s stand against Moses and Aaron is recognized as a spirit of “rebellion” on their part (Numb. 17:10).

2. The people were in no position to rebel and make demands to God. He had miraculously taken them out of their hard bondage in Egypt, destroyed the Egyptian army, gave them a law to follow, and fed them with manna and quail in the wilderness. The Lord also provided water for them to drink. Such a rebellious spirit represents a disposition of ungratefulness (see study # 12).
Chapter 18

I. Tithes for the Levites and Priests (18 all):

A. “And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy fathers' house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony. And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the Tent: only they shall not come nigh unto the vessels of the sanctuary and unto the altar, that they die not, neither they, nor ye. And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be wrath no more upon the children of Israel. And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are a gift, given unto Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting. And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil; and ye shall serve: I give you the priesthood as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” (18:1-7).

1. Korah’s rebellion has brought to light God’s sovereign choice of a priesthood. Aaron’s budding rod confirmed God’s choice. God now gives specific instructions to Aaron regarding the responsibilities and rights of the priests and Levites.

2. God has given the Levites to Aaron and his son as a gift to do the service of the tabernacle. No stranger was to involve themselves in this work.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, And I, behold, I have given thee the charge of my heave-offerings, even all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, as a portion for ever. This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, even every meal-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. As the most holy things shalt thou eat thereof; every male shall eat thereof: it shall be holy unto thee. And this is thine: the heave-offering of their gift, even all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, as a portion for ever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat thereof. All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give unto Jehovah, to thee have I given them. The first-fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring unto Jehovah, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat thereof. Everything devoted in Israel shall be thine. Everything that openeth the womb, of all flesh which they offer unto Jehovah, both of man and beast shall be thine: nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem. And those that are to be redeemed of them from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary (the same is twenty gerahs). But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave-breast and as the right thigh, it shall be thine. All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto Jehovah, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, as a portion for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before Jehovah unto thee and to thy seed with thee” (18:8-19).

1. The priests, along with their families, were to receive as food the heave and wave-offerings of the people. They would take their oil, wine, grain, first-fruits, and flesh of the people’s firstlings sacrificed unto Jehovah.

2. The priests did not make a living as did the others. The work of the priests was spiritual in nature and thereby the Lord makes provisions for them through the sacrifices of the people.

C. “And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any portion among them: I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.”
And unto the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting” (18:20-21).

1. Aaron and his sons (i.e., the priests) were not to have any inheritance of land as did the other tribes. God was to be their inheritance! God’s people today are priests (I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6). We too ought not to seek out our eternal inheritance here on this earth (cf. I Jn. 2:16-17) but rather in heaven (cf. Heb. 9).

2. The Levites were given the people’s annual tithing as a way of life since they were responsible for the work of the tabernacle. Said work would not procure land, clothing, and food. God’s portion for them thereby was the people’s tithing.

D. “And henceforth the children of Israel shall not come nigh the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; and among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. For the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering unto Jehovah, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance” (18:22-24).

1. All other tribes of Israel were not to come near the tent of meeting. To do so would be sin and the consequences thereof death.

2. No physical inheritance belonged to the Levites but rather spiritual things belonged to them. Jehovah “was necessarily to be regarded as the greatest possession of all, beyond which nothing greater is conceivable, and in comparison with which every other possession is to be regarded as nothing” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 731).

E. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Moreover thou shalt speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave-offering of it for Jehovah, a tithe of the tithe. And your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the grain of the threshing-floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer a heave-offering unto Jehovah of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and thereof ye shall give Jehovah's heave-offering to Aaron the priest” (18:25-28).

1. The Levites were to take the tithes that were given to them by the other tribes of Israel and offer up their own heave-offering unto Jehovah (a tenth of the tenth they received).

2. This heave-offering of a tenth was to be given to Aaron and the priests.

F. “Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of Jehovah, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye heave the best thereof from it, then it shall be reckoned unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best thereof: and ye shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, that ye die not” (18:29-32).

1. The Levites were to offer a tenth of all things that the children of Israel had tithed unto them. Those things would be from the vine and flesh.

2. God’s charge to the Levites was that they would “bear no sin by reason of it...” The Levites were no different than anyone else when it came to following God’s ordinances. Those who did not follow the instructions of offering a tithe of a tithe would be put to death.

Chapter 19

I. Laws regarding the unclean who come in contact with the dead (19 all):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the statute of the law which Jehovah hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke. And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, and he shall bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face: and Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle her blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. And one shall burn the heifer in his
sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: and the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even. And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water for impurity: it is a sin-offering. And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever” (19:1-10).

1. The Lord had decreed that the rebellious people who refused to take Canaan would die in the wilderness over a forty year period (cf. Numb. 14:33). No doubt that death was all about the people every day. The laws of this chapter deal with the uncleanness of being in the vicinity and having contact with the dead.

2. The “sinner” (cf. 19:9) would need to bring a red heifer outside the camp and have another slaughter it in his sight. The blood of the heifer was to be sprinkled before the door of the tent of meeting seven times. The heifer was then to be burned. The officiating priest was then to wash his clothes and body and remain unclean until the evening.

3. To be “unclean” was to be in sin (see Lev. 16:16, 30). One interesting point is that when a man or woman became a leper or a woman had a child and so forth they were recognized as “unclean.” When a woman has a baby or a man has leprosy it is really no fault of their own yet they are considered unclean until either healed or given a period of time for a mother who has given birth. The point being that God is the law giver, he is pure in all since of the word, and holy. Moses writes, “Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am Jehovah your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I am Jehovah who sanctifies you” (Lev. 20:7-8).

4. The sovereign and all holy God determined that the unclean things cause the individual to be “defiled” as well. The idea of being “defiled” is revealed as being guilty of sin (cf. Lev. 18:30). These things being so, God instructs Moses to separate all unclean people from the camp so that the rest are not defiled by their uncleanness.

5. The apostle John tells us that no unclean thing shall be in heaven (Rev. 22:27). The unclean individual is one who does not meet the standard of the sovereign will of God. It was not God’s will that man contact the dead. Therefore, if one happened to have contact with the dead he or she was recognized as “unclean” (not measuring up to God’s will) (see study # 1 and # 8).

B. “He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days: the same shall purify himself therewith on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean. Whosoever toucheth a dead person, the body of a man that hath died, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of Jehovah; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water for impurity was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him” (19:11-13).

1. The man or woman who “touches the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.” The third day of this period of uncleanness was to be used to purify one’s self by the process mentioned above.

2. If one refused to follow God’s purifying instructions he was to be regarded as one who “defiles the tabernacle of Jehovah.” This phrase indicates the equivalence between God’s instructions and the tabernacle itself (i.e., the dwelling place of God). The man who would so act remains “unclean” (see # 3).

C. “This is the law when a man dieth in a tent: every one that cometh into the tent, and every one that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean. And whosoever in the open field toucheth one that is slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days” (19:14-16).
1. Not only is the one who comes in direct contact with the dead unclean but also the one who comes within the vicinity of a dead man or woman. Even open vessels exposed to the air of the house wherein is a dead person is considered unclean and unfit to eat.

2. Furthermore, the person who simply touches a grave of the dead shall be unclean seven days.

D. "And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burning of the sin-offering; and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched the bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify him: and he shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even" (19:17-19).

1. The procedure was that a red heifer be slaughtered and burned. The ashes of the heifer were to be mixed with water and sprinkled, by a clean person, upon the unclean who has come in contact the dead. This event was to transpire on the third and seventh day of their uncleanness.

2. The unclean would be viewed as clean when doing these procedures upon the seventh day at evening.

E. "But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of Jehovah: the water for impurity hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean. And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them: and he that sprinkleth the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he that toucheth the water for impurity shall be unclean until even. And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean: and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even" (19:20-22).

1. The unclean who refuses God’s instructions regarding the procedure for cleansing of sin was to be cut off from the people.

2. Such a one is guilty of a “high-handed” sin in that he is not willing to go through the necessary procedures to be clean (cf. Numb. 15:29-31). Unfortunately there are people today of the same mind or spirit. The Lord commands baptism for the remission of sins yet they are not willing to follow this simple instruction.

**Lessons Learned from Numbers 17 – 19**

- God’s sovereign choices equate to our law. When God chose Aaron as priest it was His sovereign choice (cf. Numb. 17:5). When Korah demanded the priesthood he was in rebellion against God’s sovereign will (cf. Numb. 16:3, 10). Thereby when Korah and the others seemed to be against Moses (cf. Numb. 17:5) and Aaron (cf. Numb. 16:11) they were in all reality setting themselves against God (Numb. 17:10). When God makes a decision man is not at liberty to do differently. God chooses baptism to remove sin (Acts 2:38), singing as a mode of worship (Eph. 5:19; etc.), and the first day of the week as a day of worship (Acts 20:7). To not follow these instructions is to rebel against the Lord’s sovereign and revealed will (see study # 22).

- God’s gifts / rewards are conditioned upon man’s service (cf. Numb. 18:6, 21, 31). God’s gifts have ever been conditional and they ever will be (cf. Eph. 2:8; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:13; Acts 13:23, 32-39).

- To be unclean under the Mosaic Law was to be in sin (cf. Lev. 16:16, 30) and or defiled (Lev. 18:30). Moses reveals a process whereby man would be purified if contact with a dead person occurred (Numb. 19 all). The unclean man or woman was to go through a seven day period where they would be considered unclean. The third day of this period was to be a day when the water of purification was poured upon the unclean person. Some were not willing to go through with this procedure (Numb. 19:20). Their sin (or state of uncleanness) occurred through the spirit of “high handedness” (cf. Numb. 15:29-31). The sinner who sinned with a high hand had no intentions to ask the Lord’s forgiveness. Such a one was steeped in pride. Many today refuse God’s instructions for being clean; i.e. baptism (Acts 22:16) and confession through a spirit of humility (I Jn. 1:8ff) (see study # 22, and # 3).
Chapter 20

I. The People Complain against Moses and Aaron because there is no Water (i.e., God) (20:1-13):

A. “And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came into the wilderness of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there” (20:1).

1. Israel had arrived in Kadesh-barnea on the first month of the 40th year (Numb. 33:38). Exodus 19:1 reveals that the Hebrews traveled for 3 months from Egypt to Sinai. Moses records that the Hebrews picked up their camp at the command of God on the second year and second month (Numb. 10:11). Thereby they had remained at Sinai receiving the law for 11 months.

2. At Numbers 20, we find the Hebrews had already wandered through the wilderness of Zin and had made their way back to Kadesh. Numbers 33:38 states that Aaron, at the command of God, went up to mount Hor and there died on the 40th year fifth month after the Hebrews came up out of Egypt. This would make the Hebrews wandering through the wilderness for approximately 38 ½ years. Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, dies here at Kadesh-barnea.

B. And there was no water for the congregation: and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people strove with Moses, and spake, saying, Would that we had died when our brethren died before Jehovah! And why have ye brought the assembly of Jehovah into this wilderness, that we should die there, we and our beasts? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink” (20:2-5).

1. Let us remember that Israel has complained against Moses and Aaron on several occasions (cf. Numb. 14:2; 16:3; 17:5; 20:2). The complaining against Moses and Aaron was an error on their part not against Moses and Aaron but against God (cf. Numb. 17:10). One may be bewildered that Israel would continue to complain against the sovereign God’s choice of Moses and Aaron; however, we look close and note that they had a spirit of rebellion that governed their hearts (cf. Numb. 14:8-9; 17:10; 20:10). When Israel wandered into the wilderness of Zin there was no water and they begin to grumble about their current condition in relation to their former days in Egypt. The people now want answers from Moses. They are suffering from thirsts and they blame it on God’s messenger. Again, they have forgotten that it was God who miraculously took them out of Egypt and cared for them as a eagle would care for her young (cf. Ex. 19:4). It is odd how that many today do not like God’s sovereign laws and thereby the messenger is the one who is accosted by the unruly person. Their real quarrel is not with man but with God (see study # 25; Preachers and Preaching).

