

WEEK 18

Numbers 1 – 12 (Tribes, Substitutions, Rituals, and Troubles)

Sunday ([Numbers 1 - 4](#))

Due to the quantity of text here are the links to the Bible.org/NET text, or you may choose to consult another equally-reliable translation.

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Num&chapter=1>

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Num&chapter=2>

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Num&chapter=3>

<http://net.bible.org/bible.php?book=Num&chapter=4>

PRAYER

Lord, may I be found of some small value in Your great plan so that I, like the Levites, may be Your hands and feet in this world.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The NET Bible translator's introduction to the Book of Numbers (or a similar introduction one may find in another version) is very important to understand the role of the Book in the OT and in the Bible as a whole.

Here is the NET translators introduction to Numbers..

"The book of Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch, traditionally called the Law of Moses. It provides a record of the experience of the Israelites during the wilderness wanderings, and records the laws for the camp as they traveled from place to place. The book focuses on the difficulties of the Israelites due to their lack of faith, rebellion, and apostasy. It also records God's protection of his people from opposition from without. The book makes a fitting contribution to the collection of holy writings as it shows the spiritual and physical progression of the company of the redeemed toward the promised land. The book has to be studied in conjunction with the other books of the Pentateuch. It builds on the promises made to Abraham in Genesis and the redemption from bondage in Exodus; it completes the cultic instructions for Israel that were laid down in Leviticus, and it concerns the worship in and the movement of the tabernacle that was built in Exodus. But the information here, both legal and historical, was not the major concern in those books. The

book gets its title in English (following the Greek tradition) from the two censuses taken of the people, one at the beginning of the wanderings and the other at the end (although the Hebrew title is taken from the beginning of the book, *בְּמִדְבָּר* [bammidbar], “in the wilderness”). In these lists particular emphasis is given to the leaders of the clans, a theme that will continue in the book as the focus is on how the leaders function in all the trials and temptations of the journey. The material in this book is essentially a theological interpretation of historical events, and as such it stands as an integral part of the revelation of God. In the study of the book of Numbers, when these issues of the nature of the text are significant to the interpretation and acceptance of the text, the notes will comment on them briefly. The indication at the outset of the book is that Moses had a good number of people who were able to help him compile the statistics and the facts of the wandering community. In [Num 11:16-18](#) there is a group of leaders known as *שֹׁטְטֵרִים* (shottýrim). This term was used in [Exod 5:16-19](#) to describe the officers or foremen of the Israelites. They were appointed supervisors of the clans by Moses, and by the time of Joshua ([Josh 1:10](#)) they were a literary guild. The Hebrew word, cognate with Akkadian *sataru*, means “to write.” These people were to Israel what the scribes and chroniclers were to the pagan nations. They assisted Moses and the priests in their keeping of records. So no matter what they were called from time to time, there was a group of literate people who could keep the records and preserve the information from the very beginning. Their work matches the activities of scribes in the ancient world who used all the literary devices to preserve the material. There is no reason to doubt that the events recorded were attested to and preserved by such eyewitnesses. But their work would have been essentially to serve the leader, Moses. The book essentially follows the order of the events chronologically, more or less. Where it departs from that order it does so for literary or theological reasons. At the center of the theological concern is the tabernacle, its significance to the faith, and therefore the care in using it and in moving it. Its importance explains the presence and the arrangement of the ritual laws. With the records and statistics provided for him, Moses could then introduce into the record the great events in the wilderness experience of Israel, which were to become warnings and encouragements for all time. Most of this material comes from the two years at the beginning of the experience and the two years at the end. But this itself may be a literary device (merism) to show the nature of the wanderings throughout. The Hebrew text of the book of Numbers has been preserved fairly well. It has not been preserved as well as Leviticus, which was most important to the ministry of the priests and Levites. But in comparison with some of the prophetic writings, Numbers represents a well-preserved text. The problems will be discussed in the relevant passages. So Numbers is essentially a part of the unfolding revelation of the Torah, the Law. It shows God’s faithfulness to his covenant plan and to his covenant people, but it also shows the problems incurred by the people’s lack of faith and

obedience. The book focuses frequently on the nature of the holy Lord God, for at the center of all this material is the person and the works of the Lord. This provided the standard for the faith and practice of the people.”

The Lord God instructed Moses to conduct a census of the Israelite people.

