

Seven Bible Studies 2017

Law

August 14: Numbers 1-4 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 14, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 1-4

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

The English name of the book comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT)

and is based on the census lists found in chs. 1; 26.

The Hebrew title of the book (bemidbar, "in the desert")

is more descriptive of its contents. Numbers presents an account of the 38 year period of Israel's wandering in the desert following the establishment of the covenant of Sinai.

Chapter 1

This chapter has to do with taking a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families.

The LORD had Moses and Aaron to number and name all the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army. I'll record some of the names, a man from each tribe to assist Moses and Aaron. From the tribe of Reuben, 46,500,

the tribe of Simeon, 59,300, the tribe of Gad, 45,650, the tribe of Judah, 74,600, the tribe of Issachar, 54,400, the tribe of Zebulun, 57,400. From the sons of Joseph: Ephraim, 40,500, Manasseh, 32,200, the tribe of Benjamin, 35,400, the tribe of Dan, 62,700, the tribe of Asher, 41,500, the tribe of Naphtali,

53,400. Total count of twenty year-old or more men: 603,550.

This census did not include the tribe of Levi, whom we know were set aside as priests to serve the LORD for the people.

The Israelites did all this just as the LORD commanded Moses. (vs 54)

Chapter 2

Now the LORD had Moses and Aaron to have the Israelites set up their camps around the Tent of Meeting, but at some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family. The first camp was the camp of Judah,

which numbered 186,400, on the east. Next would be the camp of Reuben, numbering 151,450, on the south.

Now, the Tent of Meeting and the Levites would set out in the middle of the camps, in the same order as they encamp, each in his own place under his standard.

Next, the camp of Ephraim, numbering 108,100, on the west.

On the north, the camp of Dan, numbering 157,600.

These camps accounted for all of the tribes in chapter one.

The total of the numbers here is the same, @ 603,550.

Now, let us reason that each of these young men that are numbered here have a set of parents which would make this number at least 1,810,650. And who knows how many siblings there may be? Consider: The LORD knows exactly how many, (certainly in excess of 2 million) and

each of their names and everything else about each one, just as HE knows everything about each one of us now.

I am reminded of what Paul wrote to the church in Corinth:

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace,
as in all the churches of the saints." (1 Cor. 14:33 NKJV)

The Israelites did everything the LORD commanded Moses.

Chapter 3

This chapter has to do with the Levites. The LORD had Moses bring the Levites to Aaron to assist him. They were to do the work of the tabernacle, but could not approach the sanctuary. The LORD decreed that all firstborn males of the Israelites were HIS, but HE took the Levites in place of the firstborn. So HE said: "The Levites are mine."

Moses was to count every male, a month old or more, among the Levites. The text, of course, names the heads of the clans who were counted. (I'll let you read those) The number of the Levite males a month old or more was 22,000, however, the number of firstborn males a month old or more of the Israelites was 22,273. And the LORD allowed the 273 to be redeemed at a cost of five shekels each, and so Aaron and his sons received 1,365 shekels of silver for the redemption of the 273, according to the LORD's command.

Chapter 4

This chapter records the duties of three branches of the Levites: The Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites.

Each clan was to assist in the moving of the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and the holy items, whenever required.

The men of each clan, from thirty to fifty years of age were to be counted. The number of the Kohathites were 2,750, the Gershonites, 2,630, the Merarites, 3,200. The number of men involved in this work were 8,580.

At the LORD's command through Moses, each was assigned his work and told what to carry. Thus they were counted, as the LORD commanded Moses.

(vs 49)

These are incredible numbers! I knew they were high but reading and considering it anew really brings it home!

I can remember working on projects in my trade that were sometimes million dollar undertakings several stories high,
and we had nowhere near 8,000 men on the job!

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you brother! Here at the Hospice House with John, just now had a chance to read your study! John's is an "hours to days " situation.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you for summing up Numbers for us, Butch!

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Num 1:51 says "When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death."

This leads me to believe that Levites, (at least), were not allowed to marry non-Levites, for any children would then not be considered "Levite enough" to carry on the care of the tabernacle. But I don't know if there was a specific commandment against such marriages.

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Leviticus 21: 10-15 addresses whom a high priest may marry. Also vs, 7&8 indicates whom a priest may not marry. There may be other references on this subject but I haven't found them.

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch!

Charles Fry:

It is interesting that John the Baptist's parents were both of the lineage of Aaron, the priestly lineage (Luke 1:5). I'm not aware of a rule to that effect though. The passage Butch pointed out mentions the high priest marrying a "virgin of his own people" (NASB), which I would understand to mean an Israelite, not necessarily another Levite.

The two most prominent Levites of all were Moses and Aaron, whose parents were both of the family of Levi (Ex 6:14-20), but Moses had a Midianite wife (Ex 2:21) and a Cushite wife (Num 12:1 -- the time and circumstance of this marriage are not given), while Aaron married a woman of the family of Judah (Ex 6:23).

