



KINGDOM PREPARATION

PART 1

Forty Daily Devotions
from Numbers 1-17
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

You might think that only an accountant would want to read a book titled “Numbers,” but I am sure that you will find this story more interesting than you might imagine! This narrative picks up about 30 days after the events of the last chapter of Exodus and covers the vast majority of Israel’s 40-year journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. While several chapters of this book contain census figures, there are more than enough exciting stories intermingled along the way to make it remarkably interesting reading. As you read, you will see a lot of human failure coupled with a lot of divine patience and mercy. This book will help us better understand how God works with His imperfect people by carefully guiding them to the point where they are prepared to know and do His will. As we read this wonderful book, we will see Israel transformed from a nation of slaves who fled from the armies of Pharaoh to a nation of soldiers who marched boldly forth to conquer the armies of the Canaanites!

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Numbers 1:1-16	12/04/22
2	Numbers 1:17-37	12/05/22
3	Numbers 1:38-54	12/06/22
4	Numbers 2:1-17	12/07/22
5	Numbers 2:18-34	12/08/22
6	Numbers 3:1-16	12/09/22
7	Numbers 3:17-32	12/10/22
8	Numbers 3:33-51	12/11/22
9	Numbers 4:1-15	12/12/22
10	Numbers 4:16-33	12/13/22
11	Numbers 4:34-49	12/14/22
12	Numbers 5:1-15	12/15/22
13	Numbers 5:16-31	12/16/22
14	Numbers 6:1-15	12/17/22
15	Numbers 6:16-27	12/18/22
16	Numbers 7:1-17	12/19/22
17	Numbers 7:18-35	12/20/22
18	Numbers 7:36-53	12/21/22
19	Numbers 7:54-71	12/22/22
20	Numbers 7:72-89	12/23/22

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Numbers 8:1-13	12/24/22
22	Numbers 8:14-26	12/25/22
23	Numbers 9:1-23	12/26/22
24	Numbers 10:1-18	12/27/22
25	Numbers 10:19-36	12/28/22
26	Numbers 11:1-17	12/29/22
27	Numbers 11:18-35	12/30/22
28	Numbers 12:1-16	12/31/22
29	Numbers 13:1-16	01/01/23
30	Numbers 13:17-33	01/02/23
31	Numbers 14:1-12	01/03/23
32	Numbers 14:13-25	01/04/23
33	Numbers 14:26-45	01/05/23
34	Numbers 15:1-16	01/06/23
35	Numbers 15:17-41	01/07/23
36	Numbers 16:1-11	01/08/23
37	Numbers 16:12-22	01/09/23
38	Numbers 16:23-35	01/10/23
39	Numbers 16:36-50	01/11/23
40	Numbers 17:1-13	01/12/23

Day 1: Numbers 1:1-16

“Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying:” (Numbers 1:1)

In the Wilderness

In Exodus you see the phrase “The LORD spoke to Moses” 20 times. This same phrase is found in Leviticus 33 times. However, none of the five books that made up the “Book of Moses” (the first five books of the Bible) recorded the fact that “the LORD spoke to Moses” more often than the book of Numbers! We will read this amazing phrase 50 times as we walk through the “Wilderness” with the children of Israel. I think it is important to note that the very first words we read in this wonderful book mention the fact that “the LORD spoke to Moses.” It is one thing to imagine that the LORD would speak to Moses as he represented God before pharaoh and led the children of Israel out of Egypt (Exodus) or as He dictated His divine laws of worship and service to Moses (Leviticus). However, it is another thing to think that God seems to have spoken most often to Moses while he was leading God’s people through the Wilderness! We often forget that God does not speak only in the big moments in life or just during our most spiritual moments. From Numbers, we will learn that God speaks to us every day while we are living out our lives! It should not surprise us that God would speak most frequently, and perhaps most clearly, while His children were seeking to follow His direction to a land which represented His perfect will for their lives.

Prayer Emphasis: **Listen** for God’s voice in the Wilderness. **Trust** God to lead you in your every life circumstance. **Expect** God to provide specific instructions on how to discover His perfect will for your life. **Kingdom Preparation** demands that we diligently pursue God’s will for our lives.

Day 2: Numbers 1:17-37

“Then Moses and Aaron took these men who had been mentioned by name,” (Numbers 1:17)

Prompt Obedience

A quick review of verses 1-3 from yesterday’s reading will remind us that “The LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness...on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of Egypt, saying, ‘Take a census of all of the congregation of Israel...every male individual from 20 years old and above – all who are able to go to war.’” It is important to note that God has Moses record the date these important instructions were given. They were only in their second year of walking with God in the Wilderness when God determined to prepare them for warfare. If that was the case with Israel so soon after their redemption from Egypt, then it should not surprise us today when we, so soon after our redemption from sin and bondage to this world, are confronted by our enemy and forced to be strong in battle! Today’s focus verse reveals that Moses and Aaron immediately took action to fulfill God’s command for a census “on the first day of the second month,” or the exact same day that God spoke to Moses! It was no small assignment to take a census of the young men that dwelt among the two million plus people who had come out of Egypt, but Moses and Aaron wasted no time in getting started. Prompt obedience is the key to spiritual success. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to never procrastinate when it comes to doing God’s will.

Prayer Emphasis: **Become** a member of God’s Rapid Response Team! **Seek** to obey God’s commands at every opportunity and as quickly as possible. **Practice** prompt obedience no matter how difficult the assignment might seem. **Trust** God to always enable you to accomplish His commands.

Day 3: Numbers 1:38-54

“...you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle.” (Numbers 1:50)

A Different Kind of Army

Yesterday we read where Moses and Aaron numbered 603,500 men from among the Israelites that were over 20 years old and able to go to war. When we consider that large number of young, able-bodied men, it is not difficult to believe that the number of people that left Egypt with Moses can easily be estimated to be over two million! The Bible is clear to explain exactly who was to be included in that census. Because of that, we can also come to a clear understanding of who was *not* included in that numbering. None of the women, any man under age 20, or any man considered too old or feeble, were included in that 600,000 plus number. Also, none of the mixed multitude that accompanied Israel out of Egypt, or any of the men of the tribe of Levi were included in that count. While God was having Moses prepare an army for future battles and conquests, God was setting apart the Levites as His own army of men to lead Israel in their spiritual battles. The men of Levi were set apart for the service of the tabernacle and were to be the only ones allowed to set it up, take it down, and perform all the ministry services in between. The last words in verse 51 clearly indicates that God was serious about who was to oversee the needs of the Tabernacle!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that **Kingdom Preparation** includes training for physical *and* spiritual warfare. **Acknowledge** that no believer is exempt from warfare and that all are now divinely *appointed* and *anointed* for service in God’s Army!

Day 4: Numbers 2:1-17

“*And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the camp of the Levites in the middle of the camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their standards.*” (Numbers 2:17)

Getting Organized!