When Moses had counted the Levites God called them apart and numbered them as replacements for the firstborn of all of Israel until the number of Levites ran out – then Moses assessed 5 shekels for each firstborn beyond that and the number was 273 – that money was given to the Levites to meet their needs. [The NET translators observe that this was equal to about 2 ounces of silver per 5 shekels, or converted to US Dollars at a value (in late 2010) of \$21. per ounce, or approximately \$28,665.]

The Levite men, aged 30 to 50 numbered 8,580, were assigned to the transport and care of the tabernacle.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Book of Numbers tells the story of the organization of this moving-city of around a million people, how they would transport and maintain the tabernacle, and how they would interact with God through the covenant to which they had agreed.

DISCUSS

Imagine being one of the 8,580 men to whom it was assigned, in great detail, the transport and care for the Lord God’s tabernacle. How would you react to such an assignment?

REFLECT

The Lord God essentially bought the Levites from the rest of Israel – counting them as the fee owed to Him – then placing them in service to the tabernacle.

SHARE

When have you been given an assignment to serve God in a specific way?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where and how He is either using you right now, or where He wants you to be His hands and His feet.

ACT

Today I will praise God for allowing me to be a part of His plan. I will prepare myself as He directs, I will serve with a heart of joy and an eye to excellence, and I will prayerfully ask that I am continuously valuable in His service.

Be Specific _____

Monday (Numbers 5)

Separation of the Unclean

5:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 5:2 “Command the Israelites to expel from the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse.

5:3 You must expel both men and women; you must put them outside the camp, so that they will not defile their camps, among which I live.” 5:4 So the Israelites did so, and expelled them outside the camp. As the Lord had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did.

Restitution for Sin

5:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 5:6 “Tell the Israelites, ‘When a man or a woman commits any sin that people commit, thereby breaking faith with the Lord, and that person is found guilty, 5:7 then he must confess his sin that he has committed and must make full reparation, add one fifth to it, and give it to whomever he wronged. 5:8 But if the individual has no close relative to whom reparation can be made for the wrong, the reparation for the wrong must be paid to the Lord for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement by which atonement is made for him. 5:9 Every offering of all the Israelites’ holy things that they bring to the priest will be his. 5:10 Every man’s holy things will be his; whatever any man gives the priest will be his.’”

The Jealousy Ordeal

5:11 The Lord spoke to Moses: 5:12 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘If any man’s wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 5:13 and a man has sexual relations with her without her husband knowing it, and it is hidden that she has defiled herself, since there was no witness against her, nor was she caught – 5:14 and if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is defiled; or if jealous feelings come over him and he becomes suspicious of his wife, when she is not

defiled – 5:15 then the man must bring his wife to the priest, and he must bring the offering required for her, one tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he must not pour olive oil on it or put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of suspicion, a grain offering for remembering, for bringing iniquity to remembrance.

5:16 “Then the priest will bring her near and have her stand before the Lord. 5:17 The priest will then take holy water in a pottery jar, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle, and put it into the water. 5:18 Then the priest will have the woman stand before the Lord, uncover the woman’s head, and put the grain offering for remembering in her hands, which is the grain offering of suspicion. The priest will hold in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 5:19 Then the priest will put the woman under oath and say to the her, “If no other man has had sexual relations with you, and if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband’s authority, may you be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. 5:20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has had sexual relations with you...” 5:21 Then the priest will put the woman under the oath of the curse and will say to the her, “The Lord make you an attested curse among your people, if the Lord makes your thigh fall away and your abdomen swell; 5:22 and this water that causes the curse will go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh rot.” Then the woman must say, “Amen, amen.”

5:23 “Then the priest will write these curses on a scroll and then scrape them off into the bitter water. 5:24 He will make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness. 5:25 The priest will take the grain offering of suspicion from the woman’s hand, wave the grain offering before the Lord, and bring it to the altar. 5:26 Then the priest will take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial portion, burn it on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. 5:27 When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her to produce bitterness – her abdomen will swell, her thigh will fall away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. 5:28 But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she will be free of ill effects and will be able to bear children.

5:29 “This is the law for cases of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband’s authority, goes astray and defiles herself, 5:30 or when jealous feelings come over a man and he becomes suspicious of his wife; then he must have the woman stand before the

Lord, and the priest will carry out all this law upon her. 5:31 Then the man will be free from iniquity, but that woman will bear the consequences of her iniquity.”

PRAYER

Lord, every sin we commit against another person we first commit against You; may I be ever mindful of that and may that awareness strengthen me against the temptation to sin.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God commanded, as He had previously taught, that Moses put every leper, everyone with a discharge, and anyone defiled by a corpse outside the camp. This served both to protect against a plague and enforced the general sense of holiness among the people. [He had elsewhere in Leviticus described the means of restoration.]