2. Note that what God called a good land flowing with milk and honey the people now call an “evil place.” They want to know where all the seeds, figs, vines, pomegranates, and abundant water is. Israel has soon forgotten their wicked stance they took against Jehovah God when the spies came back with an evil report. Canaan is a land flowing with milk and honey but it will only belong to those who diligently seek after it (cf. Heb. 3:12 – 4:4).

C. “And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tent of meeting, and fell upon their faces: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto them. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink. And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as he commanded him” (20:6-9).

1. The Israelites were hardened in sin and rebellion. God takes the opportunity to test the faith of Moses and Aaron. Rather than cursing the people and smiting them for their unfaithfulness the Lord gives Moses and Aaron specific instructions that Israel and their cattle may have water to drink.

2. Jehovah tells Moses to take his rod and speak to the rock that water may come forth.

D. “And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice: and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle. And Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to
sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. These are the waters of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with Jehovah, and he was sanctified in them” (20:10-13).

1. Moses and Aaron make two grave mistakes. No doubt Moses and Aaron were exasperated with the rebellious spirit displayed by Israel; however, this did not give them license to sin against God. The Lord had instructed Moses and Aaron to speak to the rock that water may miraculously come forth; however, rather than speaking to the rock Moses strikes the rock twice with the rod. Secondly, as Moses addresses the people he exclaims, “shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?” Rather than giving God the rightful glory for the miracle Moses and Aaron took it upon themselves. Jehovah is greatly displeased with Moses and Aaron and tells them that neither one of them would be the man to take Israel into the “land which I have given them.” Jehovah equates Moses and Aaron’s disobedience with that of “ye believed not in me.” Many today lay claims to having faith in Jesus yet they do not do according to God’s will. Jehovah thereby states that they truly do not believe in him (cf. Jn. 3:36; 14:15).

2. The name “Meribah” means strife. The contest between the rebellious people and God is termed strife. Not even Moses or Aaron were above God’s laws.

II. Israel Makes request to Edom for passage through their land (20:14-21):

A. “And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and our fathers: and when we cried unto Jehovah, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border. Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy land: we will not pass through field or through vineyard, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go along the king's highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy border” (20:14-17).

1. The years of wandering have now been completed and it is time to enter Canaan. Rather than going directly north from Kadesh Moses decides to take the people around the Dead Sea and up through Moab and Amon (i.e., enter in from the east).

2. A messenger is sent with a letter for the request. Moses appeals to their kinship of Jacob and Esau by referring to the Edomites as their brethren. Moses promises that the people will not go through the fields, vineyards, and neither will they drink of the water from Edom’s wells.

B. “And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass through me, lest I come out with the sword against thee. And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go up by the highway: and if we drink of thy water, I and my cattle, then will I give the price thereof: let me only, without doing anything else, pass through on my feet. And he said, Thou shalt not pass through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him” (20:18-21).

1. The king of Edom refused Moses’ request to pass through the land. The king even threatens Israel in his return message.

2. Apparently Moses sends out another messenger pleading his cause yet the king of Edom refused and went out against Israel as though to wage war. Israel did not engage them but rather went around Edom.

III. Aaron dies at Mount Hor (20:22-29):

A. “And they journeyed from Kadesh: and the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, came unto mount Hor. And Jehovah spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there” (20:22-26).

1. All of Israel travels to Mount Hor. Mt. Hor is most likely located at “Jabel Madurah, a site about 24 Km. (15 miles) NE of Kadesh” (ISBE Volume 2; pg. 756).
2. Aaron now dies due to his sin at the waters of Meribah mentioned above. God had given Moses and Aaron a command and they did not follow it. The action is thereby referred to as “rebellion” (see study # 22 / Not even Moses and Aaron were above God’s Laws).

3. Aaron is stripped of his high priest garments and they are given to his son Eleazar.

B. “And Moses did as Jehovah commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they wept for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel” (20:27-29).

1. Moses obeyed the voice of God. Aaron was stripped of his garments and duties by Moses at the commandment of God. All authority as high priest is now transferred to Eleazar and then Aaron died.

2. All of Israel mourns for thirty days.

Chapter 21

I. The People are Attacked by Snakes due to their Ungrateful Words against God and Moses (21:1-9):

A. “And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the South, heard tell that Israel came by the way of Atharim; and he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive. And Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. And Jehovah hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and the name of the place was called Hormah” (21:1-3).

1. This battle “occurred in the interval between the departure from Kadesh and the arrival in the Arabah at Mount Hor” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 738). Evidently this was the same rout the 12 spies had earlier taken (vs. 1; Numb. 13:17).

2. Israel vowed to God to destroy all their cities if he would deliver them into their hands. The Lord delivered Arad into their hands and they kept their vow

B. “And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died” (21:4-6).

1. The people were discouraged by the rugged terrain and the knowledge that Canaan was north and they were traveling south (far south around Edom).

2. The people begin to complain “against God, and against Moses.” It is evident to them now that God is working through Moses. Their complaint is clearly against God now. Their complaint was that God had brought them to the wilderness to die of thirst and hunger. They complain about the manna saying that they “loath this light bread.” Due to their complaining Jehovah sent snakes to bite them and many thereby died.

3. When the road in life is rugged it may cause us to do and say things that we would not normally do had things been easy.

C. “And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people” (21:7).

1. Israel, after being punished by the snakes, admits their sin and requests that Moses would pray to God on their behalf.

2. Moses prays to God for the people.

D. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent
of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived” (21:8-9).

1. The people desired to be relieved of the snakes. They desired God’s favor. God would give them His favor based upon the condition that they came to the brass snake made by Moses and looked upon it.

2. Jesus compared himself to this healing snake at John 3:14-16. Faith will certainly motivate one to obedience.

II. Israel Defeats Ammon (21:10-35):

A. “And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth, and encamped at Iyeabarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising. From thence they journeyed, and encamped in the valley of Zered. From thence they journeyed, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness, that cometh out of the border of the Amorites: for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. Wherefore it is said in the book of the Wars of Jehovah, Vaheb in Suphah, And the valleys of the Arnon, And the slope of the valleys That inclineth toward the dwelling of Ar, And leaneth upon the border of Moab. And from thence they journeyed to Beer: that is the well whereof Jehovah said unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then sang Israel this song: Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: The well, which the princes digged, Which the nobles of the people delved, With the sceptre, and with their staves. And from the wilderness they journeyed to Mattanah; and from Mattanah to Nahaliel; and from Nahaliel to Bamoth; and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the field of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh down upon the desert” (21:10-20).

1. See map for the journeys of Israel to Mount Pisgah.

2. A water well is dug at Beer and the people rejoice in song.

B. “And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn aside into field, or into vineyard; we will not drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway, until we have passed thy border. And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness, and came to Jahaz; and he fought against Israel. And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from the Arnon unto the Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon; for the border of the children of Ammon was strong. And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the towns thereof” (21:21-25).

1. As Israel travels to Mount Pisgah they must travel through Ammon. Once again messengers are sent out to seek a peaceful passage through Ammon as they did with the Edomites.

2. Ammon, like Edom, refused to let Israel pass through peacefully. A war is waged and Israel defeats the Ammonites.

C. “For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto the Arnon. Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come ye to Heshbon; Let the city of Sihon be built and established: For a fire is gone out of Heshbon, A flame from the city of Sihon: It hath devoured Ar of Moab, The lords of the high places of the Arnon. Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: He hath given his sons as fugitives, And his daughters into captivity, Unto Sihon king of the Amorites. We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, And we have laid waste even unto Nophah, Which reacheth unto Medeba. Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites” (21:26-31).

1. A song of woe to Moab is composed by the defeated peoples and disseminated throughout the land.

2. If Ammon is defeated by Israel Moab will certainly be too.

3. Note that Israel did not have to fight with Moab initially because they were subject to Ammon.

D. “And Moses sent to spy out Jazer; and they took the towns thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there. And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon. So they smote him, and
his sons and all his people, until there was none left him remaining: and they possessed his land” (21:32-35).

1. Israel further defeats Ammon.
2. Israel defeats Og, the king of Bashan. Now all the land East of the Jordan belonged to Israel.

Lessons learned from chapters 20-21

- Canaan (Heaven) belongs to the faithful (cf. Heb. 3:12-4:4). The rebellious (Numbers 14:8-9; 17:10; 20:10) have no place with God due to their unbelief (Numb. 20:12). These rebellious complainers ought to forever be an example to the existing generation (cf. I Cor. 10:1ff).
- The road to heaven is paved with tribulations and great difficulties (Acts 14:22). Life is a long hard road. The Israelites’ trek through the wilderness was choked full of hardships. It is in these difficult days that God was molding them that they may be approved by Him. Likewise, God molds us today (cf. James 1:1ff).
- Obedience evidences one’s faith. When the snakes bit Israel they were commanded to go to the brazen snake and look upon it. Those who humbled themselves and did so were saved. Likewise those who humbly believe and submit to Jesus will be saved (cf. John 3:14-16).

Chapter 22

I. Balak, king of Moab, request that Balaam Curse Israel (22 all):

A. “And the children of Israel journeyed, and encamped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan at Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now will this multitude lick up all that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time” (22:1-4).

1. We noted earlier that Moab was subject to Ammon at this time. Israel had crossed through Moab with no resistance. They are now encamped on the east side of the Jordan just at the border of their promised land of Canaan. The very presence of a massive amount of people moving through one’s lands that have the battle capability of overthrowing a nation that you are subject to is enough to cause mental distress. Moab had no idea what Israel was up to. Their fear was that they were going to be the next peoples exterminated in Israel’s path.

2. Balak is the king of Moab at this time. He sends out messengers to confer with the elders of Midian about this crisis.

B. “And he sent messengers unto Balaam the son of Beor, to Pethor, which is by the River, to the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I know that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak” (22:5-7).

1. Balak of Moab and the elders of Midian confer that they should send for Balaam, the well known soothsayer in Mesopotamia (see Joshua 13:22).

2. Messengers are to take “rewards of divination” to Balaam that he may be hired to curse the people of God. It was apparently a well known fact that whoever Balaam cursed was cursed and whoever he blessed would prosper. Balak believes that the people of God are too many and mighty for them to conquer.

3. Balak’s plan is to curse the Israelites rendering them defenseless while he goes to them and smites them all in this defenseless state.

C. “And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Jehovah shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam. And God came unto Balaam, and
said, What men are these with thee? And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying, Behold, the people that is come out of Egypt, it covereth the face of the earth: now, come curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to fight against them, and shall drive them out. And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed” (22:8-12).

1. Balaam was an apparent prophet of God of some sort. He appears to have faith in Jehovah due to his comments to the princes of Moab and Midian regarding his conferral with Jehovah. To Balaam, the Lord would determine whether or not Israel should be cursed.

2. Jehovah commands Balaam to not curse Israel due to the fact that they were blessed of God.

D. “And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for Jehovah refuseth to give me leave to go with you. And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us. And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honorable than they. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me: for I will promote thee unto very great honor, and whatsoever thou sayest unto me I will do: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people” (22:13-17).

1. Faithfully Balaam responds to the princes that Balak had sent by saying, “go away, God told me to not curse a blessed people.”

2. Balak barters with Balaam the only way he knows how. The king offers Balaam a prestigious position of authority in Moab. This reminds us of the temptation of Christ by Satan (cf. Matt. 4:1ff). Moses was also one tempted with riches and power yet he chose the way of God (cf. Heb. 11:24ff).

E. “And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more. Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what Jehovah will speak unto me more. And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men are come to call thee, rise up, go with them; but only the word which I speak unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab” (22:18-21).

1. The princes of Balak return to Balaam and tell him of the king’s offer of great authority in Moab. Balaam faithfully replies, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God, to do less or more.” Balaam indicates a spirit of lust for the vainglory of life when he invites the messengers to stay another night that he may once again confer with Jehovah on the matter. The Lord had already told Balaam His desire yet Balaam had it in his heart to go.

2. It may seem odd that God told Balaam not to go and then gave him permission to go. We shall see that God had a plan so that Balaam may learn about the character and sovereign commands of Jehovah God.