God is very much into details! This great sea of people who marched out of Egypt “according to their armies” (Exodus 6:26) were not to break ranks now that they entered the Wilderness. Each tribe was assigned a place to set their camp and was to mark it accordingly with their tribal banner. The tribes were divided to make up four groups of three and each division was assigned a leader. When it was time to march, each tribe was assigned a place in that great parade with the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun leading the way and the tribes of Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, marching at the rear. Our focus verse indicates that the tribe of Levi was to be at the center of the parade and, therefore, protected by those who marched before and after it. Just as it was in the camping order, so it was to be in the marching order. The Tabernacle was to be the central point for all of God’s people. Read today’s focus verse again and note that Israel was to march with “everyone in his place” and with the Levites and the Tabernacle “in the middle of the camps” (v. 17). Perhaps all these military terms are used here to help us understand that **Kingdom Preparation** transforms former slaves into fighting soldiers!

Prayer Emphasis: Recognize God’s right to assign each of us to a place of service. If you have not completed a Spiritual Gift Survey Class, then be sure to sign up at the very next opportunity. **Discover** the place where God wants you to march and **fulfill** the role that He desires for you to have in His service.

Day 5: Numbers 2:18-34

“...the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses...they camped by their standards...each one by his family, according to their fathers’ houses.” (Numbers 2:34)

Forces, Armies, and Family

Look back at today’s Scripture reading and note the number of times you see the words “forces,” “army,” or “armies”. When we carefully read the Bible, and especially Numbers, there is no question that these people were being prepared and organized for battle and that the largest part of this mighty army was at the front of the line, and the smallest portion was assigned to the rear. If you remember the story of Exodus, you remember that God had done all that was necessary to discover and disable Egypt from ever attacking His people from that vantage point! Each “army” or division had its own insignia or “standard” so there would be no confusion as to where someone was to be or to serve. It definitely appears that God took every precaution to allow every person to locate his place of service and to relocate it if he were ever to become separated from it. As important as it is to note the words “forces” and “armies,” it is also important to note the word “family” in verse 34. Even though God’s people were given different places and positions in His service, they were never to forget they were all of one family and they all served the same “Father.”

Prayer Emphasis: Remind yourself that you are part of God’s *family* while you are also a part of His *forces*! **Note** that the word “forces” reminds us that we are called to fight, while the word “family” reminds us that we are to fight against a common enemy and not one another!

Day 6: Numbers 3:1-16

“‘Number the children of Levi by their fathers’ houses, by their families; you shall number every male from a month old and above.’” (Numbers 3:15)

It’s Never Too Early!

As we read today’s verses, we should remind ourselves that the earlier census included only those who were 20 years of age or older and able to go to war, and that the tribe of Levi was not included in that census. However, today’s Scripture reading reveals that the Levites were counted according to a separate set of instructions. Our focus verse reveals that the numbering of this specially appointed tribe was to include “every male from a month old and above.” From this different approach to numbering this very different army, we can draw two definite conclusions. First, we see that it is never too early to begin considering God’s place of spiritual service for our children or to include them in the work of the Lord! **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to include our young in the process of discovering God’s will for life! Second, we see that while it was a necessity for one to possess the physical strength to engage in physical warfare, they might early on possess the spiritual strength to count and be included in spiritual warfare. God’s command that those who were to fight physical battles were to be *able* was now waived for those who were going to be divinely *enabled* to lead in the spiritual battles. While physical strength provides for protection, it is always spiritual strength that provides our direction.

Prayer Emphasis: Be constantly reminded that our spiritual battles are not won in our own strengths or abilities. **Memorize** and **meditate** on the last part of Zechariah 4:6: “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.’ says the LORD of hosts.” **Commit** to being the kind of example that your children can follow as you faithfully find your way in your own personal walk.

Day 7: Numbers 3:17-32

“And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei.” (Numbers 3:18)

A “Family” Affair

Our focus verse includes the word “families” while our entire Scripture reading today focuses on the same thing. Just as you carefully read the Scriptures assigned to day five of this devotional guide and noted the words “forces” or “armies,” you should review today’s assigned verses and make note of the number of times you see the words “family” or “families.” If the Levites were to be anything, they were to be an example to all Israel of God’s emphasis on the family! Even as we look at the New Testament instructions on the selection of pastors and deacons, we see that God places a special emphasis on how those men who were called to those places of service were to be examples in the way they lead their own families. The census of the Levites also included specific details regarding the service of the Levites. These men were to be busy in this important work of the LORD without neglecting to be equally involved in the lives of their children. Note that the Levites were allowed the liberty to choose their own place of service. Each section of this divinely appointed family was given its own place and responsibilities in service to God and His people. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us how to be leaders in our own homes as well as in the church.

Prayer Emphasis: **Accept** God’s assigned place of service in your own life. **Claim** God’s promise to enable you to perform your spiritual responsibilities and **thank** Him for His indwelling Spirit. **Ask** God to guide you in every deed and decision that you might confront today.

Day 8: Numbers 3:33-51

“Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tabernacle of meeting, were Moses, Aaron, and his sons, keeping charge of the sanctuary, to meet the needs of the children of Israel; but the outsider who came near was to be put to death.” (Numbers 3:38)

The True Purpose for Ministry

Today’s verses emphasize the fact that God left no task unassigned and detailed instructions were given to each family as to their place and purpose in His service. No part of this great service was to be considered unimportant or without purpose. God gave detailed instructions, even down to who was to oversee the tent pegs! However, the true purpose for these divinely appointed ministers was not to be lost in the performance of their individually assigned duties. The overall purpose of their work is found in today’s focus verse where we are told that these specifically arranged families from the tribe of Levi, and their specifically assigned responsibilities, were to work together for one specific purpose, that being “to meet the needs of the children of Israel.” God’s purpose for calling and equipping ministers has not changed. He still calls us to minister with the spiritual needs of the people in mind. As such, we must be constantly aware that our role is that of servants. As such, we must be careful to perform our duties with two goals in mind. First, *we are to serve for the glory of God*. One might not readily see how God can be glorified in little tasks like taking care of the tent pegs, but we must never forget that without the pegs, the Tabernacle itself could not stand in its place. Second, *we are to serve for the good of the people*.

Prayer Emphasis: **Review** Colossians 3:23 and remember that our spiritual service is to be performed “as to the Lord and not to men.” Because of this, there are no small jobs in God’s Kingdom! **Determine** to give God your absolute best effort today!

Day 9: Numbers 4:1-15

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ‘Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers’ house, from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.’” (Numbers 4:1-3)

A Third “Census”

Today’s verses describe a third census that God commanded Moses to take. Moses was to now take a census only “of the sons of Kohath” who were “from thirty years old to fifty years old” and who were assigned duties regarding “the work in the Tabernacle” (vs. 2-3). Since the Jews believed these years denoted the prime years of a man’s physical strength and abilities, they were being reminded of two things here. First, they were to be reminded that the work of the LORD is not easy. Many of the assignments regarding the Tabernacle were far from glorious. While many might have noticed the spiritual things that took place during God’s special meetings in the Tabernacle, probably very few took note of all the packing and carrying that was required to move this great tent from one place to another. It was, without question, work that required much physical strength and stamina. Second, they were to be reminded that God deserves our absolute best. Since the years designated for service within the Tabernacle aligned with those considered as the prime years of physical strength and ability, we see that God wanted His people to understand that He wanted their best and most productive service to be for Him.

