

The Book of Numbers

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(1996–1997 Study)

The following notes on the Book of Numbers were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1996–1997. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “**Question**”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1996–1997)

Num. 1:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

This book is called Numbers because it numbers the tribes of the children of Israel. In other words, God was instructing the Israelites how to arrange their habitations and conduct with regard to various assemblies. The book starts with the numbering of the tribes and the ordering of the host of Israel in the camp about the Tabernacle in a mathematical arrangement. The book also tells the order of the tribes in going to war.

The time element is interesting, for Numbers begins with the second month in the second year after the Exodus. At the end of the Book of Exodus (Chapter 40), the Tabernacle was set up, and Numbers now resumes with the chronological account a month later. Stated another way, when all the component parts of the Tabernacle were made (a process that took a year), Moses superintended the erection of the structure for service, and God blessed it. The very next month the Israelites were numbered, as recorded in the Book of Numbers. “And it came to pass in the *first month in the second year, on the first day of the month*, that the tabernacle was reared up” (Exod. 40:17). “And the LORD spake unto Moses ... *on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of ... Egypt*” (Num. 1:1).

Num. 1:2 Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls;

Num. 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

God told Moses to number all of the males who were (a) 20 years old and upward and (b) fit for warfare. The many Israelites who were excluded would be women, children, all males under age 20, those too old to go to war, and those too feeble for warfare. Verses 4–46 describe this numbering.

One reason for the numbering was for military purposes, but during the 40 years in the wilderness, there were few battles. On the way to Sinai, the Israelites fought the Amalekites. In that battle, whenever Moses’ hands were held up, the Israelites prospered (Exod. 17:8–13).

Num. 1:4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers.

Num. 1:5 And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Num. 1:6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Num. 1:7 Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Num. 1:8 Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

Num. 1:9 Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon.

Num. 1:10 Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Num. 1:11 Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Num. 1:12 Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Num. 1:13 Of Asher; Pagiël the son of Ocran.

Num. 1:14 Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Num. 1:15 Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan.

Num. 1:16 These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.

Notice the names in verses 5–15. First, the children of Leah were listed (Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun), then the children of Rachel (Joseph and Benjamin) and her grandchildren through Joseph (Ephraim, and Manasseh), and finally the children of the two maidens, Zilpah and Bilhah.

Num. 1:17 And Moses and Aaron took these men which are expressed by their names:

Num. 1:18 And they assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls.

Num. 1:19 As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

Now that the Tabernacle had been completed, it was time to begin the wilderness wanderings, but first, the host of Israel had to be numbered. In preparation for the numbering, men of renown were named, one for each tribe. These 12 men, who were selected on a hereditary basis, were responsible for the register. In other words, each of the 12 had a notebook, as it were, and proceeded to take a census, or “poll.”

Q: Of course the Levites were not included in this first numbering. Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were substituted for him and for Levi. Is there a spiritual reason why the Levites were not numbered for war but were numbered separately?

A: A discussion of the Levites will be delayed until later. For now we will just read verses 20–46 and then make some general observations.

Num. 1:20 And the children of Reuben, Israel’s eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:21 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred.

Num. 1:22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to

war;

Num. 1:23 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

Num. 1:24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:25 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.

Num. 1:26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:27 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Judah, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

Num. 1:28 Of the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:29 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

Num. 1:30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:31 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

Num. 1:32 Of the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:33 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred.

Num. 1:34 Of the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:35 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

Num. 1:36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:37 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

Num. 1:38 Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:39 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Dan, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

Num. 1:40 Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:41 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

Num. 1:42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

Num. 1:43 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

Num. 1:44 These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.

Num. 1:45 So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel;

Num. 1:46 Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

When the numbers for each of the 12 tribes are added up, the total is 603,550. In the enumeration of the preceding verses, the paragraph breaks should have appeared differently. Because the translators inserted a paragraph break before each individual tribe and its number, the account obscures the four most important tribes, which are Reuben, Judah, Ephraim, and Dan. The paragraph breaks should have appeared before only these four tribes.