The modern Jew considers that anyone born of a Jewish mother is Jewish, but the ancient reckoning was patronymic, and anyone born of an Israelite father was Israelite, and belonged to the ancestral tribe of he father, not the mother. This had an interesting legal test in Moses's day, when a family head died before entering Canaan, leaving only daughters N no son. The daughters petitioned to receive their father's inheritance, and appropriate rules were set forth (Num 27:1-11). A detail that concerned the tribe involved in this particular question was what happened to the inheritance received by a daughter? If she married a man from another tribe, would the inheritance pas to the other tribe? For the sake of inheritance, the ruling was that a daughter heir must marry within her own tribe to receive the inheritance (Num 36:1-12), preserving the patronymic identification of tribal membership and property rights.

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Thank you, Ryan, for your encouragement.

Comment:

LuAnn Woody:

I enjoyed thinking about how the Children of Israel are described as 'wandering' the desert for 40 years which sounds haphazard. But God, through Moses and his tribal leaders, knew exactly where everyone was, where they were to camp, down to tribal banners to indicate the

camping divisions. Everyone had a job assignment as well. Numbers is more interesting than I had remembered.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Great summary, Butch! Israel's amazing growth from the 70 who entered Egypt (Exodus 1:5) was evidence of God's great blessing & faithfulness to His promise to Abraham. I agree with your thoughts above. This large number of men counted for the military roster suggests a population for the entire community in excess of 2 million. Wow!

August 21: Numbers 5-8 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 21, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 5-8

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 5

Purity of the Camp

The Israelites were to send anyone who had a discharge or was ceremonially unclean, outside the camp, so as not to defile where the LORD dwelt among the Israelites.

They did just as the LORD had instructed Moses.

If a person wronged another, and so, became unfaithful to the LORD, they must confess that sin and make full restitution, plus a fifth to the person wronged.

Each man's sacred gifts are his own, but what he gives to the priest will belong to the priest.

Test for an Unfaithful Wife

This section is about a man feeling that if his wife has been unfaithful, then he must take her to the priest, along with an offering on her behalf.

(An offering of jealousy) The priest would have her stand before the LORD.

Then there would be a mixture of bitter water and an oath made by the woman involved, and after drinking the bitter water, it would either harm her, or not, depending on the truthfulness of her oath. Not guilty, no harm. Guilty, a swollen abdomen and her thigh to waste away. (Barren and a miscarrying womb)

There is more to this procedure and if the woman is found guilty, she would be accursed among her people. If not, she would be cleared and able to have children. This, then, is the law of jealousy.

Chapter 6

The Nazirite

One of either sex who was bound by a vow of a peculiar kind to be set apart from others for the service of God. The obligation was either for life or for a defined time. (New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

This chapter covers the rules for a Nazirite while serving under that vow:

He/she must abstain from wine or any other fermented drink, including vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. No grape juice, grapes or raisins.

Nothing that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.

No razor may be used on his/her head during the period of the vow.

He/she must not come near a dead body. If someone dies suddenly in his presence, defiling his hair, he must shave it off on the day of his cleansing--

the seventh day. On the eighth day, he must bring two doves to the priest, one for a sin offering, the other as a burnt offering because he has sinned by being in the presence of a dead body. That same day he is to consecrate his head.

There is more in the way of sacrifice and offerings to be made when the period of separation is over, including burning his hair in the fire under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering. All sacrifices and offerings are typical of those that I have described in earlier posts and all were to be done just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Priestly Blessing

The LORD had Aaron and his sons to bless the Israelites with these words:

"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace"

Chapter 7

Offerings at the Dedication of the Tabernacle

This chapter has to do with the gifts of the leaders of the twelve tribes.

After setting up the tabernacle, Moses anointed it, consecrated it, all its furnishings, the altar and all its utensils. Then the leaders of Israel, tribal leaders, made offerings. They brought before the LORD six covered carts and twelve oxen. The LORD had Moses to give these to the Levites as each man's work requires. Then the LORD said to Moses: "Each day one leader is to bring his offering for the dedication of the altar." And so it was done.

The offering on the first day was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old; for a burnt offering; one male goat for a sin offering; and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old, to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.

The offerings on the second through the twelfth days were exactly the same as the offering on the first day.

These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony. And he spoke with him. (vs 89)

Chapter 8

The LORD told Moses to have Aaron set up the seven lamps to light the area in front of the lampstand and Aaron did so.

The Setting Apart of the Levites

The Levites were to be ceremonially clean. This required the sprinkling of cleansing water on them along with shaving their whole bodies and washing their clothes. Then a grain and a sin offering would be made and the Levites would be brought before the LORD, and the Israelites would lay their hands on them. Aaron would present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering and they would be ready to do the work of the LORD.