Prayer Emphasis: **Remind** yourself that it is only that which is done for God and His glory that will accompany us to our eternal home in Heaven. **Reserve** your greatest emphasis and effort toward those things that count for eternity.

Day 10: Numbers 4:16-33

“but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.” (Numbers 4:19)

Appointed

Concerning the Levites as a whole, and specifically here the tribe of Kohath, God commanded the priests (Aaron and his sons) to “appoint each of them (God’s people) to his service and his task.” The word that is translated “appoint” in today’s focus verse comes from a Hebrew word that means “to set something in a specific place” or “to assign to someone or something a specific purpose.” In this case, the word was used in both ways. It helped the people to see exactly where God wanted this specific family within the tribe of Levi to serve as well as exactly what that service was to include. The following verses include even more detailed instructions on the way that these appointed men were to serve. Just as there were some especially important things that they were to do, there were also some very important things that they were to be careful not to do! Our assigned verses also include specific duties that Aaron was to assign to the sons of Gershon (v. 27) as well as specific instructions for “the service of the families of the sons of Merari” (v. 33). It is obvious that God’s **Kingdom Preparation** was designed to help each person find his or her own place and purpose in His work.

Prayer Emphasis: **Believe** that God has a special work for you to do in service to Him and His people. **Make** every effort to **discover** your place and purpose in God’s Kingdom work and then **invest** your time and energy in finding ways to fulfill God’s divine purpose for your life.

Day 11: Numbers 4:34-49

“And Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers’ house,” (Numbers 4:34)

Kohath, Gershon, and Merari

In Numbers 3:5-9 we read about God telling Moses that the Levites were to be helpers to Aaron and the priests and that they were to be assigned supporting roles in the work of the Tabernacle. Then, in chapter four, we learned that a third census was to be taken with this census being for the counting of the Levites who were eligible for this service to the priests and the Tabernacle. Now, in these closing verses of chapter four, we will read about the results of that third census and see more details regarding the services assigned to the descendants of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. The first mention of these sons of Levi is found in Genesis 46:11, and they are mentioned all together again in Exodus 6:16-17, Numbers 3:17-18, and then one last time in Numbers 26:57. However, in the discussions of these families and their duties, Kohath (the second son) is mentioned first and Gershon (the first son) is mentioned second. Even though there is no explanation as to why He did so in this case, it is obvious that the second son was given preeminence over the first. Unlike other situations where this happened in the Bible, we read of no reason for God to change the order of this listing of Levi’s sons, nor any complaining regarding who was given the more honorable assignments.

Prayer Emphasis: **Accept** your place of service with dignity and gratitude. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that no gift or calling is any more important to the fulfillment of God’s work than another. Joyfully **serve** God in the capacity in which He has called and equipped you.

Day 12: Numbers 5:1-15

“Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, everyone who has a discharge, and whoever becomes defiled by a corpse.” (Numbers 5:2)

Tough Love

The phrase “Tough Love” might have been first used in 1968 when a book by that title was written to help people confront damaging issues and habits in the lives of those that they love. It required a stern yet loving approach to addressing situations and demanding change. However, today’s Scripture reading deals with some tough love of its own. How difficult it must have been to send your friends and family members out of the camp because they were diseased or considered to be ceremonially unclean (vs. 1-4)! How bold would one person have to be to accuse another person of wrongdoing and force them to publicly confess their sin before the people and then make restitution (vs. 5-10)? Then, finally, how sobering a thought it is to consider having to bring charges of adultery against your own wife and publicly expose her sin to all others within the camp (vs. 11-15). In the case of the third situation, the treatment of the suspected unfaithful wife might have had more to do with the “tough” than the “love.” Verses 13-14 speak of jealousy and suspicion and indicate that such attitudes might lead one person to falsely accuse another of sin even though there is no actual evidence that the sin has occurred.

Prayer Emphasis: **Resist** the temptation to be more severe in your actions and opinions regarding the sins of others than your own faults and failures. However, if a position must be taken, side with that which is biblical and Christ-like, always remembering to **treat** others as you would want to be treated in the same situation. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us how to have a right relationship with God and man.

Day 13: Numbers 5:16-31

“*This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband’s authority, goes astray and defiles herself,*” (Numbers 5:29)

“The Law of Jealousy”

There might not be a more difficult portion of Scripture in the book of Numbers to explain than this section that deals with “the law of jealousy.” Since God chose to include it in His Word, we should pay careful attention to it. Here we have the account of a woman who is merely suspected of having committed adultery and the test that she must endure to prove her innocence. It is quite noticeable that there is no mention of what was to happen to the man that might be suspected of committing this sin with her. As difficult as it might be for us to understand today, women, in Bible times, were treated as possessions and, as such, were often dealt with in ways that would appear to be unfair. However, there are a few positive ways to see why God would allow the test that is discussed in these verses. First, the test might help to prevent this same sin from occurring in the lives of others. Surely, no one who witnessed any woman who had to experience this awful test would even consider falling into the same sin! Second, the test would provide evidence as to whether the sin had actually occurred. As indicated in verse 22, only an innocent woman would face this test with an “Amen, so be it!” Third, this test would protect and preserve the lives of the innocent. The test, as harsh and severe as it might seem, would serve to spare this woman from the cruel jealousy of her husband as well as the hatred of those within her society.

Prayer Emphasis: **Thank** God that we live under grace and not law! **Refuse** to accuse others of anything based on suspicion, rumor, or innuendo. **Practice** Christian forgiveness as opportunities come your way.

Day 14: Numbers 6:1-15

“*All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.*” (Numbers 6:8)

The “Nazirite” Vow

In our focus verse, the word “Nazirite” (spelled Nazarite in some translations) and the word “separation” come from two very similar Hebrew words that have similar meanings. In fact, in Hebrew, these two words look identical to each other. Both words mean “separate” or “set apart.” The first time that the word translated Nazirite is found in the Bible it is used to describe Joseph as being “separate from his brothers” (Genesis 49:26). Today’s Scripture clearly states that there were some things from which those who took this vow were to separate themselves. They were to separate themselves from wine and other intoxicating drinks, grape juice, grapes, and even raisins. Verse four clearly states that, “All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.” Nazirites were also forbidden to cut their hair during the entire time of their vow, and those taking this vow were also to avoid contact with the dead, even if the dead person was a close family member (vs. 5-7). However, this vow was not just about things that the Nazirite was separated *from*. It was very much about what the Nazirite was separated *unto*! Our focus verse reveals that, “All the days of his separation he shall be holy unto the LORD.”