The census began with Reuben, the firstborn of Leah (he was later supplanted by Judah). The listing of the 12 tribes is actually a group of four triads. For instance, when we read about Reuben, the tribes of Simeon and Gad are mentioned with him. The first, Simeon, was on the right side of Reuben, and Gad was to the left. In other words, Reuben was the most important of these three tribes, and Simeon and Gad were associated with him in their positions around the Tabernacle. Numbers 2:10 tells us that these three were encamped around the Tabernacle on the south side.

The next tribe to be mentioned is Judah, and with him were Issachar and Zebulun. Judah was the primary one, Issachar was on his right side, and Zebulun was on the left. Then come Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, the order of importance being Ephraim first, Manasseh on his right side, and Benjamin on the left. And the last triad was Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. Dan was the chief one, Asher was on his right side, and Naphtali on the left.

Thus four triads, four groupings of three, were enumerated, the total being $4 \times 3 = 12$ tribes.

Levi was not counted among the 12 (his place was taken by one of the sons of Joseph). And neither was Joseph counted. However, he was represented twice through his two sons—an honor none of the other tribes received. By this arrangement, Levi became the 13th tribe.

Q: If Reuben had not sinned against his father, would he have been represented twice?

A: Not necessarily, but he would have been more prominent, for as the firstborn, he had certain rights of primogeniture, which he forfeited. And forfeiture of the firstborn seems to be the history of Israel (Esau, Manasseh, etc.).

The four families of the Levites were immediately around the Tabernacle, but around the Levites—and thus farther from the Tabernacle, at a respectful distance—were the other 12 tribes. Why were the 12 tribes to be farther away and thus separated from the Levites? The tribe of Levi was inserted between the Tabernacle and the other 12 tribes as a buffer so that the uncleanness of the nation would not defile the sanctuary in the middle. The antitypical significance will be considered later.

The books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy present sequential happenings, or events. Genesis covers the time from the creation of Adam until the death of Joseph, a period of more than 2,000 years. After a gap, Exodus starts with Moses and covers only one year. Deuteronomy, too, covers just one year. The Book of Numbers, in between, records the events that took place from the time the Tabernacle was set up and the wilderness journey began until the Israelites were about to cross the Jordan River—a total of 38 or 39 years.

The Pastor gave an explanation of what the 12 tribes of Israel represented when they were encamped around the Tabernacle. His conclusion, in the final analysis, was that they pictured the *saved* world of mankind.

Num. 1:47 But the Levites after the tribe of their fathers were not numbered among them.

Num. 1:48 For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying,

Num. 1:49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel:

Num. 1:50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof; and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.

The Levites were in charge of everything pertaining to the Tabernacle. Later in the Book of Numbers, their duties are given in detail (who was in charge of the wagons, the boards, the skins, the posts, etc.). No one could enter the Tabernacle, under penalty of death, unless authorized to do so. Bro. Magnuson had a clever way of stating the situation: “A sign on the outer gate read, ‘No one allowed except those on official business.’” The Tabernacle was for those who were repentant (those who wanted to do penance for forgiveness of sin) or for those who wanted to donate a goodwill offering to show their appreciation or thankfulness to the Lord. Otherwise, the Levites were a buffer between the other 12 tribes and the Tabernacle.

Num. 1:51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down: and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Why is the death penalty mentioned here? When the Tabernacle was erected, the most that the 12 tribes could see was the top 50 percent (that is, the upper 5 cubits, from the middle up to the top). What they did see looked like a black coffin. When the Tabernacle was being either disassembled or erected, curiosity seekers would want to seize the opportunity to see what was in the structure, for instance, the furniture: the Candlestick, the Golden Incense Altar, the Table of Shewbread, and the Ark of the Covenant. Therefore, the purpose of the death penalty was to prevent curiosity seeking. Incidentally, it is interesting that Exodus 40 shows the sequence in which the Tabernacle was erected.