He declared that every sin that the people committed broke faith with Him. They were to confess and repent and make reparations to the one they offended, and if that person was unavailable then to a close relative, and lacking that to the high priest.

If a husband suspected his wife of infidelity he was to bring her to the priest who would administer the rite of bitter water. If guilty the Lord would make her physically ill and if not she would be symptom-free. If guilty she, and other man, would receive the punishment for adultery described elsewhere in Leviticus.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Every sin we commit against others is first committed against God because He is holy and we belong to Him.

DISCUSS

The Lord God knew that jealousy related to a husband suspicious of his wife could lead to him attacking her and her presumed lover in a jealous rage – is it not an excellent solution to require him to bring her to the priest for God’s judgment?

REFLECT

When jealousy festers it poisons the heart, confuses the mind, harms ones walk, and pollutes relationships with the Lord and with others.

SHARE

When have you observed a jealous person reacting irrationally? Can you see a value in a system that requires one to bring the accused into a neutral place of evaluation rather than every person being their own judge and priest?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you a place where you are jealous and have not known how to resolve that toxic situation.

ACT

Today I will apply the principles of this text to my circumstance of jealousy, be it within a relationship, of the circumstances of another, or in any other place. I will ask a fellow believer to pray in-agreement with me and will consult with one Biblically-qualified to be an elder as needed. I will confess and repent of the anger, bitterness, and/or depression this has cause me, as well as any harm to others. I will accept the Lord's forgiveness and healing.

Be Specific _____

Tuesday ([Numbers 6 - 8](#))

<https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Numbers+6>

The Nazirite Vow

6:1 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 6:2 "Speak to the Israelites, and tell them, 'When either a man or a woman takes a special vow, to take a vow as a Nazirite, to separate himself to the Lord, 6:3 he must separate himself from wine and strong drink, he must drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from strong drink, nor may he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 6:4 All the days of his separation he must not eat anything that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

6:5 "All the days of the vow of his separation no razor may be used on his head until the time is fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord. He will be holy, and he must let the locks of hair on his head grow long.

6:6 “All the days that he separates himself to the Lord he must not contact a dead body.
6:7 He must not defile himself even for his father or his mother or his brother or his sister if they die, because the separation for his God is on his head. 6:8 All the days of his separation he must be holy to the Lord.

Contingencies for Defilement

6:9 “If anyone dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his consecrated head, then he must shave his head on the day of his purification – on the seventh day he must shave it. 6:10 On the eighth day he is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the entrance to the tent of meeting. 6:11 Then the priest will offer one for a purification offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because of his transgression in regard to the corpse. So he must reconsecrate his head on that day. 6:12 He must rededicate to the Lord the days of his separation and bring a male lamb in its first year as a reparation offering, but the former days will not be counted because his separation was defiled.

Fulfilling the Vows

6:13 “Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he must be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 6:14 and he must present his offering to the Lord: one male lamb in its first year without blemish for a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish for a purification offering, one ram without blemish for a peace offering, 6:15 and a basket of bread made without yeast, cakes of fine flour mixed with olive oil, wafers made without yeast and smeared with olive oil, and their grain offering and their drink offerings.

6:16 “Then the priest must present all these before the Lord and offer his purification offering and his burnt offering. 6:17 Then he must offer the ram as a peace offering to the Lord, with the basket of bread made without yeast; the priest must also offer his grain offering and his drink offering.

6:18 “Then the Nazirite must shave his consecrated head at the entrance to the tent of meeting and must take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire where the peace offering is burning. 6:19 And the priest must take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one cake made without yeast from the basket, and one wafer made without yeast, and put them on the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated head; 6:20 then the priest must wave them as a wave offering before the Lord; it is a holy portion

for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the raised offering. After this the Nazirite may drink wine.'

6:21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the Lord his offering according to his separation, as well as whatever else he can provide. Thus he must fulfill his vow that he makes, according to the law of his separation."

The Priestly Benediction

6:22 The Lord spoke to Moses: 6:23 "Tell Aaron and his sons, "This is the way you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

6:24 "The Lord bless you and protect you;

6:25 The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;

6:26 The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace."

6:27 So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

Chapter 7:

<https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Numbers+7>

Lighting the Lamps

8:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 8:2 "Speak to Aaron and tell him, 'When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light in front of the lampstand.'"