And the Levites would be set apart from the Israelites and they would be the LORD's. The Levites would be gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites. Moses, Aaron, and the whole community did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The LORD said to Moses, "This applies to the Levites:

Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the Tent of Meeting, but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer." However, they would be allowed to assist their brothers.

"This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites." (vs 26b)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch! So many rules to keep track of...

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Yes, brother Ryan. Before this study I didn't really realize this. It gives me a much better understanding of sinning unintentionally.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

We do have more freedom in Christ, and don't have those rules of ritual, for which I am grateful!

Do you ever wonder how many rules we live by every day? Just something to think about, as we appreciate the covenant of Christ.

According to the Jewish Talmud the Torah, the law of Moses, contains 613 commandments (I've never personally counted). 365 positive commands, and 248 prohibitions. I'll let the rabbis' count stand.

Meanwhile, the California Vehicle Code is a volume over 1000 pages long, with new rules added annually. The building code is massive, the criminal code is huge, the tax code is mind boggling... Our daily lives are fenced in by thousands and thousands of regulations, local, state, and federal. Israel had 613 commandments for everything, while they were a theocracy.



Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

And ignorance of the law is no excuse in this country.

Comment:

Cherris Lehman:

I would be lost without "Just a little talk with Jesus". What a blessing we have in God's word!

August 28: Numbers 9-12 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, August 28, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 9-12

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 9

The LORD told Moses, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of Egypt, to have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. At twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, according to all its rules and regulations. Some previous scriptures concerning these rules and regulations are Ex. 12:11, 48, 34:25, Lev 23:5-8.

The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Now some could not celebrate the Passover because they were ceremonially unclean because of a dead body.

They petitioned Moses and Moses learned from the LORD that they could celebrate the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They must eat the lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and not leave any of it till morning nor break any of its bones, and all regulations must be followed.

If a ceremonially clean man failed to celebrate the Passover, he would be cut off from his people and bear the consequences of his sin.

The same regulations applied to the alien living among them as to the native-born.

The Cloud Above the Tabernacle

On the day the tabernacle, the Tent of the Testimony, was set up, the cloud covered it. At night the cloud looked like fire, and whenever the cloud lifted, the Israelites would set out, and whenever the cloud settled, they would camp.

And the Israelites would encamp or set out in accordance with the cloud of the LORD settling or lifting.

They obeyed all that the LORD commanded through Moses.

Chapter 10

The LORD had Moses to make two trumpets of hammered silver to be used for calling the community together and for having the camps set out. When both were sounded the whole community assembled before Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. When one was sounded the leaders were to assemble before Moses.

When a trumpet blast was sounded, those camped on the east were to set out. At the second blast, those camped on the south were to set out. Verse 7 indicates that the manner of blasts on the trumpets could suggest different signals.

Only the sons of Aaron were to blow the trumpets.

This would be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

The trumpets were to be sounded when they went into battle in their own land and the LORD would rescue them from their enemies. And at times of rejoicing, appointed feasts and new moon festivals, the trumpets were to be sounded over the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. They would be a memorial for the Israelites before their God.

"I am the LORD your God." (vs 10b)

The Israelites leave Sinai

On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.

The Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. They set out, this first time, at the LORD's command through Moses.

From vs 14 down through 28 records a very orderly setting out of all of the divisions of the camps, one after another, under each of their standards, until all were on the move.

This is certainly evidence, to me, of no chaos present in the forty years of 'wanderings' for the Israelites.

Now Moses persuaded his father-in-law to come with them because he knew the desert.

And Moses would share with him what the LORD gave.

Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,

"Rise up, O LORD!

May your enemies be scattered;
may your foes flee before you."

Whenever it came to rest, he said,

"Return, O LORD,

to the countless thousands of Israel."

(vs 35-36)

Chapter 11

Now the LORD's anger was aroused when HE heard the people complaining about their hardships and fire came down from the LORD and burned among them and consumed some

of the outskirts of the camp until the people cried out to Moses and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died.

Quail From the LORD

Now the people were complaining that they had no meat to eat. No fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

Only the manna.

The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin.

It could be cooked in a pot or made into cakes.

When the dew settled at night, the manna also came down.

Moses heard the people complaining, the LORD was angry, and Moses was troubled. He asked the LORD why HE had brought this trouble on him. "Did I give these birth, am I a nursemaid, Why all this burden, Where can I get meat for all these people?" "This burden is too heavy for me."

The LORD had Moses to pick seventy elders and bring them to the Tent of Meeting. There, the LORD would come down, speak with Moses and take of the Spirit that was on Moses, and put the Spirit on the seventy elders so that they could help Moses bear the burden of the people.

The LORD subsequently, overwhelmed the people with quail, up to three feet deep all around them, and the people gathered all they could in a night and a day, but while they were still eating, the LORD's anger burned against them and HE struck them with a severe plague. Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, (graves of craving) because there they buried the people who had craved other food. From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Chapter 12

Oh, oh! Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because he had married a Cushite.