Num. 1:52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

Now we learn that the Israelites had standards; that is, each of the 12 tribes had its own standard (or symbol) based mostly on Jacob's deathbed prophecy. The standards identified each tribe, and particularly the chief tribes. The other tribes had auxiliary or subsidiary standards. The standards were attached to poles. Rome too had standards, the eagle being the emblem at one time.

Num. 1:53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

Num. 1:54 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

In summary, the first chapter is the numbering of the children of Israel except for the tribe of Levi.

Comment: The number 603,550 was used in *The Keys of Revelation* as a basis for proving that in the Exodus, 2 million Israelites left Egypt.

Reply: Yes, and the number 2 million is a conservative estimate, for when the women, children, old men, etc., are added to 603,550, the total would be closer to 2.5 million people. Strangers (that is, the mixed multitude, the Egyptians who left Egypt with the Israelites) also have to be added, for they were not numbered.

Num. 2:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 2:2 Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.

Verse 2 hints at a procedure. When a site for encampment was chosen by the Lord, the cloud stopped moving and a pillar dropped down like a column to mark the placement of the Tabernacle proper. Then someone had to go around and make measurements to determine where the Levites would encamp. After that, measurements were made in regard to the other 12 tribes. As the spot for each tribe was marked, the standard was set down. By looking for their own standard, the Israelites of a particular tribe knew where to pitch their tents. Thus order was established as each tribe rallied to its standard.

"Far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch." The words "far off" meant that the 12 tribes pitched their tents around the Levites and farther away from the Tabernacle.

Comment: From the methodical order set forth here, we can, by extension, draw a Kingdom lesson. God has predetermined and made advance arrangements so that when the Ancient Worthies are brought forth, they will know how to proceed. Before the general resurrection begins, order and organization will be established on the earth in regard to temporal matters (food distribution, clothing, etc.). The Lord is very orderly.

Reply: Yes, and the raised saints have been getting orientation lessons and instructions in earth's atmosphere since 1878. The Ancient Worthies will get their instructions when they come forth from the tomb. Being perfect individuals of mature age, they will quickly grasp the information given to them by The Christ, who will have everything organized. The Ancient Worthies will comply accordingly and be fit servants in administering the Kingdom as princes here on the earth.

Num. 2:3 And on the east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of the children of Judah.

Num. 2:4 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred.

Num. 2:5 And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar.

Num. 2:6 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.

Num. 2:7 Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun.

Num. 2:8 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.

Num. 2:9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah were an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth.

Num. 2:10 On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Num. 2:11 And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred.

Num. 2:12 And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Num. 2:13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

Num. 2:14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

Num. 2:15 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand

and six hundred and fifty.

Num. 2:16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben were an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.

Num. 2:17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.

Num. 2:18 On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Num. 2:19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty thousand and five hundred.

Num. 2:20 And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Num. 2:21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

Num. 2:22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Num. 2:23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

Num. 2:24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank.

Num. 2:25 The standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Num. 2:26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

Num. 2:27 And those that encamp by him shall be the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran.

Num. 2:28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.

Num. 2:29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan.

Num. 2:30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

Num. 2:31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards.

Num. 2:32 These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

Num. 2:33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Num. 2:34 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers.

Detailed information such as the above fatigues the mind, but there is great depth of meaning. For instance, the numbering was done for five or six different reasons, one of the most obvious being for military purposes.

Notice that Chapter 2 repeats what was stated in Chapter 1. This is the Lord's method, or technique. The repetition may seem monotonous, but out of the mouth of two or three witnesses is a matter established. To criticize the repetition would be a reflection on the divine character. Moreover, subtle details are usually added to the repetition, and it behooves us to notice those additions.