8:3 And Aaron did so; he set up the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the Lord commanded Moses. 8:4 This is how the lampstand was made: It was beaten work in gold; from its shaft to its flowers it was beaten work. According to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

The Separation of the Levites

8:5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 8:6 "Take the Levites from among the Israelites and purify them. 8:7 And do this to them to purify them: Sprinkle water of purification on

them; then have them shave all their body and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. 8:8 Then they are to take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with olive oil; and you are to take a second young bull for a purification offering. 8:9 You are to bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the entire community of the Israelites. 8:10 Then you are to bring the Levites before the Lord, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on the Levites; 8:11 and Aaron is to offer the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the Israelites, that they may do the work of the Lord. 8:12 When the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, offer the one for a purification offering and the other for a whole burnt offering to the Lord, to make atonement for the Levites. 8:13 You are to have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them as a wave offering to the Lord. 8:14 And so you are to separate the Levites from among the Israelites, and the Levites will be mine.

8:15 “After this, the Levites will go in to do the work of the tent of meeting. So you must cleanse them and offer them like a wave offering. 8:16 For they are entirely given to me from among the Israelites. I have taken them for myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn sons of all the Israelites. 8:17 For all the firstborn males among the Israelites are mine, both humans and animals; when I destroyed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I set them apart for myself. 8:18 So I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn sons among the Israelites. 8:19 I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the Israelites, to do the work for the Israelites in the tent of meeting, and to make atonement for the Israelites, so there will be no plague among the Israelites when the Israelites come near the sanctuary.”

8:20 So Moses and Aaron and the entire community of the Israelites did this with the Levites. According to all that the Lord commanded Moses concerning the Levites, this is what the Israelites did with them. 8:21 The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothing; then Aaron presented them like a wave offering before the Lord, and Aaron made atonement for them to purify them. 8:22 After this, the Levites went in to do their work in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons. As the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did.

The Work of the Levites

8:23 Then the Lord spoke to Moses: 8:24 “This is what pertains to the Levites: At the age of twenty-five years and upward one may begin to join the company in the work of the tent of meeting, 8:25 and at the age of fifty years they must retire from performing the work and may no longer work. 8:26 They may assist their colleagues in the tent of

meeting, to attend to needs, but they must do no work. This is the way you must establish the Levites regarding their duties.”

PRAYER

Lord, it is Your desire to bless us. My I mature and as I do may I be found more obedient so that Your blessings flow into and through me to the benefit of others.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

A man or a woman is permitted to voluntarily take a Nazarite vow. This set them apart to the service of the Lord. There were a number of special restrictions and requirements thereafter.

The Lord God provided Aaron a priestly blessing to speak to the people and he encouraged them with a summary of the blessings that the Lord had for them:

*“The Lord bless you and protect you;
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”*

When the dedication of the altar had been completed “... Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the atonement lid that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim.”

The Lord God then gave Moses some additional instructions about the lighting of the lamps and the separation of the Levites from the rest of the Israelite population.

He also instructed that the Levites were available to work in the tabernacle at the age of 25 but had to retire at age 50. after 50 they could assist others but to not do the work themselves.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Aaron's prayer was a message of the Lord's love, not a guarantee that no-matter-what such would be done.

DISCUSS

Some translations begin Aaron's blessing with the qualifying-term "May". Given the Lord's consistent history of blessings contingent upon obedience would it help in a fuller understanding to read that into the NET rendering?

REFLECT

Both men and women were allowed the honor of choosing to take a Nazarite vow to serve the Lord God. This is another evidence that He did not reserve all duties related to His work to males only.

SHARE

When have you observed the Lord blessing you for obedience, and the loss of those blessings when you knowingly pressed Him away for the sake of a worldly pleasure and/or priority?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how the "priestly prayer" given to Aaron for the people might still be an encouragement to you and to others.

ACT

Today I will read aloud and/or quietly the "priestly prayer" at least three times – in the morning, at mid-day, and again in the evening. I will meditate on the words and their meaning and prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten my heart. I will share with a fellow believer what I learn.

"The Lord bless you and protect you;

The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."

Be Specific _____

Wednesday ([Numbers 9](#))

Passover Regulations

9:1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt:

9:2 “The Israelites are to observe the Passover at its appointed time. 9:3 In the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you are to observe it at its appointed time; you must keep it in accordance with all its statutes and all its customs.”

9:4 So Moses instructed the Israelites to observe the Passover.

9:5 And they observed the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight in the wilderness of Sinai; in accordance with all that the Lord had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did.