F. “And God's anger was kindled because he went; and the angel of Jehovah placed himself in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. Then the angel of Jehovah stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again. And the angel of Jehovah went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And the ass saw the angel of Jehovah, and she lay down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with his staff” (22:22-27).

1. Three times Balaam’s ass saw an angel in the way and sought to avoid it. Each time the ass turned aside Balaam struck the ass with a rod. Jehovah then gives the ass the ability to speak.

2. “As it was a longing for wages and honor that had induced the soothsayer to undertake the journey, the nearer he came to his destination, under the guidance of the distinguished Moabitish ambassadors, the more was his mind occupied with the honors and riches in prospect; and so completely did they take possession of his heart, that he was in danger of
casting to the winds the condition which had been imposed upon him by God...he was darkened as it was by sinful lust; and this happened three times before Jehovah brought him to his senses by the speaking of the dumb animal, and thus opened his eyes” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 766-767).

G. “And Jehovah opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me, I would there were a sword in my hand, for now I had killed thee. And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden all thy life long unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay. Then Jehovah opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Jehovah standing in the way, with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed his head, and fell on his face. And the angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? Behold, I am come forth for an adversary, because thy way is perverse before me: and the ass saw me, and turned aside before me these three times: unless she had turned aside from me, surely now I had even slain thee, and saved her alive” (22:28-33).

1. Balaam’s desire was to get to Moab. Moab presented him the opportunity of authority and riches. Jehovah had commanded Balaam not to go yet he has decided to go anyway. While on the way to Moab, Balaam is blind to the dangers of an angel with a sword before him but not his ass. Balaam was blinded by his lust for power and riches.

2. Three times the ass tries to flee the sword wielding angel and three times Balaam beats the animal. At last, the Lord gives the donkey the ability to speak and the animal rebukes Balaam for striking it these three times. The ass had only desired to save both of their lives. The angel reveals the reality of the danger that the ass caused them to avert in that the Lord states it would have slain Balaam. Balaam’s “way was perverse” and thereby the angel sought to smite him to death.

H. “And Balaam said unto the angel of Jehovah, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again. And the angel of Jehovah said unto Balaam, Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak” (22:34-35).

1. The angel had exposed Balaam’s intentions of the heart and called it “perverse.” Balaam’s clear desire was to receive the honor and riches that Balak had offered. Balaam now sees his sin with open eyes and admits that “I have sinned.” Balaam is willing to return to his homeland yet the angel of Jehovah explains that he has somewhat more work to accomplish.

2. The angel of Jehovah instructs Balaam to continue on with the princes of Moab yet upon arrival he is only to speak the words that Jehovah would have him.

I. “And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto the City of Moab, which is on the border of the Arnon, which is in the utmost part of the border. And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? Wherefore camest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honor? And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to speak anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kiriath-huzoth. And Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him. And it came to pass in the morning, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal; and he saw from thence the utmost part of the people” (22:36-41).

1. Balak comes out to meet Balaam on the borders of Moab. The king is somewhat angered that Balaam did not come at his first bidding. His idea of Balaam not coming was that the prophet did not believe that the king could give him the things offered. Balak failed to see that Balaam’s delay was not due to materialism but rather due to the commandment of Jehovah God. Balaam responds to Balak’s admonition by saying that he will only be able to speak that which Jehovah gives him to speak.

2. The next day Balak takes Balaam upon the high places of Baal and makes sacrifices to the heathen god.
Chapter 23

I. Balaam blesses Israel and Balak is Angered (23:1-26):

A. “And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram. And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt-offering, and I will go: peradventure Jehovah will come to meet me; and whatsoever he showeth me I will tell thee. And he went to a bare height. And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar. And Jehovah put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak” (23:1-5).
1. While Balak’s mind is on Baal Balaam’s is on Jehovah (especially since he had been rebuked as perverse on the way to Moab).
2. Balaam instructs the king of Moab to construct seven altars to sacrifice seven bullocks and seven rams. Balak does as Balaam instructs. Balaam then goes to confer with Jehovah as to what he is to say to the king in relation to Israel. Jehovah meets with Balaam and gives him a word to speak to Balak regarding Israel.

B. “And he returned unto him, and, lo, he was standing by his burnt-offering, he, and all the princes of Moab. And he took up his parable, and said, From Aram hath Balak brought me, The king of Moab from the mountains of the East: Come, curse me Jacob, And come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? And how shall I defy, whom Jehovah hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, And from the hills I behold him: lo, it is a people that dwelleth alone, And shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, Or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, And let my last end be like his! And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which Jehovah putteth in my mouth?” (23:6-12).
1. Balaam returns to the king of Moab who is standing by the sacrifices with his princes of Moab. When Balak sees Balaam coming he speaks a parable regarding his wishes for Jacob (i.e., Israel) to be cursed.
2. Balaam; however, blesses Israel. Balak is angered yet Balaam replies that he cannot curse that which Jehovah blesses. Balaam said, “Must I not take heed to speak that which Jehovah puts in my mouth?”

C. “And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them; thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from hence. And he took him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, while I meet Jehovah yonder. And Jehovah met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus shalt thou speak. And he came to him, and, lo, he was standing by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath Jehovah spoken? And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; Hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor: God is not a man, that he should lie, Neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said, and will he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and will he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless: And he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob; Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: Jehovah his God is with him, And the shout of a king is among them. God bringeth them forth out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox. Surely there is no enchantment with Jacob; Neither is there any divination with Israel: Now shalt it be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people riseth up as a lioness, And as a lion doth he lift himself up: He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, And drink the blood of the slain. And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all. But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that Jehovah speaketh, that I must do?” (23:13-26).
1. Balak takes Balaam to the heights of Mt. Pisgah that he may once again look down on the people of Israel and curse them that he may slay the whole lot of them.
2. Again, seven altars are prepared and again Balaam goes to meet with Jehovah regarding what he should say in relation to Israel.

3. Balaam comes back to Balak and the princes of Moab and once again blesses Israel. They are like a lion blessed by God that shall not rest till they devour their prey.

D. “And Balak said unto Balaam, Come now, I will take thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence. And Balak took Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh down upon the desert. And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams. And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered up a bullock and a ram on every altar” (23:27-30).

1. Balak seems to think that different geographic views of the whole of Israel will give Balaam and Jehovah a different perspective. This time they go to Peor. “Mt. Peor was one peak of the northern part of the mountains of Abarim by the town of Beth-peor, which afterwards belonged to the Reubenites (Josh. 13:20...situated in the valley of the Jordan...Peor was about seven Roman miles from Heshbon...” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 778).

2. Once again Balaam instructs Balak to construct the seven altars and make the sacrifices.

Chapter 24

I. Balak and Balaam on Mt. Peor (continued from previous chapter / 24:1-13):

A. “And when Balaam saw that it pleased Jehovah to bless Israel, he went not, as at the other times, to meet with enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness. And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel dwelling according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him” (24:1-2).

1. Balaam’s experience with Jehovah over this matter in his home land of Midian, the experience with the angel on the way to Moab, and the two conversations with Jehovah at Kiriath-huzoth and the heights of Baal and Mt. Pisgah has left the soothsayer with no doubt as to God’s will regarding Israel.

2. Balaam does not even consort with Jehovah this time. Balaam looks out over Israel and then the “Spirit of God came upon him.” To have the Spirit of God come upon one is to be given divine revelation (cf. Numb. 11:26-30).

B. “And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, And the man whose eye was closed saith; He saith, who heareth the words of God, Who seeth the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, and having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, Thy tabernacles, O Israel! As valleys are they spread forth, As gardens by the river-side, As lign-aloes which Jehovah hath planted, As cedar-trees beside the waters. Water shall flow from his buckets, And his seed shall be in many waters, And his king shall be higher than Agag, And his kingdom shall be exalted. God bringeth him forth out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox: He shall eat up the nations his adversaries, And shall break their bones in pieces, And smite them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, And as a lioness; who shall rouse him up? Blessed be every one that blesseth thee, And cursed be every one that curseth thee” (24:3-9).

1. Balaam speaks by divine revelation saying that Israel is to be a mighty kingdom filled with strength.

2. Furthermore, Balaam reveals the danger of cursing such a God blessed people (cf. Gen. 12:3).
C. “And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together; and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honor. And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers that thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; what Jehovah speaketh, that will I speak?” (24:10-13).

1. Balaam had good intentions or at least through his experience with Jehovah on this occasion fear was produced within. Balaam faithfully states, “I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah... What Jehovah speaks that will I speak.” Though these classic words go down in history as some of the greatest words of faith (even terms that we use today... i.e., ‘let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent...’ ‘Let us give book, chapter, and verse for all that we do...’) Balaam would come to betray Jehovah.

2. Notice the evil tactic of Balak. The king said to Balaam that, “Jehovah hath kept thee back from honor.” Honor to Balak meant worldly renown and riches. Honor to Jehovah God means living by a spirit of meekness and faith (cf. Habakkuk 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11).

IV. Balaam’s fourth and final prophecy (24:14-25):

A. “And now, behold, I go unto my people: come, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days. And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor saith, And the man whose eye was closed saith: He saith, who heareth the words of God, And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High, Who seeth the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, and having his eyes open: I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh: There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, And a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, And shall smite through the corners of Moab, And break down all the sons of tumult. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession, who were his enemies; While Israel doeth valiantly. And out of Jacob shall one have dominion, And shall destroy the remnant from the city. And he looked on Amalek, and took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; But his latter end shall come to destruction. And he looked on the Kenite, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, And thy nest is set in the rock. Nevertheless Kain shall be wasted, Until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this? But ships shall
come from the coast of Kittim, And they shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber; And he also shall come to destruction. And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way” (24:14-25).

1. Balaam goes with Balak to speak a final prophesy to the people of Moab.
2. This final prophesy is divided into 4 sub prophesies:
   a. The two nations related to Israel: Edom and Moab: The “star out of Jacob” the “scepter shall rise out of Israel” these refer to the Messiah; the future King. Moab and Edom shall be subdued; both of which have up to this point illustrated hostility to Israel.
   b. Amalek, the arch-enemy of Israel: Remember that the Amalekites were the first nation to show hostility to Israel (Ex. 17:8). They are therefore mentioned in vs. 20 as the “first of the nations.” There end would be just as their beginning (destroyed vs. 20)
   c. Prophesy regarding the Kenites (those who were led by Jethro Ex 17:8-18). Those from “the rocky mountain of Horeb, in the neighborhood of which the Kenites led a nomad life before their association with Israel (see Ex. 3:1)” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 785). This is where Moses met his wife. There dwelling place shall be strong. Asshur (Assyria see Ezra 6:22) would carry them away.
   d. The final prophesy is a foretelling of the over throw of Assyria and Eber. All world powers would eventually fall to the “star of Jacob.”

Lessons Learned from Chapters 22 - 24

- **See study # 26; The Road to hell is paved with good intentions:** The Word of God reveals men who had great intentions; however, when push came to shove they faltered. Balaam made great statements of faith that illustrated his resolve to do nothing more or less than what Jehovah commanded (cf. Numb. 22:18). Yet when one concludes a study of Balaam’s life we find one who gave in to the lust of worldly gains (cf. Numb. 22:32-34; II Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11). Other examples may be seen. The Hebrews coming out of Egypt made statements of great faith yet later reneged on their resolve (cf. Exod. 24:1-11). During Nehemiah’s day the people’s resolve is depicted in Nehemiah 10:39 yet their failures at 13:11. Peter is another one whose conviction and purpose of service was genuine yet he too failed the Lord (Matt. 26:34-35). The Bible records man’s failures. Some of these men went on to live great lives of faith through repentance and prayer (i.e., Peter) and others such as Balaam became eternal failures. How you and I handle our current failures determines our eternal existence.

- **The rewards of God and the World:** When one labors their reward is the day’s wages agreed upon. When one lives either godly or ungodly there is reward as well (Rom. 6:23). God’s rewards are eternal and good (cf. Rev. 2:10). The world’s rewards are eternal as well yet very painful (Rev. 20:10ff). Balaam was offered rewards of divination and great honor in Moab in exchange for cursing the people of God (cf. Numb. 22:15-18, 37). What man must contemplate today is whether these temporary earthly pleasures are worth and eternity of pain and anguish (cf. I Tim. 6:7-12; Heb. 11:24ff).