Prayer Emphasis: **Seek** to make your walk with Christ more about what you do and not so much about what you don’t do! **Listen** attentively to the Holy Spirit as He speaks to you about spiritual matters and seeks to guide you into all truth. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to **refuse** to allow the fear of man to cause us to avoid making eternal commitments to God.

Day 15: Numbers 6:16-27

“*The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.*” (Numbers 6:24-26)

The Priestly Blessing

Our focus verses record a specific blessing that Moses was told to give to Aaron so he could pronounce it upon the people. It is my understanding that this blessing was spoken over the children of Israel at the end of each Tabernacle or Temple service. I have also read that this same blessing was spoken to the people at the times of the morning and evening sacrifices. As you read the blessing that Aaron was directed to pronounce on the people, you cannot help but notice that the name of “the LORD” (Yahweh) was made a vital part of each of the three phases of that blessing. Each part of the blessing contained a different aspect of God’s relationship to His people. First, *there was the promise of protection*. Yahweh was to bless them and “keep” them. The word translated “keep” literally meant to build a hedge around someone to protect them. Second, *there was the promise of presence*. Yahweh’s explanation that He was going to “make His face to shine upon” His people used terminology that was indicative of the way that the sun shines high over the earth. Finally, *there was the promise of peace*. The last few words of the blessing speak for themselves, “The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.”

Prayer Emphasis: Enjoy and appreciate the blessings of God on your life! **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to take an inventory and recount the ways that God has given us a sense of protection, presence, and peace as we walk this life for His honor and glory.

Day 16: Numbers 7:1-17

“*Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers’ houses, who were the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, made an offering.*” (Numbers 7:2)

The Offerings of the Leaders

Today’s Scripture begins to describe some of the offerings that were made by the “leaders of Israel.” These offerings were made over a period of 12 days and will be discussed in the next several devotions. At the beginning of this season of giving, God had the leaders bring a total of six carts and 12 oxen that were to be used in the transporting of the Tabernacle through the Wilderness. This meant that two tribes had to share the cost of one cart and each tribe had to bear the cost of one of the oxen that was needed to pull the carts. These gifts represented a substantial amount of money in that day. Each cart, along with the oxen, would be likened to the gift of a tractor-trailer rig today. Moses then gave two of the carts and four of the oxen to the sons of Gershon and the remaining four carts and eight oxen to the sons of Merari (vs. 7-8). The sons of Kohath were given neither cart nor oxen because they were to personally carry the “holy things” as the people moved the Tabernacle from place to place. Verses 12-17 describe the first of the 12 offerings that were made on these 12 consecutive days. Each day a different tribe made the exact same offering for the supply and provision of the Tabernacle. So, what we read in the last four verses of today’s devotional will be repeated 11 more times over the days to come.

Prayer Emphasis: Refute those who are critical of pastors for “always” talking about money and taking offerings! **Kingdom Preparation** reminds us that God spoke often of money and He was never bashful or hesitant about asking His people to give generously to His work!

Day 17: Numbers 7:18-35

“On the second day Nethanel...leader of Issachar, presented an offering...On the third day Eliab...leader of the children of Zebulun, presented an offering...On the fourth day Elizur...leader of the children of Reuben, presented an offering.” (Numbers 7:18, 24, and 30)

Days Two through Four

Yesterday’s Scripture concluded with a detailed description of the first of 12 offerings that were to be brought by the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel over a period of 12 days. By comparing the offering brought by the leader of the tribe of Judah on day one to the descriptions of the following 11 offerings, you will see that each tribe was responsible for bringing the exact same gift to the Lord and His Tabernacle. Thus, we can clearly see that God’s **Kingdom Preparation** plan teaches us that God expects all His people to give equally to His work. Today’s verses describe the offerings that were received on days two through four of this amazing giving program. This was all done in accordance with God’s instructions to Moses in Numbers 7:11: “For the LORD said to Moses, ‘They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar.’” Since all 12 offerings were identical – penny for penny and pound for pound – then we can only assume that the leaders were instructed about what they were to give and directed about when they were to give it. Judah was the first tribe to give (Day One) followed by the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, and Reuben.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for every opportunity to give back a portion of what He so faithfully gives to you. **Learn** to be faithful in the matter of giving and **encourage** others to do the same.

Day 18: Numbers 7:36-53

“On the fifth day Shelumiel...leader of the children of Simeon, presented an offering...On the sixth day Eliasaph...leader of the children of Gad, presented an offering...On the seventh day Elishama...leader of the children of Ephraim, presented an offering.” (Numbers 7:36, 42, and 48)

Days Five through Seven

The great parade of provisions that God’s people were instructed to bring for the service of the Tabernacle continued for 12 consecutive days! Today’s Scripture reading covers the fifth, sixth, and seventh days of giving and records the offerings brought by the tribes of Simeon, Gad, and Ephraim. Each leader brought the exact same offering to the Lord. Each offering consisted of one silver platter and bowl mixed with fine flour and oil that was to be used as a grain offering. Along with that, each leader was to bring one gold pan full of incense, one young bull, one ram, and one lamb in its first year to be used as a burnt offering. One kid of a goat was to be used as a sin offering. Then, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year were to be given as a peace offering. Each of these offerings included about five pounds of silver and about a quarter pound of gold. Clearly, the command to all of God’s people was that they were to be generous givers! As slaves in Egypt, they had been accustomed to having all their basic needs provided by their former masters. Now, as free people who were moving toward a land that was to be their own, they were challenged to move from the mindset of receiving to the mindset of giving. Part of God’s preparation for their inheriting the Promised Land was that they would have to learn how to invest in His Kingdom.

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for allowing you to be a part of a generous church! **Contact** some of your fellow church members today and let them know what a joy it is to serve with them. **Testify** about one of the ways that our church has shown its generosity to others to someone you meet today.

Day 19: Numbers 7:54-71

“On the eighth day Gamaliel...leader of the children of Manasseh, presented an offering... On the ninth day Abidan...leader of the children of Benjamin, presented an offering...On the tenth day Ahiezer...leader of the children of Dan, presented an offering.” (Numbers 7:54, 60, and 66)

Days Eight, Nine, and Ten

You would not think that reading verses of Scripture that are identical could get better and better, but it does! **Kingdom Preparation** often includes a repeating of lessons that we have already learned. I have already spoken of the generosity of these leaders and their people as they followed God’s instructions on what and when to give to the Tabernacle service. However, I want to add here that just the value of the silver and gold that was given on each day equaled an offering in the amount of approximately \$7,000 in today’s economy. However, the way that God instructed His people to give to this worthy cause also teaches us a lot about humility in giving. As we read about the gifts from the tribes of Manasseh, Benjamin, and Dan, we are again reminded that God required the exact same gift from every tribe, thereby removing from any one tribe the temptation to boast on the size of their gift. There was no room for glory in this type of giving. Each leader, and the tribe that they represented, simply obeyed God, and gave what He required of them. There was no opportunity to be “seen of men” because everyone obviously knew what the other was required to give! There is no question that **Kingdom Preparation** includes learning how to meet the needs of God’s ministry.