"Hasn't the LORD also spoken through us and not only Moses?"

And the LORD heard this.

Verse 3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

At once the LORD had Moses, Aaron and Miriam come to the Tent of Meeting. The LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and had Aaron and Miriam stand before him and HE said, "Listen to my words:

"When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.

But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house.

With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD.

Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

The LORD's anger burned against them, and HE left them.

When the cloud lifted, there stood Miriam--leprous, as snow.

Aaron pleaded to Moses, not to hold their sin against them, and to plead for Miriam.

So Moses cried out to the LORD,

"O God, please heal her!"

And so, the LORD confined her outside the camp for seven days till she could be brought back, presumably clean.

After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.

Now one might wonder why there was no apparent punishment for Aaron, just Miriam, so I offer this:

Adam Clarke's Commentary

Numbers 12:10

Miriam became Leprous--It is likely Miriam was chief in this mutiny; and it is probable that it was on this ground she is mentioned first, (see verse 1), and punished here, while Aaron is spared. Had he been smitten with the leprosy, his sacred character must have greatly suffered, and perhaps the priesthood itself have fallen into contempt. How many priests and preachers who deserved to be exposed to reproach and infamy, have been spared for the sake of the holy character they bore, that the ministry might not be blamed! But the just God will visit their transgressions in some other way, if they do not deeply deplore them and find mercy through Christ.

Nothing tends to discredit the work of God so much as the transgressions and miscarriages of those who minister in holy things.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Butch!

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Mucho gracias Butch O'Neal!

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:

Por nada Randy Ingle!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Butch! I missed most of last week's posts. It's unfortunately the busiest time of year for me. I was able to stay up on all the readings, though. It's good to be back and hear your voice. 😊 lots of pieces in today's reading that I forgot about. I can only imagine how overwhelmed Moses was leading 2 million Israelites. I love the Lord replying Is my arm too short? What seems impossible always leads to God's power being demonstrated.

September 4: Numbers 13-16 (Butch O'Neal)

Butch O'Neal, thanks for your good efforts in this project of fellowship and encouragement in the word week by week. Thank you for spending the time and work in a late night/early morning session after traveling to Bakersfield for our Labor Day weekend meeting, to provide direction in the reading for 9/4 in Numbers 13-16! Sometimes this technology that lets us share also lets us down, and it is very disappointing to lose the carefully prepared message before it has been passed along to build up the readers!

I won't try to duplicate the effort already made by Butch his preparation for the reading of Numbers 13-16, but I will offer a few quick and brief comments.

Num 13-14 the fascinating story of Israel's failure to enter the promised land because of unbelief. We are reintroduced to the young man Joshua, mentioned previously in Exodus as a

war leader and assistant to Moses, who served as a representative of the (half) tribe of Ephraim in spying out the land, along with 11 others from each tribe of Israel. We learn of the agricultural abundance available in Canaan, along with the fact the land is occupied by people well entrenched in fortified cities, including unusually large warriors including some described as Nephilim or Anakites.

The report of powerful people in the land was accurate, but misleading. According to the two of the selected spies, Caleb from Judah and Joshua from Ephraim, with God's help victory was assured. According to the other ten, the cause was hopeless. As folk often do, the people of Israel favored the pessimism of human failure rather than the optimism of faith in God. The outcome was God's judgment that a whole generation of Israelite men would die in the wilderness in a total time frame of 40 years (2 years of which had already passed). An attempt to avoid the consequences of their rebellion only led to failure, and Israel became wandered for a generation.

Chapter 15 presents supplementary ceremonial laws for life in Canaan, plus the story of a man who violated the 4th commandment (in the 4th book of the law) and was condemned to death.

Chapter 16 has the account of Korah's rebellion, a cousin of Moses and Aaron, with a very important principle taught in Moses's words to Korah and other Levites who joined him , 16:18-10. Order and delegated authority are very important in the service of God among his people, and it is a grievous error to envy or aspire to what God has given to others, not appreciating the work and honor God has given to each of us in our own calling. The people were not happy with God's enforcement of his will in the matter of authority in worship, but their resistance was tragic, not helpful in any way.

Comment:

Butch O'Neal:

I thank you very much, Charles! :)

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Charles Fry: it has been a great blessing for all of us to benefit from your knowledge. Thanks for this post and your insightful comments throughout the study this year. I'm glad you brought attention in the last paragraph. Very good take away and application for us.

September 11: Numbers 17-20 (Charles Fry)

Reading for Monday, September 11, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 17-20

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 17

Now the LORD told Moses to get twelve staffs, each from the leader of their ancestral tribes, with the man's name written on each staff. Place these in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony. The man I choose, his staff will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant

grumbling against you by the Israelites. So, Moses did this, and Aaron's staff was among them. When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting the next day, he saw that Aaron's staff, from the tribe of Levi, not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed, and produced almonds.

Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence and each man took his own staff. But the LORD had Moses to put Aaron's staff back in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. "this will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."

Moses did just as the LORD commanded him.

This miraculous growth on Aaron's staff was to show the Israelites that the Divine appointment of Aaron should never again be questioned or challenged such as had occurred in chapter 16. The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die! We are lost, we are all lost! Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD will die. Are we all going to die?"

(Excerpt from Bible Knowledge Commentary):

Characteristically the people overreacted and assumed that the presence of the staff would forever endanger anyone who even came close to the tabernacle.

Chapter 18

The LORD told Aaron that he, his sons, and his father's family were to bear the responsibilities for offenses against the sanctuary, but he and his sons alone would bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood. They were to have their fellow Levites to join and assist them when they ministered before the Tent of the Testimony. The Levites were responsible to Aaron and were to perform all the duties of the Tent, without going near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, lest they and Aaron both die.

Aaron was responsible, the Levites were a gift to Aaron from the LORD, to do the work at the Tent of Meeting.

Only Aaron and his sons could serve as priests in connection with all at the altar and inside the curtain.

The priesthood was a gift to Aaron & sons from the LORD.

All others who came near the sanctuary would be put to death. The LORD put Aaron in charge of all the offerings presented to HIM by the Israelites, and the LORD gave them to Aaron and his sons. Holy offerings were to be eaten as most holy, every male would eat it. Other offerings could be eaten by anyone in the family who were ceremonially clean. All that was devoted to the LORD would be Aaron's. But the firstborn had to be redeemed, except for the ox, sheep, or goat. They were holy. Aaron had no share among the Israelites. The LORD was his share. Only the Levites could go near the Tent of Meeting, all others would die if they went near.

The LORD gave to the Levites the tithes that the Israelites presented to the LORD, as an inheritance for the Levites.

Now, in turn, the Levites were to present to the LORD a tenth of the tithes they received and the best and holiest part of everything given to them, so they would not defile the holy offerings of the Israelites, and not die.

Chapter 19

The Water of Cleansing

The LORD told Moses and Aaron: "this is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: They were to bring a red heifer without defect or blemish that had never been under a yoke, to be taken by Eleazar the priest, outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. Eleazar was to sprinkle some of its blood, from his finger, seven times toward the front of the Tent of Meeting. Then, as he watched, the whole heifer was to be burned. Eleazar was to take some cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. Then Eleazar was to wash his clothes and bath himself with water. Then he could come into camp but he would be ceremonially unclean till evening. The man who burns it must also wash with water, and he too, would be unclean till evening. A man who is clean would take the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp.

They would be kept for use in the water of cleansing, for the purification of sin. The man who gathered the ashes must also wash his clothes, and he would be unclean till evening. This would be a lasting ordinance for the Israelites and the aliens living among them. Anyone touching a dead body would be unclean for seven days. He must purify himself on the third and the seventh days and he would be clean. But if he did not, then he would not be clean and he would defile the LORD's tabernacle and must be cut off from Israel. If a person died in a tent, anyone who is in the tent or enters it would be unclean for seven days.

Any open container without a lid on it would be unclean.

Verses 16-20 has to do with much of the same procedures to follow to make one clean again, particularly with the sprinkling of the ashes mixed with water on the affected person/s.

This is a lasting ordinance for them.

Vs 21-22:

"The man who sprinkles the water of cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the water of cleansing will be unclean till evening. Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean till evening."

Chapter 20

Water From the Rock

Here, at the Desert of Zin we find that Miriam died and was buried.

We also see the community had no water and, once again, they gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron.

Moses appealed to the LORD and the LORD had Moses to take Aaron's staff, and Aaron, gather the assembly together, and speak to a certain rock, and it would pour out its water, so the Israelites and their livestock could drink.

Moses took the staff as commanded, gathered the people in front of the rock as commanded, but then Moses sinned by saying: "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" (as if the LORD was not involved!?) Then he struck the rock twice with his staff. (he was told to speak to the rock, not strike it.) Nevertheless, water gushed out, but Moses and Aaron were told they would not enter the promised land because they failed to trust in, and honor the LORD in the sight of the Israelites.

Edom Denies Israel Passage

Verses 14-21 has to do with Israel being denied the privilege of passing through the country of Edom on their journey.

Edom refused, and came against them with a large and powerful army, and Israel turned away.

The Death of Aaron

The LORD told Moses and Aaron that Aaron would be gathered to his people, and to take Aaron and his son Eleazar up Mount Hor. There, remove Aaron's garments and put them on Eleazar, for Aaron would die there.

Moses did as the LORD commanded.

When the community learned that Aaron had died, the entire house of Israel mourned him for thirty days.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

I want to thank Charles Fry for posting on last week's reading, and rescuing me.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you brother Butch!

September 18: Numbers 21-24 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, September 18, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 21-24

the most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 21

When the king of Arad heard that Israel was coming along the road, he attacked and captured some of them.