- **Has Jehovah “held you back” from worldly honor?** Balak, King of Moab, told Balaam that it was God’s fault that he did not receive rewards of divination and neither does he receive honor in Moab. Balaam chose to obey God rather than accept the rewards of error. Sometimes Christians may feel that if it were not for their spiritual convictions they may have received that promotion or fit in better with people at work. We may blame God for any misfortunes and lost opportunities. When one begins thinking that God is causing us to miss out on the fun of this world we may need to reassess our Christian stand. Jesus said that your either with him or against him... we cannot have things both ways in this life (i.e., live worldly and spiritually) (cf. Matt. 12:30 / I Jn. 2:16-18) (see study # 27; Attitudes toward Sin and Righteousness).
Chapter 25

I. Israel’s Sin at Peor and the Zeal of Phinehas (25:1-13):

A. “And Israel abode in Shittim; and the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab: for they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take all the chiefs of the people, and hang them up unto Jehovah before the sun, that the fierce anger of Jehovah may turn away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that have joined themselves unto Baal-peor” (25:1-5).

1. Apparently as Balaam is on the long road home to Mesopotamia he contemplates the glory, honor, and riches that he had lost out on because he blessed rather than cursed Israel. Balaam, no doubt thought long and hard about Balak’s statement, i.e., “I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, Jehovah hath kept thee back from honor” (cf. Numb. 24:11). Considering the fact that Jehovah had kept him back from honor Balaam councils Balak regarding how to curse Israel (cf. Numb. 31:16). Balaam knew that the only way Israel was to be cursed is if they committed trespasses against Jehovah.

2. As Israel dwelt in Shittim, Balak (in some unrecorded way) introduced his women to the Israelite men. Through the lust of the flesh Israel took these Moabite women in and committed fornication with them. The sexual union of these people gave way to spiritual adultery; i.e., worshipping Moab’s gods (Baal-peor).

3. Jehovah’s anger was kindled against the people and He commands Moses to string up all the chiefs of the people in the broad daylight. After the chiefs were executed Moses commands the judges of the people to “slay ye every one his men that have joined themselves unto Baal-peor.”

B. “And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, while they were weeping at the door of the tent of meeting. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the pavilion, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died by the plague were twenty and four thousand” (25:6-9).

1. Consider the picture. There are dead chiefs impaled upon post throughout the camp. Dead men, who were slain by the judges of the people, are being drug out of the camp due to their being joined to Baal-peor. The rest of the congregation is terrified of the fierce wrath of God. They have assembled themselves at the tent of meeting to weep over the loss of their loved ones and mourn over their disobedience.

2. During this moment of anguish and despair a foolish Israeliite brought one of the foreign women into the camp and began having sex with her. The mourning congregation saw the two as well as Phinehas the grandson of Aaron. At this point a plague begins through the people wherein 24,000 people die at the hands of Jehovah. To avert the plague, Phinehas runs to the fornicating couple and plunge a javelin through the two and the plague was stayed.

C. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and it shall be unto him, and to his seed after him, the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel” (25:10-13).

1. The righteous indignation of Phinehas is rewarded. Phinehas displayed a spirit of zeal comparable to Jehovah’s when he saw the fornication taking place. Jehovah states that Phinehas’ actions were a display of being “jealous with my jealousy.”

2. Phinehas’ reward was that God gave him His “covenant of peace... an everlasting priesthood.” At Judges 20:28 we find Phinehas standing as high priest of the people.
3. God desires such convicted and zealous followers today (cf. Eph. 4:26). Consider the following Bible men who displayed such conviction (see study # 28; Bible Conviction):
   a. Moses (Heb. 11:24ff)
   b. Isaiah (Isa. 6:8)
   c. Jeremiah (Jer. 15:17-18; 20:9)
   d. Ezra (Ezra 7:10; 9:1-4)
   e. Jesus (Jn. 2:14-15)
   f. Apostles (1 Cor. 4:9ff)
   g. Members of the body of Christ (Col. 2:5)

II. Identity of the Slain Fornicators (25:14-18):
   A. “Now the name of the man of Israel that was slain, who was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a fathers’ house among the Simeonites. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head of the people of a fathers’ house in Midian” (25:14-15).
      1. Notice that the name of these two sinners goes down in history as two who were responsible for the deaths of 24,000 people (see study # 29; Naming Names of the Erring).
      2. Not only is their name mentioned but their families as well.
   B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them; for they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of the prince of Midian, their sister, who was slain on the day of the plague in the matter of Peor” (25:16-18).
      1. Jehovah commands Moses to vex the wicked Midianites after the events of plague and conviction are over.
      2. The Midianites vexed Israel with wiles of lust and idolatry.

Chapter 26

I. The Second Numbering of Israel (26:1-56):
   A. “And it came to pass after the plague, that Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers’ houses, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel. And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as Jehovah commanded Moses and the children of Israel, that came forth out of the land of Egypt” (26:1-4).
      1. The first numbering of Israelites was for the purpose of knowing the number in Israel’s army.
      2. This second numbering of Israel is for the purpose of dividing the land of Canaan. Those with the greatest numbers would receive the largest amount of land (cf. Numb. 26:51-52). Jehovah instructs Moses to number all Israelite men above 20 years old who are able to go to war.
   B. “Reuben, the first-born of Israel; the sons of Reuben: [off] Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the family of the Pallutites; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. These are the families of the Reubenites; and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. And the sons of Pallu: Eliab. And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. These are that Dathan and Abiram, who were called of the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against Jehovah, and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died; what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men, and they became a sign. Notwithstanding, the sons of Korah died not” (26:5-11).
      1. The first numbering of Reuben was 46,500 and the current 43,730 men.
      2. Reuben lost nearly 3,000 men.
   C. “The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred” (26:12-14).
1. The first numbering of Simeon was 59,300 and the current is 22,200.
2. Simeon lost 37,000 men (likely to the Baal-peor incident).

D. “The sons of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggit, the family of the Haggitites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; of Ozn, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; of Arod, the family of the Ardotites; of Areli, the family of the Areliites. These are the families of the sons of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred” (26:15-18).
1. The first numbering of Gad was 45,650 and the current is 40,500.
2. Gad lost about 5,000 men.

E. “The sons of Judah: Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Judah after their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Perezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred” (26:19-22).
1. The first numbering of Judah was 74,600 and the current is 76,500.
2. Judah is the first mentioned tribe to actually gain (i.e., ~2,000 men).

F. “The sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah, the family of the Puhaites; of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred” (26:23-25).
1. The first numbering of Issachar was 54,400 and the current is 64,300.
2. Issachar gained approximately 10,000 men.

G. “The sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Seredites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred” (26:26-27).
1. The first numbering of Zebulun was 57,400 and the current is 60,500.
2. Zebulun gained 3,300 men.

H. “The sons of Joseph after their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begat Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. These are the sons of Gilead: of Iezer, the family of the Iezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; and of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and of Hepher, the family of the Hepherites. And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. These are the families of Manasseh; and they that were numbered of them were fifty and two thousand and seven hundred” (26:28-34).
1. The first numbering of Manasseh was 32,200 and the current is 52,700.
2. Manasseh gained approximately 20,500 men.

I. “These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the family of the Becherites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahaniahites. And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families” (26:35-37).
1. The first numbering of Ephraim was 40,500 and the current is 32,500.
2. Ephraim lost 8,000 men.

J. “The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; of Shephupham, the family of the Shephuhamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamanites. These are the sons of Benjamin after their families; and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred” (26:38-41).
1. The first numbering of Benjamin was 35,400 and the current is 45,600.
2. Benjamin gained 10,200 men.

K. “These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families. All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred” (26:42-43).
1. The first numbering of Dan was 62,700 and the current is 64,400.
2. Dan gained 1,700 men.

I. “The sons of Asher after their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Berites. Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah. These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them, fifty and three thousand and four hundred” (26:44-47).
1. The first numbering of Asher was 41,500 and the current is 53,400.
2. Asher gained nearly 12,000 men.

M. “The sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred” (26:48-50).
1. The first number of Naphtali was 53,400 and the current is 45,400.
2. Naphtali lost 8,000 men.

N. “These are they that were numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. To the more thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to the fewer thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one according to those that were numbered of him shall his inheritance be given. Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit. According to the lot shall their inheritance be divided between the more and the fewer” (26:51-56).
1. The total number ready for war was 601,730. The first numbering was 603,550. The current number of men ready for war was approximately 2,000 less than first numbered.
2. The greater numbered tribes were to be given more land and the lesser number the smaller inheritance of land.

II. Numbering of the tribe of Levi (26:57-65):
A. “And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. And Kohath begat Amram. And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister. And unto Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before Jehovah” (26:57-61).
1. Moses traces the history of the Levites and focuses upon the ancestry of Aaron.
2. Moses reminds us of the error of Nadab and Abihu.

B. “And they that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, every male from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel. These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. But among these there was not a man of them that were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For Jehovah had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun” (26:62-65).
1. The first numbering of Levi was 22,300 and the current is 23,000.
2. Levi gained 700 men.
Lessons Learned from Numbers 25 – 26

- Beware of the council of wicked men. Balaam apparently thought long and hard about the honor and riches he lost out on and thereby counseled the Midianite women to seduce Israel into sin (cf. Numb. 31:16). Balaam appeared to be a faithful man (cf. Numb. 24:13) yet his inner man of flesh was sinful (cf. I Pet. 2:1-3, 10-15; Jude 5-12). Let us be careful not to be swayed from truth by teachers of error (see study # 16).

- Develop and attitude toward sin that parallels God’s. Phinehas’ quick actions of righteous indignation led to he and his family being blessed with the office of high priest. Let us all be angry at sin (cf. Eph. 4:26) and abhor it (Rom. 12:9) (see study # 27).

- God fulfills His promises. God promised the land of Canaan to Israel and here at Numbers 26 we find Moses commanding Israel to number their men of war for the purpose of dividing the land (cf. Numb. 26:51-52). Note that they have not yet taken Canaan; however, the Lord is so sure of His promises that he has them divide it before they get there. God promises us salvation today if only we would do our part.

Chapter 27

I. Law Concerning Inheritance of Land (27:1-11):

A. “Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, the son of Joseph; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah. And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, at the door of the tent of meeting, saying, Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not among the company of them that gathered themselves together against Jehovah in the company of Korah: but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from among his family, because he had no son? Give unto us a possession among the brethren of our father. And Moses brought their cause before Jehovah” (27:1-5).

1. After all the men of war are numbered for the purpose of dividing the land the daughters of Zelophehad, a man who had died in the wilderness wanderings for his own sins, approach Moses. Zelophehad was of the family of Manasseh. The five daughters have a good question. They want to know if they can have land in Canaan due to their father dieing and basically taking his name with him.

2. When daughter’s married they took on the name of their husband’s family. With no sons, Zelophehad’s name would be extinct. Though the name was extinct the daughters feel that they should have a portion for their father’s name sake. Since Zelophedhad was of the family of Manasseh the five daughters ought to have a portion of land with the family of Manasseh even though they had no men of war numbered. Moses brings this question before Jehovah (should we not bring all spiritual questions before Jehovah?).

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them. And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute and ordinance, as Jehovah commanded Moses” (27:6-11).

1. If a man has sons his inheritance shall go to the sons.

2. If a man has no sons his inheritance shall to his daughters.

3. If a man has no daughters his inheritance shall go to his brother.

4. If a man has no brothers he shall give it unto his next of kin.

II. God commands Moses to transfer his honor and leadership position to Joshua (27:12-23):
A. “And Jehovah said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, and behold the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered; because ye rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the waters before their eyes. (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.”) (27:12-14).

1. Neither Moses or Aaron were allowed to enter Canaan due to their sins at the waters of Meribah of Kadesh (Numb. 20:12). Moses struck the rock rather than speaking to it and took the glory for himself and Aaron rather than giving it to God.

2. The Lord graciously allowed Moses to climb to the top of Mt. Nebo and view the land before he would be gathered to his people (cf. Deut. 32:48-52).