Prayer Emphasis: Praise God for every penny that He allows you to return to Him! On every occasion that you are allowed to give, hold that offering in your hands, bow your head, and **ask** God to show you how to truly give it from your heart! **Humbly give** while reserving all glory and honor for God!

Day 20: Numbers 7:72-89

“On the eleventh day Pagiel...leader of the children of Asher, presented an offering...On the twelfth day Ahira...leader of the children of Naphtali, presented an offering.” (Numbers 7:72 and 78)

Days Eleven and Twelve

We have already spoken of the generosity and humility that characterized the type of giving that God prescribed for His people. I want to close out the devotions on this section of Scripture by mentioning the nobility that God obviously associates with giving. Surely, those who knew the value of the papyrus (paper) or leather upon which the earliest Bible scrolls were written might have considered it a waste of space to repeat 12 identical records of the same specific gifts the people were to bring. However, we can clearly see it was God’s intention to draw attention to each tribe’s offering, although they were all the same. The lesson to be learned from this lengthy chapter of the Bible is that God notices and recognizes our obedience in the matter of giving. God sees and records every gift that is given in the right spirit, and wants His people to be aware of how those in the past gave so graciously to Him. Whether it was Mary’s precious ointment or the widow’s two small coins, God was careful to preserve a record of several acts of obedience for us to read and remember.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that God considers no gift that is given for His glory as small! **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us to make every effort to do our personal giving to God in a way that exhibits generosity, humility, and nobility.

Day 21: Numbers 8:1-13

“Speak to Aaron, and say to him, “When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.”” (Numbers 8:2)

The “Lampstand” and the “Lamps”

The Bible clearly states that the “lampstand” and the “lamps” are two different things. Jesus certainly recognized that fact when He said, when one lights a “lamp” he “sets it on a lampstand” (Luke 8:16). This lampstand was to be made from one solid piece of gold, and the lamps were to be set in their respective places thereon. The instructions here were not about how to light the lamps but how they were to be placed on the lampstand after the lighting process was complete. Some translations use the word “arrange” in place of “light” in verse two to help us better understand what God had in mind. The lampstand, without the lamps, could not provide light. Its purpose was to allow the lamps to light up the Holy Place in the best way possible. Leviticus 24 explains that the “lamps” were “on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually” and that these carefully arranged “lamps” were fueled by “pure oil of pressed olives” and were to “burn continually.” In Revelation 1:20 Jesus showed John seven golden lampstands and then explained that “the seven golden lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.” Just as it was with the lampstand in the Tabernacle, the church is not the light but only the place where those of us who are “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:24) can best place ourselves in order to help introduce God’s light into this world.

Prayer Emphasis: Resist the temptation to act independently of the church and **seek** to be a part of its ministry by finding your God-designed place where you can shine the brightest for Jesus. **Ask** God to help you to be a lamp that will shine “continually” for Him.

Day 22: Numbers 8:14-26

“Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine.” (Numbers 8:14)

The Levites

The term “Levites” has more than one usage in the Bible. It can refer to anyone who was a descendant of Levi, or it can refer to a special team of people who played some important behind the scenes roles in the ministry of the priesthood and Tabernacle. In this sense, the term began to refer to those who were set apart as caretakers and ministers of the Tabernacle, and eventually the Temple. Not every Levite was a priest. The priesthood was set apart to Aaron and his descendants. The Levites were specifically commissioned to assist the priests in the service of the Tabernacle and the teaching of the people. This difference carried over into New Testament times. The story of the Good Samaritan differentiated between a “priest” and a “Levite” who saw a nearly dead man by the road and neglected to help him (Luke 10:31-32). A Levite’s period of service was from age 25 to the age of 50. Some of their assigned responsibilities included the baking of the showbread, skinning and preparing the animal sacrifices, examining the lepers for cleansing, and the security of the Tabernacle and its furnishings. I include the work of security in this listing because the word that is translated “service” in the description of their work (Numbers 4:30) can also be translated “warfare.”

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation helps us to fulfill our assigned responsibilities within the church. **Pray** for all the ministries within our church. **Contact** someone who serves in a different ministry than you and **tell** them how much you appreciate them and that you are praying for them.

Day 23: Numbers 9:1-23

“But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.” (Numbers 9:13)

The “Second” Passover

Although today’s verses contain information and instructions regarding the first Passover that Israel celebrated in the Wilderness, it is referred to as the “second” Passover in the sense that the first Passover was celebrated in Egypt (Exodus 12). It would be impossible to comment on all the important implications of this first Passover that was held while Israel journeyed toward the Promised Land, but something must be said regarding the warning that was issued in today’s focus verse. After making provisions for some who were not ceremonially clean or away on a journey at the time of the Passover to partake of the Passover meal at a later time (v. 10), God then issued a solemn warning to those who did not celebrate the Passover out of neglect or simply because it was not convenient for them to do so. He stated that those who neglected their obligations regarding this important activity “shall bear his own sin.” In that same sense, those who refuse to accept Christ as their “personal Passover” are left to bear their own sin before the Lord.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for the sacrificial death of Christ and for the knowledge that He has borne our sins for us. **Kingdom Preparation** will enable us to prioritize our lives in such a way that will enable us to be faithfully involved in worship and service to the Lord.

Day 24: Numbers 10:1-18

“So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.” (Numbers 10:13)

The March Begins

The early verses of Numbers 10 describe two silver trumpets that were designed to be used for a specified purpose. They were to be blown once to indicate that Israel was to gather at the Tabernacle door for instruction and training. These same two trumpets were to be blown twice when Israel was to move forward on its journey to the Promised Land. How exciting it must have been when the pillar of fire and smoke first began to move forward, and the trumpets sounded the two blasts for the first time! Finally, Israel’s journey could be considered as being one that was *to* the Promised Land rather than a journey *from* Egypt. It is important to recount all the things God had done thus far to prepare His people for this glorious day. After just one year in the Wilderness of Sinai, Israel was organized, cleansed, purified, set apart and blessed, trained in worship, and assigned places of service in that worship. They were also trained on how and when to celebrate the Passover on an annual basis, and they were given God’s own presence to guide them on their new and exciting journey. Verses 11-13 state that, “On the 20th day of the 2nd month, in the 2nd year, the cloud was taken from above the Tabernacle...and the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai.” They were finally heading for the place that represented God’s perfect will for their lives.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to remind you of some of your “first time” experiences in your walk with Him. **Review** some of the ways God prepared you for your own spiritual journey and **praise** Him for His presence along the way. **Seek** to be an encourager to others who are just beginning this journey and **assist** them in any way possible.