In studying the numbering of the host in Chapter 1, we realize that there were 12 tribes plus the Levites, but we do not readily see that the 12 consisted of four groups of three tribes each. However, in Chapter 2, the four groups are apparent, and it is necessary to read Chapter 2 in order to understand Chapter 1. Chapter 2 adds the detail, going clockwise, of east side, south side, west side, and north side. We should keep in mind the perspective that God is in the Most Holy. Therefore, Judah, being on the east side, was at the front of the Tabernacle. After the sequential listing of the tribes in clockwise order, we next notice that the tribes are listed in order of importance: (1) Judah, (2) Reuben, (3) Ephraim, and (4) Dan. And the same sequence of importance was on the breastplate of the high priest: (1) *Judah*, Issachar, and Zebulun; (2) *Reuben*, Simeon, and Gad; (3) *Ephraim*, Manasseh, and Benjamin; and (4) *Dan*, Asher, and Naphtali. Of course the Hebrew reads from right to left, so Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan (picturing, respectively, the four most important apostles Paul, Peter, John, and James) were positioned vertically down the right side of the breastplate.

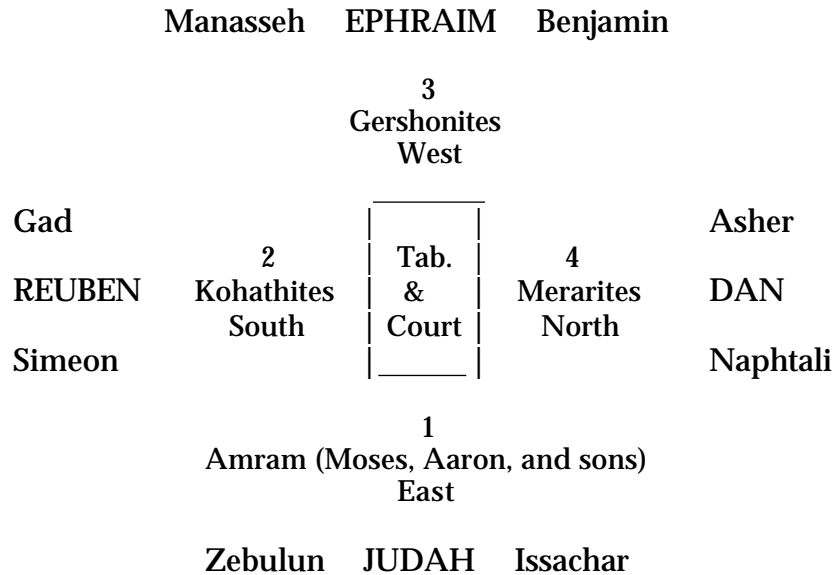
With the Levites, there were also four divisions around the Tabernacle. The children of Amram were in the forefront, that is, on the east. But with Amram on the east side, only two prominent tents are mentioned: the tents of Moses and Aaron (Num. 3:38,39). The two are in marked contrast with the multiple sons and names that are mentioned for the other three sides (the sides with the Gershonites, the Merarites, and the Kohathites).

In Bible study, it is first helpful to get order. Math, order, is the beginning, just as justice is the foundation. Before making types and pictures, we must start with first base. Some try to follow a schedule by reading a certain number of verses each day so that the whole Bible is covered in one year. Of course there is some value to such a routine, and Christians who do this will get rewarded proportionately, but that type of reading is not sufficient.

Certain principles that are laid down now will become helpful later on in Bible study. One such principle is that out of all the Levites, the Kohathites (picturing the Ancient Worthies) were more important than the Merarites (representing the Great Company). The way we get to know our Heavenly Father is by studying about Him and listening to His words, explanations, instructions, etc., as set forth in Holy Writ. Thus we become familiar with His thinking, and we know He has a very, very good reason for all of this repetition. In other words, *it is not vain*

repetition like prayer wheels and saying the Rosary. When God repeats, He has a reason.

In regard to the four triad groupings of tribes, the first name mentioned in each triad was the most important tribe; the second name, being on the right of the first tribe, was second in importance; and the third name, being on the left of the first tribe, was third in importance. For instance, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun are listed in order of importance, with Issachar being on Judah's right and Zebulun on the left (Num. 2:3–9). (The right and left sides were determined as Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan each faced the Tabernacle.)