B. “And Moses spake unto Jehovah, saying, Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Jehovah be not as sheep which have no shepherd. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight” (27:15-19).

1. Here is an interesting attribute of God. Moses addresses the Lord as the “God of the spirits of all flesh.” Though man may be Jew or Gentile (white, Mexican, German, African American, Chinese, etc) God is their Lord. Jeremiah referred to God as the “God of all flesh” (Jer. 32:27).

2. Moses requests that God appoint a man to take his place as a shepherd over the people (i.e., one who would care for their well being... God truly cares and uses men as shepherd to accomplish His purpose for His people cf. Jn. 10:11ff; Acts 20:28. The qualification for the new leader was that he would be “a man in whom is the Spirit.” To have the Spirit of Jehovah was to be one endowed with divine revelation (cf. Numb. 11:26-30; 12:6-7). Today, the qualifications for the shepherds of the church that God has ordained to care, feed, and supervise are given at I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9. One may say that the Spirit of the Lord is certainly upon the elders of the church today in that their minds have been exercised to wisdom and knowledge of God’s word by years of study. Joshua was that man for God then and we have men for this work today in the church (see study # 30; Joshua).

3. Jehovah commands that Moses would lay his hands upon Joshua in the sight of the whole congregation and thereby transfer the leadership of the people from Moses to Joshua.

C. “And thou shalt put of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may obey. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before Jehovah: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation. And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Jehovah spake by Moses” (27:20-23).

1. Moses was to put the honor that he had in the eyes of the people upon Joshua in that the people would now know that God was working through Joshua as He had through Moses. Such a public event of a transferal of authority would bring immediate respect and submission to Joshua as the people had for Moses. If the people complained against Joshua they would be rebelling against Jehovah.

2. Moses did all that God commanded him to do as was the case with most of Moses’ life.

Chapter 28

I. The Daily and Sabbath Day Sacrifices (28:1-10):

A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My oblation, my food for my offerings made by fire, of a sweet savor unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season. And thou shall say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto Jehovah: he-lambs a year old without blemish, two day by day, for a continual burnt-offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at
even; and the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. And the drink-offering thereof shall be the fourth part of a hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou pour out a drink-offering of strong drink unto Jehovah. And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meal-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah” (28:1-8).

1. Jehovah had instructed Moses to sacrifice two he-lambs per day (one in the morning and another in the evening) for a daily sacrifice unto Jehovah as a continual burnt-offering commanded by God when at Mount Sinai (cf. Ex. 29:38-42).
2. Accompanying the he-lamb in the morning and evening was to be flour for a meal-offering and oil.
3. Lastly, in addition to the he-lamb, meal, and oil there was to be an offering of “strong drink” (i.e. Heb. shekar). Interestingly, Moses had originally been told to offer yayin (wine) at Exodus 29 yet now he is told to offer shekar. The Hebrew word yayin is a word for wine that context determines whether or not alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine is under consideration. The Hebrew shekar is often times used for wine that is made from fruits other than grapes and its toxicity is determined by context as well. It seems obvious that the leavening accompaniment of yeast in intoxicating drinks would prohibit any such offering unto the Lord. The context of shekar here is an oblation unto the Lord and would most certainly not contain alcohol. The interchanging of the words from Exodus to Numbers may indicate that the Lord desired wine and it did not matter if it was the wine of grapes, pomegranates, figs, apples, etc.

B. “And on the sabbath day two he-lambs a year old without blemish, and two tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof: this is the burnt-offering of every sabbath, besides the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof” (28:9-10).

1. Each Sabbath day the people of God were to not only have a holy convocation but they were to make sacrifices of two he-lambs a year old, a meal-offering, oil, and drink offering.
2. Notice that the Sabbath sacrifices were to be made in addition to the daily oblations. The daily oblations continued throughout every day of the year no matter what feast or day it was.
3. Our offerings of thanksgiving ought to come up before Jehovah on a daily basis as well (cf. Heb. 13:14-16).

II. New Moon, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Pentecost (28:11-31):

A. “And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto Jehovah: two young bullocks, and one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish; and three tenth parts of an ephah of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, for each bullock; and two tenth parts of fine flour for a meal-offering, mingled with oil, for the one ram; and a tenth part of fine flour mingled with oil for a meal-offering unto every lamb; for a burnt-offering of a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. And their drink-offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bullock, and the third part of a hin for the ram, and the fourth part of a hin for a lamb: this is the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year. And one he-goat for a sin-offering unto Jehovah; it shall be offered besides the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof” (28:11-15).

1. Burnt offerings: 2 young bullocks; 1 ram; 7 lambs. All sacrifices were accompanied by prescribed flour, oil and wine oblations.
2. In addition, each new moon day was to have a sin offering of a goat. Accompanying this new moon oblation was the daily offerings as mentioned above.

B. “And in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, is Jehovah's passover. And on the fifteenth day of this month shall be a feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten. In the first day shall be a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer an offering made by fire, a burnt-offering unto Jehovah: two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven he-lambs a year old; they shall be unto you without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil: three tenth parts shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth parts for the ram; a tenth part shalt thou
offer for every lamb of the seven lambs; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, to make atonement for you. Ye shall offer these besides the burnt-offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt-offering. After this manner ye shall offer daily, for seven days, the food of the offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah: it shall be offered besides the continual burnt-offering, and the drink-offering thereof. And on the seventh day ye shall have a holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work” (28:16-25).

1. The Passover was to be observed on the 14th day of the first month (Nisan). On the 15th day through the 21st day was a feast (the feast of unleavened bread). The first day (Sunday) is a holy convocation with no work (assembled at the tabernacle).

2. Seven days were to be spent making the same sacrifices as the new moon offerings were to be made in addition to the daily sacrifices. On the 7th day (the Sabbath), there shall be a holy convocation. For more information on this feast see Ex. 12; Lev. 23

C. “Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye offer a new meal-offering unto Jehovah in your [feast of] weeks, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer a burnt-offering for a sweet savor unto Jehovah: two young bullocks, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old; and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for each bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram, a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs; one he-goat, to make atonement for you. Besides the continual burnt-offering, and the meal-offering thereof, ye shall offer them (they shall be unto you without blemish), and their drink-offerings” (28:26-31).

1. The feast of Pentecost was observed 50 days after the Passover (day 14 of the first month). This is a day of holy convocation and no work (vs. 26).

2. The people of God were to offer 2 bullocks, 1 ram, and 7 he-lambs a year old. Furthermore, they were to offer meal oblations (flour, oil and wine). One sin offering of a he-goat for atonement was to be sacrificed as well. Again, the daily offerings are continued on top of these offerings.

Chapter 29

I. First Day of the Seventh Month and the Day of Atonement (29:1-11):

A. “And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing of trumpets unto you. And ye shall offer a burnt-offering for a sweet savor unto Jehovah: one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the ram, and one tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, to make atonement for you; besides the burnt-offering of the new moon, and the meal-offering thereof, and the continual burnt-offering and the meal-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings, according unto their ordinance, for a sweet savor, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah” (29:1-6).

1. The first day of the 7th month is a day of holy convocation. Israel was to do no work and they were to blow the horns. The offerings were to include 1 young bullock, 1 ram and 7 he-lambs a year old. Meal offerings of flour, oil and wine were also offered. One he-goat is to be offered as a sin offering

2. The daily oblations must be kept in addition to these

B. “And on the tenth day of this seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall do no manner of work; but ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto Jehovah for a sweet savor: one young bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old; they shall be unto you without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for the bullock, two tenth parts for the one ram, a tenth part for every lamb of the seven lambs: one he-goat for a sin-offering; besides the sin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meal-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings” (29:7-11).

1. The Day of Atonement fell upon the 10th day of the 7th month. The above mentioned sacrifices were offered upon this day as well.

2. The daily and evening sacrifices were also to be made.
II. The Feast of Tabernacles (29:12-40):
A. “And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have a holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto Jehovah seven days: and ye shall offer a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old; they shall be without blemish; and their meal-offering, fine flour mingled with oil, three tenth parts for every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth parts for each ram of the two rams, and a tenth part for every lamb of the fourteen lambs; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, besides the continual burnt-offering, the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof” (29:12-16).

1. The Feast of Tabernacle fell upon the 15th day of the seventh month. The Israelites would participate in a holy convocation and for seven days they would observe the feast.

2. Burnt offerings and meal offerings were to be made.

B. “And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering; besides the continual burnt-offering, and the meal-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings. And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering; besides the continual burnt-offering, and the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering; besides the continual burnt-offering, the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, besides the continual burnt-offering, and the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering; besides the continual burnt-offering, the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, fourteen he-lambs a year old without blemish; and their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, besides the continual burnt-offering, the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work; but ye shall offer a burnt-offering, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Jehovah: one bullock, one ram, seven he-lambs a year old without blemish; their meal-offering and their drink-offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the ordinance; and one he-goat for a sin-offering, besides the continual burnt-offering, the meal-offering thereof, and the drink-offering thereof. These ye shall offer unto Jehovah in your set feasts, besides your vows, and your freewill-offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meal-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings. And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that Jehovah commanded Moses” (29:17-40).

1. Sacrificing took place for seven straight days wherein 189 animals (burnt offerings) were made. Additionally, the daily sacrifices in the morning and evening continued.

2. Upon the eighth day of the feast (22nd of the seventh month) there was to be a holy convocation. Over the eight day period of this feast there would be a total of 222 animals sacrificed.

3. 297 total animals would be sacrificed for the seventh month.
Lessons for chapters 27, 28, and 29

- God’s gifts are conditioned upon man’s obedience. Though the Lord said that He had “given” the land of Canaan to Israel they would have to go in and take possession through warfare and bloodshed (cf. Numb. 27:12) (see study # 20).
- Qualities of God’s shepherds: Moses requests that the Lord select another man to lead Israel as their caring shepherd (Numb. 27:15-17). This new man, i.e., Joshua, would lead the people as sheep (Numb. 27:17), have the Spirit of God (Numb. 27:18), and all were to obey him (Numb. 27:20-21). God’s shepherds today; i.e., the elders, ought to display the same spirit of love, care, and concern for the sheep of God’s people (cf. Jn. 10:11ff; Acts 20:28). The elder in the body of Christ must have the Spirit of God (i.e., he must be led by the Spirit / word of God) (cf. Gal. 2:20; 3:1). Those who have this caring and high office of responsibility ought to be obeyed (cf. Heb. 13:17) (see study # 31; Elders in the Church).
- Sacrifices: As noted, there were 297 total sacrifices made in the seventh month. Should we sacrifice animals today? No (cf. Gal. 5:1-4); however we ought to make our “spiritual sacrifices” unto the Lord (cf. I Peter 2:5). Our spiritual sacrifices include things like our obedience and acts of righteousness (cf. I Sam. 15:22-23; Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 13:14-16). Our spiritual sacrifices should be our love for God and our fellow man (cf. Mk. 12:28-34). Furthermore, we ought to offer up our prayers of praise and request to the Lord as a means of our sacrifices (I Tim. 2:1ff; Rev. 8:1-4) (see study # 32; NT Spiritual Sacrifices).

Chapter 30

I. Moses Receives the Laws on making Vows and Oaths (30:1-30):
   A. “And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Jehovah hath commanded. When a man voweth a vow unto Jehovah, or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth” (30:1-2).
      1. Personal integrity is built upon one doing what he says that he will do. Others come to trust that when you say you are going to do something that it is surely going to be done. The Lord demands that all of his people have this type of integrity. When a man made a vow to do something then he was bound by God’s laws to perform the vow.
      2. Everything that proceeds out of the mouth of that man is to be accomplished. God’s people were to be a people of their word rather than idle chatters who no one could trust.
   B. “Also when a woman voweth a vow unto Jehovah, and bindeth herself by a bond, being in her father's house, in her youth, and her father heareth her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her husband holdeth his peace at her; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth, none of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and Jehovah will forgive her, because her father disallowed her” (30:3-5).
      1. Women were no different than men when it came to keeping their vows. If a girl that lived under the roof of her father made a vow and her father agreed to the vow she was bound to keep that oath.
      2. There may be some cases; however, where the father hears the young girl make a vow and he will not permit such a thing. The woman, being subject to her father, is excused in this case from fulfilling her vow.
   C. “And if she be married to a husband, while her vows are upon her, or the rash utterance of her lips, wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her husband heareth it, and hold his peace at her in the day that he heareth it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallow her in the day that he heareth it, then he shall make void her vow which is upon her, and the rash utterance of her lips, wherewith she hath bound her soul: and Jehovah will forgive her” (30:6-8).
      1. Vows made by married women have the same rules as those made by the young women in her father’s house.
2. If the woman’s husband heard the vow he may allow or disallow the vow. God will not hold the woman accountable whose husband disallows the vow.