9:6 It happened that some men who were ceremonially defiled by the dead body of a man could not keep the Passover on that day, so they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day.

9:7 And those men said to him, “We are ceremonially defiled by the dead body of a man; why are we kept back from offering the Lord’s offering at its appointed time among the Israelites?”

9:8 So Moses said to them, “Remain here and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.”

9:9 The Lord spoke to Moses: 9:10 “Tell the Israelites, ‘If any of you or of your posterity become ceremonially defiled by touching a dead body, or are on a journey far away, then he may observe the Passover to the Lord. 9:11 They may observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight; they are to eat it with bread made without yeast and with bitter herbs. 9:12 They must not leave any of it until morning, nor break any of its bones; they must observe it in accordance with every statute of the Passover.

9:13 But the man who is ceremonially clean, and was not on a journey, and fails to keep the Passover, that person must be cut off from his people. Because he did not bring the Lord’s offering at its appointed time, that man must bear his sin.

9:14 If a resident foreigner lives among you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, he must do so according to the statute of the Passover, and according to its custom. You must have the same statute for the resident foreigner and for the one who was born in the land.”

The Leading of the Lord

9:15 On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle – the tent of the testimony – and from evening until morning there was a fiery appearance over the tabernacle. 9:16 This is the way it used to be continually: The cloud would cover it by day, and there was a fiery appearance by night. 9:17 Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the Israelites would begin their journey; and in whatever place the cloud settled, there the Israelites would make camp.

9:18 At the commandment of the Lord the Israelites would begin their journey, and at the commandment of the Lord they would make camp; as long as the cloud remained settled over the tabernacle they would camp.

9:19 When the cloud remained over the tabernacle many days, then the Israelites obeyed the instructions of the Lord and did not journey.

9:20 When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a number of days, they remained camped according to the Lord's commandment, and according to the Lord's commandment they would journey.

9:21 And when the cloud remained only from evening until morning, when the cloud was taken up the following morning, then they traveled on. Whether by day or by night, when the cloud was taken up they traveled.

9:22 Whether it was for two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud prolonged its stay over the tabernacle, the Israelites remained camped without traveling; but when it was taken up, they traveled on.

9:23 At the commandment of the Lord they camped, and at the commandment of the Lord they traveled on; they kept the instructions of the Lord according to the commandment of the Lord, by the authority of Moses.

PRAYER

Lord, You understand our circumstances and You make a way for us to meet Your expectations – whether it was in the OT celebration of the Passover or today when life challenges us with seeming impossible situations. May I never doubt that You know, You care, and You will make a way.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord God reminded the people, through Moses, to remember to keep the Passover.

Some men came to Moses asking about keeping the Passover if they were ceremonially unclean and God said they, as well as Israelites who were far away at Passover – a special Passover celebration would be provided 4 weeks later. He also provided that a resident foreigner would be allowed to celebrate the Passover.

Those who were present and who failed to celebrate the Passover were to be “cut-off” from the people and would thereafter bear the consequences of their sin without access to the tabernacle.

The Lord instructed that He would, as during the Exodus, lead them with a cloud and a column of fire and they would travel only when the cloud was lifted.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

The Lord God did not have to provide an alternative for people to celebrate Passover, but He did.

DISCUSS

It has been over two years since the Exodus – how excited must the Israelites have been to finally begin their travel to the promised land?

REFLECT

Those who could celebrate the Passover when scheduled, and who chose to be rebellious and ungrateful, were dis-fellowshipped. To not do so would have allowed disunity within the community.

SHARE

When have you known that you should participate in a time of fellowship but made excuses and did not bother to do so?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where He has been calling you to participate in fellowship or to prayer or study in His Word and you have not done so.

ACT

Today I will repent of carelessness about time in fellowship with fellow believers and with God as well as time in the Word. I agree to listen closely to the call of the Holy Spirit and to obey. As necessary I will ask a fellow believer to pray for me and to hold me accountable.

Be Specific _____

Thursday ([Numbers 10](#))

The Blowing of Trumpets

10:1 The Lord spoke to Moses: 10:2 “Make two trumpets of silver; you are to make them from a single hammered piece. You will use them for assembling the community and for directing the traveling of the camps. 10:3 When they blow them both, all the community must come to you to the entrance of the tent of meeting.

10:4 “But if they blow with one trumpet, then the leaders, the heads of the thousands of Israel, must come to you.