Day 25: Numbers 10:19-36

“So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: ‘Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You.’” (Numbers 10:35)

Inspiration for a Song

Since the Bible clearly states that Moses made the statement recorded in our focus verse “whenever the ark set out,” we can safely assume that he made that statement on the very first day of travel. Imagine the excitement of seeing the pillar of cloud rise from above the Tabernacle and then hearing the two blasts of the silver trumpets. Immediately after that they heard Moses loudly cry out, “Rise up, O LORD! Let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You!” Although this statement is also found in Psalm 68:1, let it be known that Moses was not quoting the psalmist, but that the psalmist was inspired to later write a song based on the words spoken by Moses and the experience of the children of Israel in the Wilderness. In that same psalm, David sang about the God who “brings out those who are bound into prosperity” and then praised God by singing, “You went out before Your people, when You marched through the Wilderness” (Psalm 68:6-7). **Kingdom Preparation** instructs God’s people to begin every new venture with the same shout of praise that greeted the ears of these early marchers!

Prayer Emphasis: **Greet** every new day and its challenges with an acclamation of praise! **Walk** in the confidence that God is more powerful than anything that might confront you today. Let those around you know that your confidence is not in your own strength but in the strength of our Almighty God!

Day 26: Numbers 11:1-17

“Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.” (Numbers 11:1)

Complaints

The word that is translated “complained” in our focus verse is found in just this one place in all the writings of Moses, and it is found in only one other place in all the Scriptures. After reading about the way God responded to this specific type of complaining, it is easy to understand why we never find God’s people complaining in this way ever again! Verse four indicates that the probable source for these complaints was the mixed multitude that left Egypt with Israel who were not descendants of Jacob. A quick look back at verse one reminds us that those who God punished for complaining were people who dwelled “in the outskirts of the camp.” Since each of the 12 tribes (descendants of the 12 sons of Jacob) were assigned specific camping sites around the Tabernacle and a specific marching order when Israel was on the move, then those who were not direct descendants lived in the “outskirts” of those assigned places. Other translations use the words “uttermost parts,” “the extremity,” “outer parts,” or even “edge” or “borders” to describe the “outskirts” of the camp that is mentioned here. How interesting it is to consider that those who live “on the edge” or just barely within the “borders” of the camp are subject to being distracted by murmuring and complaining. **Kingdom Preparation** reminds us to consider how God responded to the complaining of these people and their negative attitude about moving farther from Egypt and closer to the Promised Land!

Prayer Emphasis: **Align** yourself with those who, like Moses, sing God’s praises as they move forward in pursuit of God’s plan for their lives. **Pray** for those who complain and **encourage** them whenever possible.

Day 27: Numbers 11:18-35

“...Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, ‘Who will give us meat to eat?’” (Numbers 11:18)

Be Careful How You Pray!

Yesterday we read that, even though God had sent His people manna every day (except on the Sabbath), the people were still complaining (11:1). We read where they belittled the manna that God miraculously provided for them and showed little appreciation for it (11:6) by weeping and begging God for meat (11:13). Today’s Scripture begins with God directing Moses to tell the people that He was going to give them what they asked for! They were going to have meat, and lots of it for a whole month! In fact, they were going to eat meat until it came out of their nostrils, and they were sick of it! While some believe that the words of verse 31 teach that the quail flew only three feet above the ground, thereby making them more accessible to the people, others believe that God sent a strong wind that brought so many quail to the Israelites that they were fluttering around on the ground in a pile that was two cubits deep and a day’s journey to either side of them. Since one “cubit” equals about 1½ feet, and a “day’s journey” equaled approximately 24 miles, this would make for a pile of quail that was three feet deep and 48 miles wide!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation reminds us that prayer should be based more on spiritual needs than on physical desires. **Remember** that prayers that are based on material motivations can sometimes bring more burdens than blessings! **Pray appropriately!**

Day 28: Numbers 12:1-16

“Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.” (Numbers 12:1)

Some Unexpected Opposition

As if Moses did not have enough problems facing him, his two older siblings, Miriam and Aaron, began to speak against him and to challenge his authority as God’s chosen leader. Although their complaint appeared to be regarding him marrying an Ethiopian (Cushite) woman, the Bible reveals this complaint was merely a symptom of their rebellious attitudes. Exodus 34:11 and 16 clearly revealed that the Cushites were not among those with whom the Israelites were forbidden to marry. The fact that Miriam’s name is mentioned first gives some indication that she was the leader in this rebellion against Moses. Some suggest that this rebellion was based on envy since Moses’ new wife might be a threat to her standing as the major female leader in Israel. God called for a private meeting with Moses and his siblings, demanding that they come out to the tabernacle (v. 4) where He appeared to them in the pillar of cloud and called Aaron and Miriam to come close to Him (v. 5). In no uncertain terms, He told them that He had called Moses and that He had spoken to him in a way that He had never communicated with any other man. He reminded them that Moses had been “faithful” and that He had spoken to their brother “face to face” (vs. 7-8). One can only imagine how they must have felt when God asked, why they were “not afraid...to speak against (His) servant Moses” (v. 8).

Prayer Emphasis: Expect opposition! **Remember** that even our Lord Jesus was subject to opposition from His own family and some of His closest followers. **Kingdom Preparation** includes being obedient even when others oppose you.

Day 29: Numbers 13:1-16

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man...’” (Numbers 13:1-2)

The Selection of the Spies

Upon God’s command to “send men to spy out the land of Canaan,” a representative of each tribe was selected and sent ahead of the people to scout out the Promised Land. A detailed listing is given of the names of those who, as “leaders” of their individual tribes, would be sent on this particularly important mission. As a historical record, the names of each of these “leaders” and their tribal affiliation, is listed in today’s Scripture reading. This should serve to remind us that God is very much aware of all His people, and He desires to involve everyone in the work of the ministry. As such, He also expects all His people to respond to His divine commands and to participate in His divine work. We will soon become familiar with their reports, and especially of those of Caleb (of the tribe of Judah) and Hoshea (of the tribe of Ephraim). It was at this time that Moses chose to change the name of Hoshea (which meant “salvation”) to Joshua (which meant “Jehovah is salvation”). Perhaps this name change was to help all of Israel realize that their “salvation” was not based on their own strength or abilities.

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation warns us to be careful to remember that God’s work can only be accomplished by those who are totally reliant on Him! **Be bold** enough to obey God when He appoints you to a place of service and **be humble** enough to know that your service can only be performed through Him.