In summary, Chapter 2 gives the numbering of the tribes, their order of importance, and their geographical location around the Tabernacle.

Before continuing with Chapter 2, we will consider another aspect of the numbering, which totaled 603,550. The Tabernacle sockets were made of 100 talents of silver, a talent to a socket. That was the only silver in the Tabernacle proper, for the excess silver for the 3,550 Israelites above the 600,000 was used for hooks in connection with the wooden posts of the Court. Silver hooks supported the white curtains that hung between each pair of posts. These curtains, which surrounded the Court, were square, 5 cubits to a side or 20 cubits (30 feet) in perimeter. The 30 feet corresponded to the perimeter of the top of the Brazen Altar, which was also square and 5 cubits to a side. Thus the altar of sacrifice, which made the offerings of Israel acceptable to God, represents the righteousness of Jesus, the life he laid down as a perfect man at age 30. Not only was 30 the age under the Law for entering the priesthood, but Jesus began his ministry at that age. During his ministry, Jesus expended his life, or laid it down, for 3 1/2 years. Of course his life was further expended on the Cross, but in regard to the perfect manhood of Christ, the number 30 is more significant than the number 33 1/2, Jesus' age at the end of his ministry. Why? Because when he started his ministry, he was 30 and at the point of full, perfect manhood. During the subsequent 3 1/2 years, he expended his life. Although his virtue or vitality was restored and he recuperated with resting, he was laying down his life. Therefore, after age 30, Jesus was not perfect from the standpoint that he was being consumed on the altar. Until that consumption was completely burned in the type (until Jesus died on the Cross in the antitype), it was not finished. Thus the Cross terminated Jesus' earthly career. In other words, the number 30 was significant with regard to the top of the altar, the entrance to the Court, and each curtain surrounding the Court. The wooden posts of the Court picture Christians upholding the righteousness of Jesus and declaring him as Messiah to the world.

Back to the numbering and the silver sockets of the Tabernacle. Each Israelite male who was

numbered had to give half a shekel, and 603,550 was the total for all males who were (a) 20 years old and upward and also (b) fit for war. In other words, a man 60 years old was included in the numbering if he was physically fit to fight on behalf of the nation of Israel as God would direct.

Next, 600,000 half shekels would be 300,000 shekels. Since there were 100 talents of silver (for the 100 sockets) for the Tabernacle proper, we can divide the 300,000 shekels by 100 and determine that each talent had to be 3,000 shekels. Stated another way, the weight of each talent (or socket) was 3,000 shekels, or approximately 100 pounds.

Num. 3:1 These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses in the day that the LORD spake with Moses in mount Sinai.

Num. 3:2 And these are the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Num. 3:3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office.

Num. 3:4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered strange fire before the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father.

Verse 4 is telling us, in effect, that the priesthood consisted of only three priests: Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar. As a prologue, verses 1–4 furnish important information for reconciling some seeming discrepancies.

Num. 3:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 3:6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

Num. 3:7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

Num. 3:8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

Num. 3:9 And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons: they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

Num. 3:10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Num. 3:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 3:12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;

Num. 3:13 Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD.

The tribe of Levi was in charge of and ministered the duties of the Tabernacle services, but of the Levites, it was the priests—Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar—who handled the priestly service at the altar. In other words, the Levites in general were in charge of the Tabernacle, but the priestly functions were performed only by Aaron and his two sons. The various duties of the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites will be explained in more detail later, and information will be supplied about Eleazar and Ithamar. For now, just an overall statement is made.