10:5 When you blow an alarm, then the camps that are located on the east side must begin to travel. 10:6 And when you blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that are located on the south side must begin to travel. An alarm must be sounded for their journeys.

10:7 But when you assemble the community, you must blow, but you must not sound an alarm.

10:8 The sons of Aaron, the priests, must blow the trumpets; and they will be to you for an eternal ordinance throughout your generations.

10:9 If you go to war in your land against an adversary who opposes you, then you must sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the Lord your God, and you will be saved from your enemies.

10:10 “Also in the time when you rejoice, such as on your appointed festivals or at the beginnings of your months, you must blow with your trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, so that they may become a memorial for you before your God: I am the Lord your God.”

10:11 The Journey From Sinai to Kadesh

On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle of the testimony. 10:12 So the Israelites set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud settled in the wilderness of Paran.

Judah Begins the Journey

10:13 This was the first time they set out on their journey according to the commandment of the Lord, by the authority of Moses.

10:14 The standard of the camp of the Judahites set out first according to their companies, and over his company was Nahshon son of Amminadab.

10:15 Over the company of the tribe of Issacharites was Nathanel son of Zuar, 10:16 and over the company of the tribe of the Zebulunites was Elion son of Helon. 10:17 Then the tabernacle was dismantled, and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

Journey Arrangements for the Tribes

10:18 The standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their companies; over his company was Elizur son of Shedeur. 10:19 Over the company of the tribe of the Simeonites was Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, 10:20 and over the company of the tribe of the Gadites was Eliasaph son of Deuel. 10:21 And the Kohathites set out, carrying the articles for the sanctuary; the tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived. 10:22 And the standard of the camp of the Ephraimites set out according to their companies; over his company was Elishama son of Ammihud. 10:23 Over the company of the tribe of the Manassehites was Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, 10:24 and over the company of the tribe of Benjaminites was Abidan son of Gideon.

10:25 The standard of the camp of the Danites set out, which was the rear guard of all the camps by their companies; over his company was Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 10:26 Over the company of the tribe of the Asherites was Pagiel son of Ocran, 10:27 and over the company of the tribe of the Naphtalites was Ahira son of Enan. 10:28 These were the traveling arrangements of the Israelites according to their companies when they traveled.

The Appeal to Hobab

10:29 Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are journeying to the place about which the Lord said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the Lord has promised good things for Israel."

10:30 But Hobab said to him, "I will not go, but I will go instead to my own land and to my kindred."

10:31 Moses said, "Do not leave us, because you know places for us to camp in the wilderness, and you could be our guide. 10:32 And if you come with us, it is certain that whatever good things the Lord will favor us with, we will share with you as well."

10:33 So they traveled from the mountain of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord was traveling before them during the three days' journey, to find a resting place for them. 10:34 And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, when they traveled from the camp.

10:35 And when the ark traveled, Moses would say, "Rise up, O Lord! May your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you!"

10:36 And when it came to rest he would say, "Return, O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel!"

PRAYER

Lord, You guide us, You tell us when to move and when to stand, and you bring alongside the people and resources that we truly need. May I be trusting of Your guidance, watchful for Your signals, and aware of Your provision.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Lord instructed that Moses have a trumpet made of silver and to use it to lead the people in assembly, travel, alarm, and rejoicing.

The Israelites began their travel away from Sanai to Kadesh "On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year." The tribe of Judah led.

Moses asked Hobab, a Moabite and a relative through Jethro, to travel with them as he knew the land and resources well and he agreed.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

When we wonder what the Lord wants of us we are to pray, read His Word, and trust that He has the perfect plan.

DISCUSS

Did the Lord choose Hobab, a Moabite, to serve as a guide or might Moses have created a dependency where he had not been told to do so?

REFLECT

Clear and rapid communication would have been a major challenge across an ancient moving-nation of nearly a million people, so the Lord God explained how they were to use the trumpets for that purpose.

SHARE

When have you been involved with a large group of people and observed problems with communication that was both accurate and fast?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you an opportunity to serve as His instrument of guidance to other believers.

ACT

I will gratefully and unreservedly surrender to His guidance, to His directives, and remain humble and teachable when He sends others to assist.

Be Specific _____

Friday ([Numbers 11](#))

The Israelites Complain

11:1 When the people complained, it displeased the Lord. When the Lord heard it, his anger burned, and so the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outer parts of the camp. 11:2 When the people cried to Moses, he prayed to the Lord, and the fire died out. 11:3 So he called the name of that place Taberah because there the fire of the Lord burned among them.