D. “But the vow of a widow, or of her that is divorced, even everything wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand against her. And if she vowed in her husband’s house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath, and her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not; then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband made them null and void in the day that he heard them, then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and Jehovah will forgive her” (30:9-12).

1. The divorced and widowed women are bound to keep their vows too unless their husbands, while living with them, disallowed them.

2. The divorced or widowed woman who made a vow apart from their husbands were bound to keep the oath.

E. “Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void. But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day, then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he hath established them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them. But if he shall make them null and void after that he hath heard them, then he shall bear her iniquity. These are the statutes, which Jehovah commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between a father and his daughter, being in her youth, in her father’s house” (30:13-16).

1. The man, whether father or husband, determined whether or not the woman would keep her vows.

2. Jesus addressed this very issue on the Sermon on the Mount. He said, “Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths;” (Matthew 5:33). To “forswear” (epiorkeo) = “to swear falsely, forswear oneself” (LS 298). “One who violates his oath, perjured” (Moulton 158). Forswear = “To perjure oneself” (AHD 526). Perjury = “the deliberate, willful giving of false, misleading, or incomplete testimony under oath” (AHD 924). “Oath” (horkos) = “The object by which one swears, the witness of an oath, as the Styx among the gods” (LS 568). “Oath” = “a solemn, formal declaration or promise to fulfill a pledge, often calling upon God or a god as witness” (AHD 856). Under the Mosaic system one may make an oath in the name of God and was obligated to keep said oath (cf. Lev. 19:12; Numb. 30:2; Deut. 23:21). Examples in the OT of said oaths:

a. One may leave an animal with another to care for while traveling. If the animal is killed or stolen from the care person without his knowledge then a simple oath is to be said to the owner and satisfaction should exists (Ex. 22:10ff).

b. Some may make a vow to be separate and holy to the Lord (a Nazirite vow) (Numb. 6:1ff).

c. God commanded His people to swear their allegiance to all His commandments (cf. Deut. 6:13).

d. An example of a "rash" vow may be found at Judges 11:30-34

3. Furthermore, Jesus said, “but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black” (Matt. 5:34-36). The authority of Christ and the gospel of the kingdom is greatly magnified here. While the Mosaic Law commanded swearing (i.e., oaths) Jesus looses this command and summarily tells His audience to just always do the lawful thing. While the kingdom of God had not been established at this point its laws were being revealed by the Lord.

4. Apparently the Pharisees were teaching that one may not only swear by the name of Jehovah God but also “heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and one’s own head.” Jesus condemns said swearing because all these things have a direct correlation to God. Jesus explains why saying oaths (swearing) by the name of God are unacceptable in the next verse. “But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one” (Matt. 5:37). The command of oaths under the Mosaic Law is now abolished by Christ’s authority. The multitude
of sacrifices made under the Mosaic system was abrogated as well (cf. Heb. 10:1-2). A clear distinction exists between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. They are two different laws with two different purposes. One may not pick parts of the Mosaic Law (i.e., musical instrumentation in worship) and apply it to New Testament Christianity. The Lord Jesus Christ, the prophets and apostles delivered a divine message whereby some parts of the Mosaic system were carried over to the Law of Christ (i.e., murder is sinful) and some parts did not (see above examples). When Christ died on the cross man was no longer subject to the Mosaic Law (it was no longer binding) (cf. Col. 2:14). One’s “speech” (logos) = “the word or that by which the inward thought is expressed... that which is said or spoken... words, i.e. language” (LS 477). Such language proceeding from the heart is to be either yes or no. The Christian is one who lives and speaks in such a fashion that he needs not accompany his thoughts with oaths. Again, Jesus is getting back to the heart of man. The integrity of man is here addressed. When my character and manner of life is godly the world sees this and thereby can trust that my statements represent the truth. Such a life eliminates the need for oaths. Jesus then states, “and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.” If one is to say “more” ([perissos] = “over and above” (Moulton 317)) than a yea or nay (yes and no) the Lord proclaims that this is of “the evil one” (poneros) = “bad, worthless, knavish... laboriously wicked, base” (LS 661). “Evil, wrong, wickedness” (Moulton 336). Jesus states that the individual who goes over and above a simple yes or no in relation to answering questions or giving testimony has participated in wrongful, worthless, and wicked behavior. Why? James may help us here. James said, “but above all things, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment” (James 5:12). Jesus said that swearing oaths is wrong, worthless, and wicked and James tells us that such conduct will cause us to “fall under judgment.” But again this does not tell us the why. Consider the third commandment: “thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Deut. 5:11). The Hebrew word “vain” (shav) = “vanity (lack of usefulness, worth, or effect), falsehood” (Young 1020). Speaking by the name of Jehovah God entails authoritative speaking where as language that does not represent God’s truths is vain (useless, worthless, and false). The teacher or preacher of false doctrines is thereby wrong, wicked, and subject to God’s judgment. A man or woman who claims to speak by the authority of God yet spills out false doctrines is one who makes worthless oaths in the name of God (see study # 16).

Chapter 31

I. Israel called to war against the Midianites (31 all):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people” (31:1-2).
1. The Midianites were guilty of causing “the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Jehovah in the matter of Peor…” (Numb. 31:16).
2. Numbers chapter 25 records these events. One may ask, “why didn’t God take vengeance on the Moabites?” Israel had played the harlot with the daughters of Moab (Numb. 25:1). Keil and Delitzsch say that “The daughters of Moab had also taken part in the seduction.; but they had done so at the instigation of the Midianites, and not of their own accord, and therefore the Midianites only were to atone for the wickedness” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 808).
3. Jehovah tells Moses that after he performs this duty he would die and not be allowed to enter Canaan.
B. “And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm ye men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian, to execute Jehovah's vengeance on Midian. Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war. So there were delivered, out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. And Moses sent them, a thousand of every tribe, to the war, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the vessels of the sanctuary and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. And they warred
against Midian, as Jehovah commanded Moses; and they slew every male. And they slew the kings of Midian with the rest of their slain: Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword. And the children of Israel took captive the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods, they took for a prey. And all their cities in the places wherein they dwelt, and all their encampments, they burnt with fire. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of man and of beast. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and unto Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan at Jericho” (31:3-12).

1. Jehovah’s vengeance was to be directed at the Midianites in the form of 12,000 armed soldiers (1,000 from each tribe of Israel).

2. The war progresses favorably for Israel. All the men of Midian are killed yet the Israelites saved the women and children alive and also preserved the spoil material. The soldiers take their captives and spoils of the war and lay them at the feet of Moses and Eleazar the high priest.

C. “And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp. And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who came from the service of the war. And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Jehovah in the matter of Peor, and so the plague was among the congregation of Jehovah. Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women-children, that have not known man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves” (31:13-18).

1. Moses was angry at the officers of war because they had saved the women alive; i.e., the very ones who were responsible for their trespass against Jehovah. Moses tells us that these women were counseled by Balaam to cause Israel to fall and they were successful.

2. A great lesson for us today is that false teachers and any one else who would cause God’s people to err are not to be spared. These erring people are to be convicted of their sin and all together avoided if they do not change their erring doctrines to truth (Titus 1:9; Rev. 2:18-24; II Jn. 9-11; II Pet. 2:1-5) (see study # 16).

D. “And encamp ye without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify yourselves on the third day and on the seventh day, ye and your captives. And as to every garment, and all that is made of skin, and all work of goats’ hair, and all things made of wood, ye shall purify yourselves. And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war that went to the battle, This is the statute of the law which Jehovah hath commanded Moses: howbeit the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead, everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make to go through the fire, and it shall be clean; nevertheless it shall be purified with the water for impurity: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make to go through the water. And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean; and afterward ye shall come into the camp” (31:19-24).

1. Moses instructs the people to cleanse themselves of their uncleanness by reason of being in contact with the dead.

2. Secondly, Israel was to purify the gold and silver that was take as spoils from the Midianites. Those things that could not abide in fire; however, were to be washed by water.

E. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the heads of the fathers’ houses of the congregation; and divide the prey into two parts: between the men skilled in war, that went out to battle, and all the congregation. And levy a tribute unto Jehovah of the men of war that went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the oxen, and of the asses, and of the flocks: take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for Jehovah’s heave-offering. And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one drawn out of every fifty, of the persons, of the oxen, of the asses, and of the flocks, even of all the cattle, and give them unto the Levites, that keep the charge of the
tabernacle of Jehovah. And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Jehovah commanded Moses” (31:25-31).

1. Moses was commanded to divide the spoils of the battle between all the men of war and the other half to the congregation to be evenly distributed. Such a distribution would have been cause for many to support the warfare of their day.

2. Secondly, the Lord was to be offered one soul for every five hundred men who went to war. The Levites were to receive, as a heave offering, one of every beast out of their fifty.

F. “Now the prey, over and above the booty which the men of war took, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep, and threescore and twelve thousand oxen, and threescore and one thousand asses, and thirty and two thousand persons in all, of the women that had not known man by lying with him. And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep: and Jehovah’s tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen. And the oxen were thirty and six thousand; of which Jehovah’s tribute was threescore and twelve. And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred; of which Jehovah’s tribute was threescore and one. And the persons were sixteen thousand; of whom Jehovah’s tribute was thirty and two persons. And Moses gave the tribute, which was Jehovah’s heave-offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as Jehovah commanded Moses. And of the children of Israel’s half, which Moses divided off from the men that warred (now the congregation’s half was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand, seven thousand and five hundred sheep, and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep, and thirty and six thousand oxen, and thirty thousand and five hundred asses, and sixteen thousand persons), even of the children of Israel’s half, Moses took one drawn out of every fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, that kept the charge of the tabernacle of Jehovah; as Jehovah commanded Moses” (31:32-47).

1. The distribution of women slaves and animals is given to the people after God’s tribute money was removed.

2. The heave-offering belonging to Jehovah was offered up to the Lord.

G. “And the officers that were over the thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses; and they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war that are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. And we have brought Jehovah’s oblation, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, ankle-chains, and bracelets, signet-rings, ear-rings, and armlets, to make atonement for our souls before Jehovah. And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. And all the gold of the heave-offering that they offered up to Jehovah, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. (For the men of war had taken booty, every man for himself;) And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tent of meeting, for a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah” (31:48-54).

1. Apparently after the battle was over with the Midianites the Israelites took it upon themselves to plunder the people’s treasures and women. Moses has instructed them to slay all women who have been with a man sexually but to spare the virgins.

2. Secondly, the men of war obviously took of the Midianite treasures while plundering the people and now the Lord calls upon a collection and even distribution.

**Lessons Learned from Numbers 30 – 31**

- **Vows and Oaths**: Vows and oaths were a way of life under the Mosaic system (cf. Numb. 30). Those who broke their vows were never to be tolerated (cf. Zech. 5:3-4; Malachi 3:5). Jesus taught NT doctrine on Numb. 30 at the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:34-36). Jesus taught that making vows and swearing oaths was unacceptable (Matt. 5:37). The teachings of Jesus proved to be completely different than what Moses taught. First, this illustrated the distinction between the Mosaic Law and Law of Christ (two separate covenants). Secondly, we are taught by Jesus that truth needs no help by vows or swearing. To swear an oath or make a vow causes us to fall under judgment (cf. James 5:21) because it is a useless way of using God’s name (Deut. 5:11). Why is it useless or worthless to swear an oath by the name of God? Simply put,
man often falters in his intentions. We may intend to do or represent truth; however, through weakness we may not achieve the intention. To not achieve when vowing unto God that we will is to speak a falsehood (i.e., the very meaning of “vain”) and such dishonors the name of God (cf. Deut. 6:13). Let each person intend truth and do all within our power to achieve truth (see study # 33; Vows and Oaths).