In verses 11–13, God said, “The Levites are wholly mine” (paraphrase). An arrangement was made between God and Moses to substitute the tribe of Levi for the firstborn Israelites who were spared when the destroying angel went through the land at the time of the Exodus. (The firstborn were the only Israelites who were liable to death when the destroying angel went through Egypt at midnight and smote the firstborn of every household that did not have the blood of a lamb on the lintels and doorposts.) But whom do the firstborn of the children of Israel on the night of the Passover represent? They picture the “church of the firstborn,” which includes both the Little Flock and the Great Company (Heb. 12:23). The proof is that in the type, the Levites, who were substituted for the spared firstborn Israelites, included the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites, as well as the priests.

The fact that none of the four classes of Levites who encamped around the Tabernacle had an inheritance in the land indicates they will all receive a spiritual resurrection in the final analysis. The finished picture of the saved at the end of the Millennial Age, when all enemies of God will have been destroyed, is as follows:

Aaron and sons	=	Little Flock (The Christ)
Kohathites	=	Ancient Worthies
Gershonites	=	Great Company class developed prior to the Gospel Age
Merarites	=	Great Company class developed during the Gospel Age
Israelites	=	Saved world of mankind

When the cloud indicated that the 12 tribes were to go forward, the tribe of Judah marched first, followed by Issachar and Zebulun. These three encamped on the east side of the Tabernacle, and Judah was the most important of all the tribes. Next came Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. They encamped on the south side, and Reuben was the second most important of all the tribes.

Aaron and sons	=	Judah	=	East	=	Little Flock	=	1st
Kohathites	=	Reuben	=	South	=	Ancient Worthies	=	2nd

Notice that those of the Little Flock are first in importance and the Ancient Worthies are second. In other words, the Great Company does not measure up to Moses, Daniel, and the other Ancient Worthies. The same is true of the secondary class of the Old Testament. When Judah and Reuben went forward, the Tabernacle was transported next, that is, ahead of the Ephraim and Dan triads or, stated another way, in between the four groupings. Order of march: Judah, Reuben, Tabernacle, Ephraim, and Dan. This order of the tribes corresponds to the positioning of the stones in the high priest’s breastplate.

Comment: Subsequent verses show that the Kohathites, who were second in march, had greater responsibilities than the Gershonites or the Merarites.

Reply: Yes, they transported the articles of furniture: the Ark of the Covenant (the most important), the Candlestick, the Table of Shewbread, and the two altars. Thus the information being presented is from the mouth of two or three witnesses. When information is

substantiated by multiple witnesses in Scripture, we are assured of the interpretation and can speak as a trumpet that does not waver.

Q: Since an order of importance was established with Aaron and his sons being first and the Kohathites being second, can we assume that an order of importance was also indicated with the two Great Company classes? Does the Great Company of the Old Testament rank higher than the Great Company of the Gospel Age?

Gershonites	=	Ephraim	=	West	=	Great Co. of old	=	3rd
Merarites	=	Dan	=	North	=	Great Co. current	=	4th

A: Yes, but the subject should not be elaborated on at this time. There are reasons to support this order of importance.

Num. 3:14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

Num. 3:15 Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them.

Num. 3:16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.

Num. 3:17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari.

Num. 3:18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni, and Shimei.

Num. 3:19 And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

Num. 3:20 And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli, and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers.

The mention of Gershon ahead of Kohath seems at first to be a discrepancy with earlier statements about the order of importance, but there is a reason. This listing is merely according to birth, not importance. Gershon was the oldest, then Kohath, and next Merari (Gen. 46:11). Normally speaking, the firstborn is given the deference in listing but not necessarily in selection, for in the Old Testament, the second-born usually superseded the firstborn because of an act of disobedience or some other reason. In such cases, the firstborn lost the privileges, or prerogatives, to the second-born. Temporary deference because of age was also shown in listings of the apostles.

Another distinction is interesting. Verse 19 lists four sons for Kohath: Amram, Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Verses 18 and 20 list only two sons each for Gershon and Merari. In other words, of the Levites, not only did the Kohathites carry the most important equipment of the Tabernacle, but they were doubly represented. Of course the three priests (Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar) were the most important.

Num. 3:21 Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites.