Day 30: Numbers 13:17-33

“Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, ‘Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains,’” (Numbers 13:17)

The Sending of the Spies

The exact route that the selected spies were to take was given in their instructions to go from the Wilderness of Paran and “into the South” (Negev) and “up to the mountains.” The “South” referred to all of Southern Canaan, and the “mountains” referred to the hill country of Judah and the lands north to the hills of Ephraim and Galilee. The mission of the spies was made clear. They were sent to “see what the land was like” and “whether the people who dwelled in it (were) strong or weak, few or many” (v. 18). They were also to inspect the land to see if it was “good or bad” and whether or not “the cities (were) like camps or strongholds” (v. 19). They were further instructed to review the land and report whether it was “rich or poor” and whether there were “forests there or not” (v. 20). This specially selected task force of 12 was told to “be of good courage” in their journey and to return to their people bringing with them some of the “fruit of the land” (v. 20). While their report on the land validated everything God said about it, their report about the people who lived there was not nearly as encouraging. They reported that the people there were “strong”, and their cities were “fortified and very large” and that they “saw the descendants of Anak there” who were “men of great stature” (vs. 28 & 32). At that time, only Caleb spoke up to say that he believed Israel to be “well able to overcome it” (v. 30).

Prayer Emphasis: Recognize the power of your own “personal report” and seek to **speak** words of faith and encouragement to others. **Refuse** to give a “bad report” because of what might appear to be overwhelming odds. **Have faith** in God and **believe** that He can enable you to accomplish His will!

Day 31: Numbers 14:1-12

“And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, ‘If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!’” (Numbers 14:2)

The People’s Response and the LORD’s Reaction

Upon hearing the report of the majority that the conquest of Canaan bordered the impossible, “the congregation lifted up their voices and cried” (v.1). They began to complain against Moses and Aaron saying, “If only we had died in the land of Egypt” or in the “wilderness!” The people were ready to dump Moses and “select a leader and return to Egypt” (v. 4). Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of the congregation. Joshua and Caleb spoke up saying, “The land we passed through to spy out is a good land” and “the LORD...will bring us into this land and give it to us” (vs. 7-8). Unlike the fearful followers of the 10 doubting spies, these two men believed they already had a new leader, the Almighty Jehovah God! They tried to encourage the people not to rebel against their true Leader (“the LORD”) and to encourage them to trust Him to deliver the land to them just as He had promised. The people reacted to these two brave men just as they had reacted to Moses and Aaron. They wanted to “stone them” (v. 10). What was God’s reaction to all of this? He threatened to “strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them” and give Moses a new nation that was “greater and mightier” than those doubters (v. 12)!

Prayer Emphasis: Kingdom Preparation enables us to believe the promises of God enough to go against the flow! **Refuse** to settle for anything less than God’s best for your life! It is only prudent to accept *the will of the people* when it does not contradict *the will of God!*

Day 32: Numbers 14:13-25

“And Moses said to the LORD: ‘Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them,’” (Numbers 14:13)

The Prayer of Moses

For the sake of the integrity of God’s reputation, Moses ignored God’s offer to give him a new people and, once again, asked God to forgive and spare the ones that he already had. He argued that God’s enemies would hear of His killing the people and say that “The LORD was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness” (v. 16). The opinion that Moses had of God was that He was “longsuffering and abundant in mercy” and known for “forgiving iniquity and transgression” (v. 18). He asked God, “Pardon the iniquity of this people...according to the greatness of Your mercy...just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now” (v. 19). God reminded Moses that the people had put Him “to the test” 10 times by not “heeding” His voice (v. 22). The number 10 probably does not represent an actual number of times that the people had disobeyed God. Since the number 10 is a number associated with “totality” throughout the Bible, it was probably used to say that God considered these people to be “totally” disobedient to Him. He viewed their rejection of His will as a rejection of Him and decided to disallow them from entering the land of Canaan and stated that only those who had faithfully trusted Him and His Word would receive the promise of the land.

Prayer Emphasis: Choose to be associated with Caleb and not the complainers by exhibiting a willingness to follow God “fully” (v. 24)! **Remind** yourself daily that **Kingdom Preparation** requires that we trust and obey God and His Word completely.

Day 33: Numbers 14:26-45

“Say to them, “As I live,” says the LORD, “just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness...”” (Numbers 14:28-29)

Another Fearful Reminder About Prayer

How sobering it is to read that God decided to give the people exactly what they prayed for by saying “As I live...just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you.” He explained what He meant by that statement by saying that “the carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness.” He then told them that “all of you...from twenty years old and above” would be denied entrance into the Promised Land (v. 29). Verse 30 states that only Caleb and Joshua would be allowed to inherit “the land which you have despised.” Verse 31 then included the “little ones” in the number of those who would eventually see Canaan. To make sure that the people clearly heard Him, God repeated His decision again in verse 32! As a result of the lack of faith and the disobedience of these people, they were going to have to wait 40 years before they would enter the land. Their children were to receive one year of probation in the wilderness for each day that it took the spies to search out the land and return to the people with their discouraging report. Of the 12 spies, only Joshua and Caleb were spared from a terrible plague. When the people tried to correct their wrong actions by trying to enter and conquer Canaan anyway, they were met with swift and utter defeat.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that others often suffer grave consequences because of our rebellion against God! **Pray** for the wisdom to be obedient even in the face of doubt, fear, and anxiety. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us that there can be no spiritual victory without the presence and power of the Lord!

Day 34: Numbers 15:1-16

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: “When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you,””” (Numbers 15:1-2)

“Speak to the Children of Israel”

Since the generation of people that first followed God out of Egypt was going to be denied entrance into Canaan, the generation that was to follow them was going to have to be trained to do what their parents were to have done before them. Because of this, God had Moses carefully instruct the younger Israelites in matters concerning the offerings that were to be made to Him once they finally inhabited the land. It would seem that these young people would know how to go about the business of sacrificing to God, but one can only assume that a part of the overall disobedience of their parents was that they had never educated their children in the way that God was to be worshipped. This only makes you wonder if the parents who died in the Wilderness would have even remembered to honor God with sacrifices and offerings if they had actually inherited the land! God reminded these young ones to teach the “stranger” who dwelt among them on how to worship and make offerings to Him (v. 14). How interesting it is that the first things that God taught these new followers were about how to give to Him! He also taught them about the power of personal witnessing when He said to them, “Just as you do, so shall he (the stranger) do” (v. 14). Once again, God made it very apparent that **Kingdom Preparation** meant learning how to worship and give to Him.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for every opportunity that He provides to worship Him and give to Him. **Teach** your own children to give to God by both personal exhortation and example.

Day 35: Numbers 15:17-41

“But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people.” (Numbers 15:30)

Warnings Against Defiant Sin

The word translated “presumptuously” in verse 30 is a word that could also be translated “defiantly.” In a good sense, this word can mean to “lift up” something to God while, in a bad sense, it could mean to “rise up” against God. Such was the case with these arrogant acts of insubordination against God. They were to be seen as sins that indicated that one had *presumed* that they were exempt from the demands of God’s Word and the warnings against those who rebelled against it. It would seem that the younger Israelites who were now marching to Canaan in place of their parents took this warning against rebellion to heart. Verses 32-36 record an incident where someone among the people was “gathering sticks (working) on the Sabbath day.” We are told that “those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron” and to “the congregation.” Because they were not sure what to do with this man, they “put him under guard” until they received an answer from God. The LORD’s answer was clear. He said that “the man must surely be put to death” and that “the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.” Verse 36 clearly indicates that the children of those who had so often hesitated to fully obey God did so without wavering.