So Israel vowed to the LORD: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy (The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in vs 3.) their cities." So the LORD gave the Canaanites over to Israel, so the place was named Hormah. (destruction)

Now as they traveled along the route to go around Edom, they grew impatient, and again, spoke against GOD and Moses.

"There is no bread, no water, miserable food, we are going to die in this desert."

So the LORD sent venomous snakes among them, who bit the people and many died. The people came to Moses and they acknowledged their sin and asked Moses to pray the LORD to take the snakes away. The LORD told Moses to make a snake and put it up on a pole so anyone who is bitten can look at it and live. So Moses made a bronze snake, and any who were bitten, looked at it and lived. I suppose that these snakes were a much bigger concern to the Israelites than those things that they grumbled about.

They moved on and camped at Oboth.

(O'BOTH (o'both). The forty-sixth station of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to Canaan, near Moab (Numbers 21:10-11; Numbers 33:43-44), probably the oasis el-Weiba.)

(New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

Wow! When we recall that these people numbered about two million, and consider the number of times that they camped on their journey, along with their hardships, we can probably come to, at least, a little better understanding of the grumbling, not that it was right!

They went from Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim (#47)

From there they moved on to Zered Valley. (#48)

Then along the Arnon, a river in the desert. (#49)

The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says: (I'll leave you to read that. However, here's this.)

("Book of the Wars of the Lord" represents a memento of a larger literary development in early OT times than is represented in the canonical books. This early literary work, probably poetical, existed in Mosaic times [Numbers 21:14].

It was likely a collection of odes celebrating God's glorious acts toward Israel and recited over campfires, just as the Bedouin do today. New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

They continued on to Beer (#50) There was a well there, and the people sang a song. Then they went to Mattanah, then to Nahaliel, then Bamoth, then to the valley in Moab.

They asked for permission to pass through the land of the Amorites but they were refused, and the king brought his entire army against Israel, but Israel put him to the sword and captured all their cities up to the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. So they settled in the land of the Amorites, and went on to defeat Og of Bashan with the help of the LORD. They struck him, his sons, and his army down.

Leaving no survivors. And they took possession of the land.

Chapter 22

Now Balak king of Moab saw what the Israelites had done to the Amorites, and how many they were, (about two million) and he was terrified.

So he sent for Balaam to come and put a curse on them.

But the LORD would not let Balaam put a curse on Israel.

Balak tried again. He sent more noble messengers with a promise of a handsome reward.

"Come, curse these people"

Balaam wanted the reward but he could not defy the LORD.

So he went to inquire of the LORD again. This time GOD told him to go with these people but only do what GOD tells him.

Balaam started out on his donkey but the angel of the LORD stood in the road with a drawn sword and only the donkey saw him and would not go forward. Balaam beat his donkey three times until the LORD opened Balaam's eyes and he saw the angel of the LORD. The story continues with the angel of the LORD allowing Balaam to proceed, but "speak only what I tell you." Balaam explains this to Balak.

After sacrificing cattle and sheep, Balak took Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, where he saw part of the people.

Chapter 23

Now Balaam and Barak offered a bull and a ram on each of seven altars that Balaam had Balak to build.

But the LORD gave to Balaam a message for Balak which was a blessing, rather than a curse, for Israel.

Balak was angry! Balaam said: "I must speak what I'm told"

Balak tried again, from another area, with seven more altars, seven more bulls and rams, and wanted Balaam to curse Israel from this place. Again, the LORD put a message in the mouth of Balaam, which was essentially another blessing.

Balak said: "Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!"

Balaam: "I must do what the LORD says."

Balak tried again, at yet another place, seven more altars, seven more bulls and rams. Balak was hoping that at one of these chosen places, it would please the LORD to let Balaam curse Israel. He's just not going to give up.

Chapter 24

Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, so he did not resort to sorcery as at other times, but he turned his face toward the desert and saw Israel camped tribe by tribe, and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he uttered his oracle. This was his third oracle. I believe that each was the message the LORD gave him for Balak.

Balak was angry! Balaam did not curse, but blessed Israel three times. He told Balaam to go home. No reward.

Balaam told Balak that he told Balak's messengers that he could only obey the LORD's commands, no matter what the reward. But before Balaam went home, he warned Balak of what Israel would do to Balak's people in days to come.

Then he uttered his fourth oracle.

Balaam saw Amalek and uttered his oracle.

Balaam saw the Kenites and uttered his oracle.

He uttered one more oracle, then he returned home.

And Balak went his own way.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you sir!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
Great chapters! Thanks, Butch O'Neal!

September 25: Numbers 25-28 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, September 25, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 25-28

*The most important thing here is to
read and ponder the Scriptures consistently*

Chapter 25

Now the men of Israel began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women while they were staying in Shittim.

They also ate of the sacrifices to the Moabite gods, and bowed down before them, joining in the worshipping of Baal of Peor.