- **False teachers are not to be spared** (cf. Numb. 31:13-17): Moses was angry with the Israelite military because they spared the women and children. The women were the very ones who had caused the people to sin. Moses commands that every woman that had been with a man, and all the male children, thereby be killed. While this may sound harsh we must realize that it was these very women, who through the council of Balaam, that taught Israel to worship idols and commit fornication (cf. Numb. 25). The teachers of erring ways must not be spared! The Christian today who would spare those who bring false doctrines will only give way to souls being lost (cf. Rev. 2:18-24; II Pet. 2:1ff; II Jn. 9-11) (see study # 16).

Chapter 32

I. Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh request the land east of the Jordan (32 all):

A. “Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle; the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Sebim, and Nebo, and Beon, the land which Jehovah smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle; and thy servants have cattle. And they said, If we have found favor in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan” (32:1-5).

1. The request for the land east of the Jordan River was one that did not fall into the original plans of occupying Canaan. The request was thereby odd for those who heard it yet it made good since to Reuben and Gad. Consider these six facts:
   a. Reuben and Gad had “a very great multitude of cattle.”
   b. They saw that the land east of the Jordan was “a place for cattle.”
   c. They decided to approach Moses, Eleazar, and the princes of the land to request that they remain on the east side and inherit this land rather than Canaan.
   d. One notes the faith of Reuben and Gad when we read of their belief that “Jehovah smote before the congregation of Israel” the land of Moab, Amon, and Bashan.
   e. One notes the humility of Reuben and Gad as they proclaim, “if we have found favor in thy sight...”
   f. Lastly we read the request; i.e., “let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession; bring us not over the Jordan.”

2. Reuben and Gad’s desire was to remain in the land east of the Jordan rather than going over with their brethren to take Canaan.

B. “And Moses said unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to the war, and shall ye sit here? And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going into the land which Jehovah hath given them? Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which Jehovah had given them. And Jehovah's anger was kindled in that day, and he spake, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun; because they have wholly followed Jehovah. And Jehovah's anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander to and fro in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of Jehovah, was consumed. And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of Jehovah toward Israel. For if ye turn away from
after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye will destroy all this people” (32:6-15).

1. Moses cannot believe his ears. Did Reuben and Gad possibly think that they could sit back in the conquered land in safety while their brethren went into Canaan and all would be well? Moses reminds Reuben and Gad of the troubles Israel had previously faced due to their insubordination regarding their refusal to go into Canaan and take the land. God caused the rebellious people, with the exclusion and Joshua and Caleb, to wander in the wilderness until they all died.

2. Furthermore, Moses expresses the danger that such a proposal places Israel in. Reuben and Gad’s refusal to enter Canaan could discourage and or spark interest in others staying behind so that they would be responsible for the death of all who disobeyed.

3. The interesting thing to note here is that God had graciously given the land of Canaan to Israel (cf. Numb. 13:1; 27:12). Secondly, God commanded that Israel take His gift (cf. Numb. 14:6-12). To not do as God commanded was to rebel (Numb. 14:9), not believe, despise (Numb. 14:11), and sin (Numb. 32:14-15) against Jehovah (see study # 20).

C. “And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: but we ourselves will be ready armed to go before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan, and forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side of the Jordan eastward” (32:16-19).

1. Reuben and Gad understand and believe by faith the words of Moses.

2. The two tribes offer to wage war with their brethren throughout Canaan and not take rest until they receive their inheritance like they had received.

D. “And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will arm yourselves to go before Jehovah to the war, and every armed man of you will pass over the Jordan before Jehovah, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land is subdued before Jehovah; then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless towards Jehovah, and towards Israel; and this land shall be unto you for a possession before Jehovah. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Jehovah; and be sure your sin will find you out” (32:20-23).

1. Moses is appeased by the proposal of Reuben and Gad to fight with their brethren until all have received their inheritance.

2. Though appeased by the proposition, it would be God setting the standards of the covenant between Reuben, Gad, and God.

3. Moses makes it clear to Reuben and Gad that if they do not follow through with their word then “ye have sinned against Jehovah.” Again, we note that taking the land of Canaan was not an option but rather a command (see study # 20)!

4. When one sins against God their, “sins will find you out.” There are always consequences to sin (see study # 1):

   g. There are often immediate and physical consequences (cf. Prov. 13:15). If one is sexually immoral he or she can destroy a family and or contract a sexual disease. Those who drink alcohol can have their driver’s license taken away and even much worse kill someone while intoxicated. Those who are greedy trouble their house with financial problems (Prov. 15:27).

   h. There are also eternal consequences to sin (Isa. 59:1-2; Rev. 20:10-15).

   i. Truly one’s sins will find you out!

E. “Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth. Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead; but thy servants will pass over, every man that is armed for war, before Jehovah to battle, as my lord saith. So Moses gave charge concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers’ houses of the tribes
of the children of Israel. And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over the Jordan, every man that is armed to battle, before Jehovah, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession: but if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan. And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As Jehovah hath said unto thy servants, so will we do. We will pass over armed before Jehovah into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us beyond the Jordan” (32:24-32).

1. Moses charges Gad and Reuben to enter into an agreement that they will perform their word regarding going to war in Canaan with their brethren.
2. The two tribes (and as we learn from verse 33, half the tribe of Manasseh was in on this as well) agree to the terms set forth by Moses.

F. “And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto the half-tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, according to the cities thereof with their borders, even the cities of the land round about. And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer, and Atrothshophan, and Jazer, and Jogbehah, and Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran: fortified cities, and folds for sheep. And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim, and Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Sibmah: and they gave other names unto the cities which they built. And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites that were therein. And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein. And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the towns thereof, and called them Havvoth-jair. And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name” (32:33-42).

1. Moses officially hands over the land east of the Jordan to Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh.
   a. Gad received the Northern portion of the land of Ammon as far North as Jabesh-gilead.
   b. Reuben received Southern portion of Ammon as far south as the Arnon River.
   c. Half the tribe of Manasseh received the area of Bashan.
2. Gad and Reuben began to build cities immediately whereas Manasseh had to do more fighting to obtain their land.

Chapter 33

I. Moses Records all Israel’s journeys from Egypt to Moab (33 all):

A. “These are the journeys of the children of Israel, when they went forth out of the land of Egypt by their hosts under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Jehovah: and these are their journeys according to their goings out” (33:1-2).

1. God commanded Moses to write down all the places that the Hebrews had traveled after leaving Egypt until their present place.
2. Below is a record of Israel’s travels (41 places).

B. “And they journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their first-born, whom Jehovah had smitten among them: upon their gods also Jehovah executed judgments. And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses, and encamped in Succoth. And they journeyed from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness. And they journeyed from Etham, and turned back unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon: and they encamped before Migdol. And they journeyed from before Hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness: and they went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and encamped in Marah. And they journeyed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees; and they encamped there. And they journeyed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea. And they journeyed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin. And they
journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah. And they journeyed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush. And they journeyed from Alush, and encamped in Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink. And they journeyed from Rephidim, and encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai, and encamped in Kibroth-hattaavah. And they journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped in Hazeroth. And they journeyed from Hazeroth, and encamped in Rithmah. And they journeyed from Rithmah, and encamped in Rimmon-perez. And they journeyed from Rimmon-perez, and encamped in Libnah. And they journeyed from Libnah, and encamped in Rissah. And they journeyed from Rissah, and encamped in Kibroth-hattaavah. And they journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped in Mount Shepher. And they journeyed from Mount Shepher, and encamped in Haradah. And they journeyed from Haradah, and encamped in Makeloth. And they journeyed from Makeloth, and encamped in Tahath. And they journeyed from Tahath, and encamped in Terah. And they journeyed from Terah, and encamped in Mithkah. And they journeyed from Mithkah, and encamped in Hashmonah. And they journeyed from Hashmonah, and encamped in Mosereth. And they journeyed from Mosereth, and encamped in Bene-jaakan. And they journeyed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped in Hor-haggiad. And they journeyed from Hor-haggiad, and encamped in Jobathah. And they journeyed from Jobathah, and encamped in Abrah. And they journeyed from Abrah, and encamped in Ezion-geber. And they journeyed from Ezion-geber, and encamped in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh). And they journeyed from Kadesh, and encamped in Mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of Jehovah, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fifth month, on the first day of the month. And Aaron was a hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor. And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the South in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel. And they journeyed from Mount Hor, and encamped in Zalmonah. And they journeyed from Zalmonah, and encamped in Punon. And they journeyed from Punon, and encamped in Oboth. And they journeyed from Oboth, and encamped in Iye-abarim, in the border of Moab. And they journeyed from Iyim, and encamped in Dibon-gad. And they journeyed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblahaim. And they journeyed from Almon-diblahaim, and encamped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. And they journeyed from the mountains of Abarim, and encamped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. And they encamped by the Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab” (33:3-49).

1. A list of all 41 places is reiterated here:

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2. Moses records the death of Aaron upon mount Hor at the age of 123. Neither Moses or Aaron were to enter into Canaan due to their sins at the waters of Meribah.

C. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured
stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places: and ye shall take possession of the land, and dwell therein; for unto you have I given the land to possess it. And ye shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer thou shalt give the less inheritance: wheresoever the lot falleth to any man, that shall be his; according to the tribes of your fathers shall ye inherit. But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that ye let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell. And it shall come to pass, that, as I thought to do unto them, so will I do unto you” (33:50-56).

1. The Children of Israel have received clear and unambiguous commandments from Jehovah regarding His desire for them to take Canaan. They are commanded to drive out the inhabitants, destroy all their graven images, demolish all the high places of worship, and possess the land. Again, God reiterates that the land is His gift to them if they will but obey His will.

2. There would also be consequences to not following through with God’s command to take Canaan. The inhabitants will pester them and God would destroy them as He had destroyed many Canaanites.

Lessons learned from Numbers 32-33

- Attitude of the faithful:
  - Honesty (Numb. 32:19). NT Christians ought to be the same way (I Tim. 3:8).
  - Conviction: Moses exposed the potential danger to the entire congregation if Reuben and Gad remain east of the Jordan (Numb. 32:14-15; Gal. 2:11ff).
  - Ready to wage spiritual warfare (Numb. 32:17).
- God’s gift to Israel was Canaan (cf. Numb. 32:7). To not take God’s gift was a matter of sin (cf. Numb. 32:13, 23). God’s gift to man today is the forgiveness of sins (cf. Eph. 2:8). God’s gifts to Israel have no real difference yesterday and today. The Lord gave Canaan to Israel; however, they were expected to do their part (i.e., wage war in the name of Jehovah. There have always been conditions that are to be met if one seriously expects to receive the gift of eternal life. To receive God’s gift of the forgiveness of sins today one must obey God (cf. Eph. 1:7 / Acts 2:38). One may ask, “why didn’t the ten spies and all the multitudes they persuaded ever inter Canaan. The answer is found in Hebrews 3:12-4:3 (see study # 20).
- Let us ever be mindful of the fact that when one sins, “be sure your sin will find you out” (Numb. 32:22-23). There are consequences to sins committed (Prov. 13:15; 15:27) (see study # 1).

Chapter 34

I. Boundaries of the Land of Canaan (34:1-12):
   A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan according to the borders thereof), then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the side of Edom, and your south border shall be from the end of the Salt Sea eastward; and your border shall turn about southward of the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass along to Zin; and the goings out thereof shall be southward of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall go forth to Hazar-addar, and pass along to Azmon; and the border shall turn about from Azmon unto the brook of Egypt, and the goings out thereof shall be at the sea” (34:1-5).