Complaints about Food

11:4 Now the mixed multitude who were among them craved more desirable foods, and so the Israelites wept again and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 11:5 We remember the fish we used to eat freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. 11:6 But now we are dried up, and there is nothing at all before us except this manna!" 11:7 (Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. 11:8 And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it with mills or pounded it in mortars; they baked it in pans and made cakes of it. It tasted like fresh olive oil. 11:9 And when the dew came down on the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.)

Moses' Complaint to the Lord

11:10 Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and when the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly, Moses was also displeased. 11:11 And Moses said to the Lord, "Why have you afflicted your servant? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of this entire people on me? 11:12 Did I conceive this entire people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your arms, as a foster father bears a nursing child,' to the land which you swore to their fathers? 11:13 From where shall I get meat to give to this entire people, for they cry to me, 'Give us meat, that we may eat!' 11:14 I am not able to bear this entire people alone, because it is too heavy for me! 11:15 But if you are going to deal with me like this, then kill me immediately. If I have found favor in your sight then do not let me see my trouble."

The Response of God

11:16 The Lord said to Moses, "Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know are elders of the people and officials over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting; let them take their position there with you. 11:17 Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take part of the spirit that is on you, and will put it on them, and they will bear some of the burden of the people with you, so that you do not bear it all by yourself.

11:18 "And say to the people, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, and you will eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the Lord, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat, for life was good for us in Egypt?" Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you will eat. 11:19 You will eat, not just one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty

days, 11:20 but a whole month, until it comes out your nostrils and makes you sick, because you have despised the Lord who is among you and have wept before him, saying, “Why did we ever come out of Egypt?””

11:21 Moses said, “The people around me are 600,000 on foot; but you say, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.’ 11:22 Would they have enough if the flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? If all the fish of the sea were caught for them, would they have enough?” 11:23 And the Lord said to Moses, “Is the Lord’s hand shortened? Now you will see whether my word to you will come true or not!”

11:24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. He then gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and had them stand around the tabernacle.

11:25 And the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to them, and he took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but did not do so again.

Eldad and Medad

11:26 But two men remained in the camp; one’s name was Eldad, and the other’s name was Medad. And the spirit rested on them. (Now they were among those in the registration, but had not gone to the tabernacle.) So they prophesied in the camp. 11:27 And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!” 11:28 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his choice young men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” 11:29 Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for me? I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!” 11:30 Then Moses returned to the camp along with the elders of Israel.

Provision of Quail

11:31 Now a wind went out from the Lord and brought quail from the sea, and let them fall near the camp, about a day’s journey on this side, and about a day’s journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about three feet high on the surface of the ground. 11:32 And the people stayed up all that day, all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail. The one who gathered the least gathered ten homers, and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 11:33 But while the meat was still between their teeth, before they chewed it, the anger of the Lord burned against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague.

11:34 So the name of that place was called Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people that craved different food. 11:35 The people traveled from Kibroth Hattaavah to Hazeroth, and they stayed at Hazeroth.

PRAYER

Lord, You owe us nothing and we owe You everything. May I never have a complaining heart toward You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

The Israelites complained against the Lord God because they were frustrated with the travel and the living conditions He was righteously angry with their ungrateful hearts and caused a fire along the perimeter of their camp. They cried for relief to Moses and he asked God for grace, which he granted.

Those among the Israelites who had become accustomed to living somewhat well in Egypt then started to complain about the lack of variety in the food (God was providing them Manna) and that they mostly wanted some meat. This new ungratefulness frustrated Moses and he asked God how he was to respond to their need and he asked God to end his life rather than force him to listen to their complaining.

God responded by instructing Moses to summon the 70 elders where He transferred some of the responsibilities Moses was bearing to them. God also told Moses that He would give the people an over-abundance of meat for 30 days until they were sick of it – as a punishment for their demanding spirits.

When the Lord God descended upon the elders they prophesied as they went out among the people, as an evidence that some of God's anointing for Moses had been transferred to them, but only that one time as a witness of authority to the people. Two others, Eldad and Medad, who had not been among them then prophesied. Joshua suggested silencing them as he thought it would undermine Moses but Moses said it was of God and he was OK with it.

God then brought a massive quantity of quail to the camp and people rushed to gather and eat it – but the Lord caused a plague to come upon them for their complaining and many died.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Do we have any right to demand anything of God?

DISCUSS

How overwhelmed must Moses have been that he asked God to take his life?