Prayer Emphasis: **Learn** to obey God even if His command is to do something difficult and distasteful. Never hesitate to **follow** His commands when He makes them known to you. **Kingdom Preparation** demands a willingness to obey God in every demanding situation.

Day 36: Numbers 16:1-11

“Now Korah...took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown,” (Numbers 16:1-2)

The Rebellion of Korah

The rebellion that we read about today was not the result of the people’s circumstances. It was a result of the depravity. Be sure that the rebellion that we read about today was not a result of where Korah and his followers were, or what they faced. It was a result of what was in them. Three men (Korah, Dathan, and Abiram) “rose up” (remember what I said yesterday about presumptuous and defiant sin and “rising up” against God?) and brought “250 leaders” with them to confront Moses and Aaron and accuse them of exalting themselves “above the assembly of the LORD” (v. 3). Just as he had done in other times when the people rebelled against him, Moses “fell on his face” and prayed to God (v. 4). After much prayer, Moses felt led to say to these rebels, “You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!” (v. 7). He suggested that they each bring “censers” containing “fire and incense” before the LORD on the next morning. As such, Moses was suggesting that they all submit their prayers before God so that they could see whose prayer the LORD would answer! He then reminded Korah and his followers of the honor that God had given them and their families by allowing them to do service in the Tabernacle. He questioned them as to why they could not be satisfied with the place of service that God had given them.

Prayer Emphasis: **Learn** to appreciate your own role in God’s Kingdom and service and **avoid** being distracted by what God does with and for others. **Kingdom Preparation** teaches us not to envy. The New Testament story reminds us that even the disciples of Jesus had to learn this difficult lesson.

Day 37: Numbers 16:12-22

“Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?” (Numbers 16:13)

The Rebels’ Reasoning

As you read about this rebellion, bear in mind that it is not coming from the people who are to take their parent’s place in the Promised Land, but from the rejected ones that rebelled against God and were waiting to die in the Wilderness! Korah and his followers were a part of that doomed group of people! Even though they heard from God as to why they were in their desperate plight, they still wanted to blame everything on Moses. It does not take long to learn that those who dare to challenge God’s authority will never admit to being wrong about what they are doing! Their reasoning was that Moses had brought them “out of a land flowing with milk and honey (Egypt) to kill (them) in the wilderness.” They went on to accuse Moses of not bringing them into the Promised Land and leading them to their inheritance. Moses then challenged Korah and his 250 followers to bring their “censers” and “incense” (prayers) before the LORD while he and Aaron would do the same (v. 17). At that meeting God told the two brothers to put some distance between themselves and the children of Israel because He was going to “consume them” (v. 21). How lonely this small group of rebels must have felt when all the others began to cry out to God for pardon and forgiveness!

Prayer Emphasis: Wisdom will teach us to separate ourselves from those who choose to be rebellious against God. **Kingdom Preparation** includes learning how to **listen** and **discern** between those who speak for the Lord and those who speak on behalf of their own desires and motivations.

Day 38: Numbers 16:23-35

“And Moses said: ‘By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will.’” (Numbers 16:28)

The Ultimate Test

Korah and his followers challenged the calling and authority of Moses and Aaron as to whether it was truly based on God’s calling or just their own selfish ambitions. God gave Moses instructions to put the question to the ultimate test. After commanding the people to distance themselves from the tents of the three leaders of the rebellion, Moses then issued the basis for the test. If Korah, Dathan, and Abiram lived to die of natural causes, like the rest of the people that would die in the Wilderness, then the people would know that Moses had not been especially called of God to be their leader. However, if God chose to suddenly take their lives, then the people would know that these men were in the wrong and that Moses and Aaron were in the right. God gave Moses special insight as to what He was going to do as Moses faced this opposition by disclosing that the earth would open its mouth and swallow up the rebels and all their possessions. If that happened, then the people would know that Korah and his partners were actually rejecting the LORD and not just His representatives. The story speaks for itself. How sad that the families of these men had to die with them! **Kingdom Preparation** helps us understand that we must always act in the best interest of all the people, especially those who are closest to us.

Prayer Emphasis: **Be patient** when opposition arises and **allow** God to be your Defender! **Consider** the consequences that our personal ambitions may introduce into the lives of our families – especially our children.

Day 39: Numbers 16:36-50

“The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the LORD, therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel.” (Numbers 16:38)

A Somber Memorial

God’s instructions to Moses regarding the censers of the 250 men who sided with Korah were clear. He was to have Eleazar, the priest, gather these holy vessels and discard their contents far from the camp. Then the people were to take those censers, hammer (flatten) them out into plates, and use them as part of the covering of the altar. After that, every time the people came to the altar to sacrifice to God, those covering plates would be a continual “sign” (reminder) to them regarding what happens to those who rebel against God. (Look back at verse 30 and be reminded that God did not see the actions of the rebels as being based purely on their rejection of Moses. In God’s opinion, these men and their followers were rejecting Him.) In verse 40, God clearly expressed the purpose for creating this memorial. It was to serve as a reminder to the people that only a descendant of Aaron should be allowed to approach the altar for the purpose of offering incense. Furthermore, they were to understand that any future disobedience to God in such ways would meet with the same consequences.

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that part of our **Kingdom Preparation** is found in learning from the successes and failures of others who have walked before us. **Determine** to leave a witness of a successful walk to those who will take this path after you.

Day 40: Numbers 17:1-13

“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Bring Aaron’s rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die.’” (Numbers 17:10)

A Second Memorial

Since the challenge of Korah and his backers was against the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron, God created two memorials to remind the people of this sad rebellion that resulted in the loss of so many lives. God directed Moses to have the leader of each tribe write his name on his “rod” (staff) and bring it to the Tabernacle where they would be placed before the Ark (v. 2). God stated that the rod of the man He had chosen to be his priest would blossom. That miraculous exhibition was to serve as God’s way of ridding Himself of “the complaints of the children of Israel” that they were making against Moses and Aaron (v. 5). Moses placed the rods of the leaders of the tribes, along with the rod of Aaron, before the Lord. On the next day, when the rods were retrieved, it was “the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi” that “sprouted and put forth buds.” Also, it “had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds” (v. 8). God did this to provide irrefutable evidence to His people and to leave them no remaining arguments against His chosen leaders. So that no one would forget this miraculous sign, the Lord instructed Moses to have Aaron’s rod remain in front of the Ark as a sign to any who might be tempted to complain against God again.

Prayer Emphasis: Thank you for walking through this first part of Numbers with us. Our prayer is that you have been able to associate your own life experience with that of these people who walked with God through the Wilderness in search of the Promised Land (God’s perfect will). Contact me at gary@seminolebc.com and learn how you can have a personal relationship with the one, true Almighty God!