(Peor, a mountain in Moab, the top of which Balaam took Balaam to view the Israelites.

New Unger's Bible Dictionary)

So the LORD had Moses to kill all the leaders of the people,
and to kill all the men who joined in the worship of Baal.

Then a man took a Midianite woman into the tent of his family in front of Moses and the whole assembly. When Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest saw this he took a spear into that tent and killed the man and the woman with one thrust.

Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped;
but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

Because of the zeal of Phinehas for the honor of the LORD, the LORD made a covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants would have a covenant of a lasting priesthood.

The man put to death in the tent was Zimri son of Salu, and the woman was Cozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief.

Vs 16-18: The LORD said to Moses, "Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them, because they treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the affair of Peor and their sister Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of Peor."

Chapter 26

The LORD had Moses and Eleazar to "take a census of the whole Israelite community by families--all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel."

Vs 5-50 are the names, and numbers of those counted in the census. The total number of Israel men were 601,730.

The land was to be allotted as an inheritance to each of the clans in accordance to their number.

The male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000.

They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.

Vs 63-65: These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai. For the LORD had told those Israelites they would surely die in the desert, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Chapter 27

Now Zelophehad, from the clan of Manasseh, was one who had died in the desert, leaving five daughters but no sons.

The daughters appealed to Moses and Eleazar before the whole assembly for a rightful share of the inheritance, saying that their father's name should not disappear from his clan just because he had no sons. Moses took their case to the LORD and the LORD said they were right and told Moses to give them their Father's share of the inheritance. Further, this was to be a legal requirement for the Israelites. If who died left no son, give to the daughter, if no daughter, give to his brothers, if no brothers, give to his father's brothers, if none, give to the nearest relative. This as the LORD commanded Moses.

Then the LORD had Moses go up on a mountain to see the land that he would not enter because of the disobedience at the Desert of Zin. Moses would be gathered to his people, but he was concerned that his successor would be capable to lead the Israelites and expressed this concern to the LORD.

So the LORD had Moses to stand Joshua before Eleazar and the entire assembly to witness Moses commissioning Joshua as their leader while laying hands on him.

Eleazar would obtain decisions for Joshua, as leader, by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD.

Chapter 28

This chapter has to do with

Daily Offerings

Sabbath Offerings

Monthly Offerings

The Passover

Feast of Weeks

We have read these very explicit instructions regarding each of these Offerings in past chapters.

What stands out to me is the very importance of doing everything properly so as not to dishonor the LORD's holiness.

Also I am pleased that at least some of these Offerings would produce an "Aroma pleasing to the LORD."

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:

Thank you Butch O'Neal!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal! It's very good to review these lessons again. The numbering (census) of the Israelites really set me up to be wowed again. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promise Land from that generation. Wow, wow, wow! And you are so right on chpt 28. God expects us to follow His commands. I couldn't help but also remember that obeying is better than sacrifice.

October 2: Numbers 29-32 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 2, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 29-32

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 29

The sacred assemblies in this chapter were also mentioned in Leviticus 23, but here the requirements are more detailed.

The Feast of Trumpets

First day of the seventh month, do no work and sound the trumpets. Vs. 2-5 lists what is required for the offering to the LORD. These were to be in addition to the monthly and daily offerings made to the LORD by fire.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Day of Atonement

Tenth day of the seventh month.

Vs. 7-10 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD, including one male goat as a sin offering.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Feast of Tabernacles

Fifteenth day of the seventh month. Do no work.

Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days.

Vs. 13-16 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD, including one male goat as a sin offering.

An aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Vs. 17-38 lists the requirements for the offerings to be made to the LORD for the next seven days, including one male goat as a sin offering for each day.

All these were an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Vs 39: "In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, prepare these for the LORD at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings."

Moses told the Israelites all that the LORD commanded him.

Chapter 30

This chapter has to do with vows made to the LORD by a man and also vows made to the LORD by a young woman still living in her father's house, also vows made to the LORD by a married woman. Now if any of these vows were heard by the father or husband, they could nullify the vow and the LORD would release her. But if a husband hears the vow and says nothing and the wife fails, then the husband is responsible for her guilt. But a widow or divorced woman's vow to the LORD would be binding.

Vs. 16: These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

Chapter 31

The LORD told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites.

Twelve thousand men went into battle and killed every man.

But they took all the plunder and brought back captives.

Moses was angry. "Have you allowed all the women to live?"

"They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and were the means of turning the Israelites away from the LORD in what happened at Peor, so that a plague struck the LORD's people. Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man."

The cleansing and purification of the plunder and the soldiers was undertaken and the spoils were divided.

The plunder remaining was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys and 32,000 women who had never slept with a man. Vs. 36 through the rest of the chapter lists how the spoils were divided, including that given to the LORD.