REFLECT

How different are we than the Israelites? Are we ever really satisfied, or no matter what, is there always something more that we desire?

SHARE

When have you been faced with people who were demanding things that you could not provide? Did you have a similar sense of being overwhelmed as did Moses?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have a heart of demandingness toward Him.

ACT

Today I will confess those areas in my life where I am not content but am instead demanding of God. Perhaps it is for more money, better looks, a new car, a different home, a mate or a different mate, different food than your budget allows, a better or different job, easier work, easier school work (if a student), more toys, less responsibilities, more recognition, etc. I agree to set those things before the Lord God in prayer, to trust Him to give me what is healthy for me and to keep the rest from me, and to not concern myself again with the absence of what He does not provide.

Be Specific _____

Saturday ([Numbers 12](#))

Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses

12:1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman he had married (for he had married an Ethiopian woman). 12:2 They said, "Has the Lord only spoken through Moses? Has he not also spoken through us?" And the Lord heard it.

12:3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more so than any man on the face of the earth.)

The Response of the Lord

12:4 The Lord spoke immediately to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam: “The three of you come to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them went. 12:5 And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent; he then called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward.

12:6 The Lord said, “Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream. 12:7 My servant Moses is not like this; he is faithful in all my house. 12:8 With him I will speak face to face, openly, and not in riddles; and he will see the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” 12:9 The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he departed. 12:10 When the cloud departed from above the tent, Miriam became leprous as snow. Then Aaron looked at Miriam, and she was leprous!

The Intercession of Moses

12:11 So Aaron said to Moses, “O my lord, please do not hold this sin against us, in which we have acted foolishly and have sinned! 12:12 Do not let her be like a baby born dead, whose flesh is half-consumed when it comes out of its mother’s womb!”

12:13 Then Moses cried to the Lord, “Heal her now, O God.” 12:14 The Lord said to Moses, “If her father had only spit in her face, would she not have been disgraced for seven days? Shut her out from the camp seven days, and afterward she can be brought back in again.”

12:15 So Miriam was shut outside of the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey on until Miriam was brought back in. 12:16 After that the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

PRAYER

Lord, You speak and we listen. What You specify as set-apart is holy, it is not our place to ever question You. May I always honor You.

SCRIPTURE IN PERSPECTIVE

Aaron and Miriam allowed their personal and tribal pride to be used by the enemy to create conflict between themselves and Moses; they presumed to challenge his unique God-ordained authority merely because he married someone whom they did not approve.

The Lord God reminded them that He spoke to prophets in dreams and riddles, but that He had chosen to meet with Moses “face to face”, and therefore Moses was profoundly-unique among His people.

The Lord declared that they were beyond-foolish to challenge the one whom He had anointed. He punished Aaron and Miriam by striking Miriam with the plague of leprosy.

Aaron pleaded to Moses and Moses asked God to take her leprosy away – to which He responded that she would first need to be put-out of the camp for the usual seven days, then He would restore her.

INTERACT WITH THE TEXT

CONSIDER

Moses was known as the most humble man on the face of the earth. One may recall that more than once he confessed himself incapable to meeting God’s expectations and welcoming God’s blessings upon others to prophesy or to serve as judges.

DISCUSS

What could Aaron and Miriam have hoped to gain from challenging Moses?

REFLECT

God could have strike Aaron and Miriam dead, or could have brought plagues upon both of them and refused to relent, but He loved Moses and knew the heart of Moses would be broken were He to do so.

SHARE

When have you challenged someone with spiritual authority, about something that – upon reflection - was really petty, and later regretted it?

FAITH IN ACTION

PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you may be challenging someone with spiritual authority, or you are the one being challenged, and how you may not be handling the situation wisely – or affirm that you are being His vessel of wisdom.

ACT

Today I will repent if I am improperly challenging the authority of a Biblically-recognized authority who is not violating the Bible. The person may be a coach/mentor, a counselor, an elder, a parent, a secular authority (government), a teacher, or occupy some other role. I will repent if I have responded with rage or depression to an improper challenge to my authority – because it is not genuinely an attack on me but upon God – and it reveals a lack of humility in me that I take such attacks personally. I will allow God to handle the situation and will rest in my humility before Him. I will share the circumstances with a mature fellow believer, ask them to pray in-agreement with me for wisdom, and I will ask them to hold me accountable for walking with humble heart that rests in the Lord.

Be Specific _____

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Note 2: When NET text is quoted in commentary and discussion all pronouns referring to God are capitalized, though they are lower-case in the original NET text.

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