1. The Lord delivers the boundaries of the land of inheritance that would become Israel’s.
2. The first order of business was to mark out the south quarter. The extreme south border was to be “from the end of the Salt Sea eastward” (border cities being Kadesh-barnea, Hazor-addar, and Azmon). The southern border makes a westward turn along the “ascent of Akrabbim”

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known in the “Hebrew language as “ma’ leh ‘aqrabbim (scorpion pass) the going up to Akrabbim” (ISBE Vol. I pg. 85).

3. The border turns northward at the Brook of Egypt (see map below) and connects to the Mediterranean Sea.

B. “And for the western border, ye shall have the great sea and the border thereof: this shall be your west border. And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall mark out for you mount Hor; from mount Hor ye shall mark out unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings out of the border shall be at Zedad; and the border shall go forth to Ziphron, and the goings out thereof shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border” (34:6-9).

1. The western boundary is easy; i.e., the Mediterranean Sea.

2. Locating the Northern border of Israel (land of promise) is somewhat difficult. The recordings of the conquered land in the book of Joshua helps us (cf. Josh. 11:17):
   a. By the account of Josh. 11:17 and Numb. 34:7-9; we find the Northern limits to be at Mt. Hor (“Both Hermon and Jebel Akkar, a spur of Lebanon, have been suggested” (ISBE Vol. II pg. 756) and the North western corner to be Hazar-enan (see Numb. 34:9 and vs. 10). Notice that the eastern border of Canaan begins at Hazar-enan making this city the extreme NE corner.
   b. Keil and Delitzsch quote Robinson, Bibl. Res. Pg. 532; regarding the area of Hazar-enan known as “fountain place is so bountiful with water that you have only to dig in the gravel to get as many springs as you please” (pg. 832).
   c. The “entrance of Hamath” too is mentioned as part of the Northern border of Canaan. For location see Oxford Bible Atlas pg. 69 “Y1.” The city Lebo-Hamath is the “entrance to Hamath” (ISBE Vol. IV pg. 1186).
   d. Keil and Delitzsch observe, “how far the territory of the kingdom of Hamath extended towards the south in the time of Moses, and how much of it was conquered by Solomon (II Chron. 8:4), we are nowhere informed” (Keil and Delitzsch pg. 830).
   e. The city of Zedad is located “35 miles NE of Lebo-Hamath” (ISBE Vol. IV pg. 1186).
   f. The city of Ziphron is located “between Zedad and Hazar-enan (Numb. 34:9). Its exact location is unknown” (ISBE Vol. IV pg. 1201).

2. See map for a “guess” of the Northern border of Canaan

C. “And ye shall mark out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham; and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward; and the border shall go down to the Jordan, and the goings out thereof shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land according to the borders thereof round about” (34:10-12).

1. The eastern border of Israel’s land would begin at Shepham and head southward to Riblah.

2. The eastern border would essentially follow the Jordan River down to the Salt Sea.

II. Dividing the Land (34:13-29):

A. “And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which Jehovah hath commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half-tribe: for the tribe of the children of Reuben according to their fathers’ houses, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to their fathers’ houses, have received, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received, their inheritance: the two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising” (34:13-15).

1. Moses prepares to deliver God’s commands regarding dividing the land of promise among the nine and one half tribes.

2. Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh would receive no land in Canaan. Their inheritance would be east of the Jordan.

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, These are the names of the men that shall divide the land unto you for inheritance: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land for inheritance. And these are the names of the men: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammiud. Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. And of the tribe of the
children of Dan a prince, Bukki the son of Jogli. Of the children of Joseph: of the tribe of the children of Manasseh a prince, Hanniel the son of Ephod. And of the tribe of the children of Ephraim a prince, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. And of the tribe of the children of Zebulun a prince, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. And of the tribe of the children of Issachar a prince, Paltiel the son of Azzan. And of the tribe of the children of Asher a prince, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. And of the tribe of the children of Naphtali a prince, Pedahel the son of Ammihud. These are they whom Jehovah commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan” (34:16-29).

1. The conquered land of Canaan was to be divided up by Eleazar the priest and Joshua.
2. Eleazar and Joshua was to take one prince from every tribe to supervise in the dividing of their respective inheritance among their number.

Chapter 35

I. Forty eight Levitical Cities with six being “cities of refuge” (35:1-15):
A. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to
dwell in; and suburbs for the cities round about them shall ye give unto the Levites. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and their suburbs shall be for their cattle, and for their substance, and for all their beasts. And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall be from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure without the city for the east side two thousand cubits, and for the south side two thousand cubits, and for the west side two thousand cubits, and for the north side two thousand cubits, the city being in the midst. This shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. And the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites, they shall be the six cities of refuge, which ye shall give for the manslayer to flee unto: and besides them ye shall give forty and two cities. All the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them [shall ye give] with their suburbs. And concerning the cities which ye shall give of the possession of the children of Israel, from the many ye shall take many; and from the few ye shall take few: every one according to his inheritance which he inheriteth shall give of his cities unto the Levites” (35:1-8).

1. The Lord had told Aaron and his sons that they would have no inheritance in the land of Canaan for “I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel” (Numb. 18:20).

2. Though the priests would have no land allotted to them they would have 48 cities with there measured suburbs given to them to live in. Six of these 48 cities would be places where the manslayer could flee to for safety (i.e., a city of refuge).

B. “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer that killeth any person unwittingly may flee thither. And the cities shall be unto you for refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation for judgment” (35:9-12).

1. The “unwitting” sin was discussed at Numbers 15:22ff. One who sins unwittingly is one who did so through ignorance of a law or it may too represent the attitude of the sinner as is depicted at Number 15:29ff. The unwitting sinner is willing to perform the necessary sacrifices so that he may remain in good standing with God and man. The highhanded sinner cares nothing about remaining in good standing with God and his fellow man.

2. The man who has accidentally killed another man may flee to a refuge city and avoid any vengeance by the killed man’s family. The unwitting killer can remain there in safety until a trial is conducted.

C. “And the cities which ye shall give shall be for you six cities of refuge. Ye shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan; they shall be cities of refuge. For the children of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, shall these six cities be for refuge; that every one that killeth any person unwittingly may flee thither” (35:13-15).

1. There were to be six cities of refuge set aside. Three cities would exist in the land of Canaan (Israel proper) and three on the west side of the Jordan.

2. These cities shall be a place for the manslaughter to flee as well as a place for sojourners and strangers.

II. Law regarding Murder (35:16-34):

A. “But if he smote him with an instrument of iron, so that he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he smote him with a stone in the hand, whereby a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. Or if he smote him with a weapon of wood in the hand, whereby a man may die, and he died, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death: when he meeteth him, he shall put him to death” (35:16-19).

1. A distinction is made between murder and an unwittingly committed death. The one charged with murder is one who used an instrument, such as iron, stone, or a weapon of wood. Said killer was to be deemed a murderer and put to death by the avenger of blood.

2. It seems clear that the unwitting accused murderer is one who was in the vicinity of a man when he died. The death was most probable an accidental death. However, nothing could be proved until the trial in a refuge city took place.
B. “And if he thrust him of hatred, or hurled at him, lying in wait, so that he died, or in enmity smote him with his hand, so that he died; he that smote him shall surely be put to death; he is a murderer: the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when he meeteth him. But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or hurled upon him anything without lying in wait, or with any stone, whereby a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, so that he died, and he was not his enemy, neither sought his harm; then the congregation shall judge between the smiter and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances; and the congregation shall deliver the manslayer out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall dwell therein until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil” (35:20-25).

1. Not only would the instrument used to kill another be considered but also the attitude. If a man killed another with a spirit of hatred, surprise attack, or enmity then he was to be put to death for murder.
2. The accidental death by stone or other method was cause for the killer to flee. Once the trial had been set and the man found to be an accidental killer he was to remain in the city of refuge safely until the death of the current high priest.

C. “But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the border of his city of refuge, whither he fleeth, and the avenger of blood find him without the border of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood slay the manslayer; he shall not be guilty of blood, because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the manslayer shall return into the land of his possession” (35:26-28).

1. The accidental killer was to remain in the city of refuge. Leaving the area of refuge subjected the man to be killed by the avenger of blood.
2. Once the high priest died the man could return to his land of inheritance and dwell in safety.

D. “And these things shall be for a statute and ordinance unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be slain at the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person that he die. Moreover ye shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer, that is guilty of death; but he shall surely be put to death. And ye shall take no ransom for him that is fled to his city of refuge, that he may come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest” (35:29-32).

1. Note that the killer was not to be tried without at least two witnesses (cf. also Deut. 17:6).
2. The Lord warns the people not to be depraved at mind and bypass His laws for money (i.e., a ransom paid by the killer to the family of the man killed to appease them). Many lawsuits against the city, state, or country have as their intentions compensation for the death of a family member.

E. “So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood, it polluteth the land; and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. And thou shalt not defile the land which ye inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell: for I, Jehovah, dwell in the midst of the children of Israel” (35:33-34).

1. To bypass God’s laws regarding the death penalty for proven murderers is to pollute and defile the land. God’s command was that death was to be the punishment for the murderer. No amount of ransom money could remove this ordinance.
2. Man may make determinations that have the appearance of wisdom yet reek with insubordination and a lack of fear and reverence for God’s laws. God’s laws are not to be altered to fit our liking.

Chapter 36

I. Questions over land inheritance (36 all):

A. “And the heads of the fathers' houses of the family of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the heads of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel: and they said, Jehovah commanded my lord to give the land for inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was
commanded by Jehovah to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters. And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then will their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of our fathers, and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they shall belong: so will it be taken away from the lot of our inheritance. And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then will their inheritance be added unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they shall belong: so will their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers” (36:1-4).

1. Numbers 26 gives the account of the second numbering of God’s people. When the counting revelation comes to the tribe of Manasseh there is a man named Zelophehad who had no sons but only four daughters (cf. Numb. 26:28-34).

2. Numbers 27:1ff gives the account of Zelophehad’s daughters asking Moses about their inheritance. Moses consults with God and the Lord instructs that these daughters should receive Zelophad’s allotted land as an inheritance.

3. Now, Numbers 36, heads of the fathers’ houses come before Moses with a concern about this judgment. They are concerned that if one or more of the daughters of Zelophehad marry a man from another tribe then they will loose this part of the land to another tribe.

B. “And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of Jehovah, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph speaketh right. This is the thing which Jehovah doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them be married to whom they think best; only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they be married. So shall no inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall cleave every one to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may possess every man the inheritance of his fathers. So shall no inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; for the tribes of the children of Israel shall cleave every one to his own inheritance. Even as Jehovah commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad: for Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons. They were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father. These are the commandments and the ordinances which Jehovah commanded by Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho” (35:5-13).

1. Moses agrees with the assessment of the heads of the father’s houses regarding their land being taken by another tribe. An addendum is thereby added to the law of inheritance mentioned at Numbers 27. The man who has no sons but daughters only was to leave his inheritance to his daughters. Women in this situation were commanded to marry no man outside of their respective family.

2. Zelophehad’s four daughters complied with this law and married “their father’s brother’s sons” (i.e., their cousins) and thereby the land remained in the family.

Lessons learned from chapters 34 – 36

- Establishing fault: No man may bring a charge against another and it stand (cf. Numb. 35:30). When two or three witnesses are brought against one the charges will stand (Deut. 17:6; II Cor. 13:1-2). One cannot expect his word to be believed over another’s when there are no other witnesses.

- God’s laws cannot be altered. God commanded that the guilty murderer be punished by death. The family sinned against may not asks of money from the murderer and let him free. To go against God’s laws and establish one’s own is to “pollute” and “defile” the land (Numb. 35:31-34). Note that the man that sinned with a “high hand,” as opposed to the one who sinned “unwittingly,” has “despised the word of Jehovah” (Numb. 15:29-31). The people during the days of Malachi had similarly taken God’s laws and altered them to fit their liking. They offered “polluted” sacrifices unto the Lord in the name of religion and thereby “despised” the name of God (cf. Mal. 1:6-8; 3:8-10). When you or I perform partial acts of religious service to the Lord we have effectively taken the position of God (cf. II Thess. 2:4) (see study # 34; The Nature of Truth).