Chapter 32

Now the Reubenites and Gadites didn't want to cross the Jordan and go to war. Moses chastised them and reminded them of their father's attitudes, which resulted in the LORD causing the Israelites to wander in the desert for 40 years.

So the Reubenites and Gadites asked if they could build pens for their livestock, and cities for their women and children, and then they would arm themselves and go ahead of the Israelites until every Israelite received his inheritance, and only then would they return to their women and children.

This was agreeable to Moses, and so the Reubenites and Gadites crossed over and did all that they had promised Moses and Moses gave them the properties that they built their cities on. And everyone began to build up and rebuild that which was their inheritance.

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:

Thank you, Butch! There were a lot of sacrifices to be offered to the Lord with all these festivals. Were these instructions for everybody (like Passover) or just for the priests? I'm not sure everyone could afford to part with so much of their livestock. Also, where did the priests get these animals from? I know people brought them as sacrifices to the priests but those animals were to be sacrificed for a different purpose.

Replies:

Charles Fry:

The daily, monthly, and festal offerings were community sacrifices, not individual obligations (except for something like the Passover lamb consumed under those special pilgrimage circumstances). We get a glimpse of this 700 years later in Hezekiah's time when the king and officials provided supplies of animals for the festival offerings.

2 Chronicles 30:24 (NIV)

24 Hezekiah king of Judah provided a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats for the assembly, and the officials provided them with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep and goats. A great number of priests consecrated themselves.

An early example of this reliance on free will offerings for community obligations is in the gifts for the construction of the tabernacle, and then we see the leaders of the people stepping up and making offerings for the service of the priests and Levites. Being a community leader required making such provision for the sacred rites.

Numbers 7:2 (NIV)

2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of families who were the tribal leaders in charge of those who were counted, made offerings.

Kevin Crittenden:

Charles Fry -Thank you!

Butch O'Neal:

Yes....thank you, Charles!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Butch O'Neal! Marc read these chapters to me on the way home from stl Sunday night. We decided chpt 30 should still stand today. It is God's intention that every man should bear rule in his own house, and have his wife and children in subjection with all gravity.

October 9: Numbers 33-36 (Butch O'Neal)

Reading for Monday, October 9, 2017

THE LAW

Numbers 33-36

The most important thing here is to read and ponder the Scriptures consistently

Chapter 33

This chapter records the stages of Israel's journey, from when they left Egypt, while the Egyptians were burying their firstborn. Vs 5-39 lists about 33 places where they camped, up to the time when Aaron died at the age of 123 years, on Mount Hor, in the fortieth year after coming out of Egypt.

By then, the Canaanite king of Arad heard they were coming.

The Israelites camped eight more times. Then the LORD told Moses to have the Israelites to drive out all the people in the land before them, and to destroy all the places where they worshipped false gods, and to destroy their carved images and their cast idols. And then to distribute the land by lots, according to their clans.

Vs 55-56: "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them."

Chapter 34

The LORD told Moses to tell the Israelites that there would be boundaries in the land of Canaan. Vs 3-12 lists these borders.

South, West, North, and East.

This land was to be assigned by lots, and a leader from each tribe, (vs 18-28) including Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun, were appointed to help assign the land.

Chapter 35

The Israelites were to give the Levites towns to live in with pastureland on all sides of every town. Six of these towns were to be cities of refuge, in addition to forty-two other towns. These six towns were where one could flee from the 'blood avenger' if they killed someone accidentally.

Those who killed on purpose were to be put to death.

The one who killed accidentally could have a trial, or he could remain in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest.

If he was caught outside of that city, the avenger could put him to death.

Two or more witnesses were required for one to be found guilty of anything.

Vs 33-34: "Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it. Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites."

Chapter 36

This chapter has to do with Zelophehad's daughter's (whom we met in the 27th chapter) inheritance.

They were to receive their father's inheritance, but if any, or all, of these five sisters were to marry, they would have to marry within their father's tribal clan, as no inheritance may pass from tribe to tribe.

And so they did marry their cousins on their father's side.

This concludes the Book of Numbers.

(NUMBERS, BOOK OF. The fourth book of the Pentateuch, continuing the redemptive history of Israel where Exodus leaves off. As Genesis is the book of origins, Exodus the book of redemption, and Leviticus the book of worship and fellowship, Numbers is the book of the service and walk of God's redeemed people. Taken from New Unger's Bible Dictionary.)

Comments or questions on the reading selection are welcome.

Comment:

Ryan Ingle:
Thank you Butch O'Neal

Replies:

Butch O'Neal:
You're welcome, Ryan Ingle.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:
I almost posted a sad emoji. We are on our last book with you now, Butch. The Lord has blessed us beyond measure with your faithfulness to this study. Thank you for serving with all your heart! As for tonight's study marc & I mentioned it's interesting when you read a passage with a new perspective. Ours was the Israelites leaving Egypt, "they marched boldly in full view of all the Egyptians, who were burying their firstborn." Quite a visual laid out in this chapter.