Num. 3:22 Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and

five hundred.

Num. 3:23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward.

Num. 3:24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael.

Num. 3:25 And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation shall be the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

Num. 3:26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it for all the service thereof.

In importance of duties, Gershon was next after Kohath, for the Ark of the Covenant was more important than the cherubim curtain. The Ark—with the two cherubim, the Shekinah light, and the Mercy Seat—is a representation of *Jehovah* (of His four attributes Love, Power, Wisdom, and Justice, respectively), whereas the cherubim curtain merely pictures the Little Flock. When the lid of the Ark is considered by itself, it represents God and Jesus; thus it was more important than the box underneath, which pictures the Church. Another proof the Ark was more important than the cherubim curtain is that the blood was put on the Mercy Seat.

Notice the duties of the Gershonites. The curtain for the gate of the Court and the First Veil (the door to the Holy) were more important than the other hangings.

Num. 3:27 And of Kohath was the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izecharites, and the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites: these are the families of the Kohathites.

Num. 3:28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

Num. 3:29 The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward.

Num. 3:30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

Num. 3:31 And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof.

Num. 3:32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall be chief over the chief of the Levites, and have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary.

At this point in time, Eleazar was more important than Ithamar. Notice that the Kohathites carried the Ark, the Candlestick, the Shewbread Table, the Prayer Altar, and the Brazen Altar. All were golden vessels except the Brazen Altar. Kohath was more important than Gershon for other reasons, such as his lineage: Levi, Kohath, Amram, and then Moses. Even Aaron and Moses were descended from Kohath.

From the standpoint of lineage, because Korah and his sons were also of Kohath, they felt that Aaron should share his duties with them. But Korah was completely out of order and high-

minded (Numbers 16).

Q: The numbering of the 12 tribes was males from 20 years old and upward with certain exclusions, but the male Levites were all numbered from one month old and upward with no exclusions. What is the reason for the difference?

A: From a practical standpoint, babies were not numbered until they were one month old because there was a high infant mortality rate. An infant who survived the first month usually lived. The numbering of the 12 tribes began at age 20 because they were being numbered for war and they had to be physically fit.

Q: What was “the hanging” in verse 31?

A: It was the Second Veil, the hanging between the Holy and the Most Holy.

The early part of the Book of Numbers is like the ABCs of the Tabernacle.

Num. 3:33 Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites: these are the families of Merari.

Num. 3:34 And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred.

Num. 3:35 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail: these shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward.

Num. 3:36 And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the sockets thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto,

Num. 3:37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords.

“All the vessels” in verse 36 would mean all of the *subsidiary* vessels—tongs, bowls, saucers, snuff dishes, etc.—for the Candlestick, Table of Shewbread, and other articles of furniture.

Num. 3:38 But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses, and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary for the charge of the children of Israel; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Num. 3:39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand.

The number 22,000 included all of the Levite males from the age of one month and upward. Moses, Aaron, and his sons camped on the east side of the Tabernacle, and they had the “charge of the sanctuary”; i.e., they were the superintendents. Of the four, Moses was superior to Aaron, Aaron was superior to Eleazar, and Eleazar was superior to Ithamar. Their rank, in descending order, was Moses, Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar. When the Tabernacle was to be disassembled, Eleazar and Ithamar were the overseers who made sure the proper procedure was followed. Aaron had the more important responsibility of making the offerings to God. None of the three did manual labor in connection with taking down the Tabernacle in

preparation for moving.

Q: How was the total of 22,000 determined? Wouldn't the total be Gershon 7,500, Kohath 8,600, and Merari 6,200 for a total of 22,300?

Comment: A Revised Version Bible note reads, "The addition of one Hebrew letter would change 8,600 to 8,300 and bring the figures in verses 22, 28, and 34 into agreement with the total in verse 39."

Reply: Yes, that is a good comment. There were 8,300 Kohathites, not 8,600. When the enumeration was given anciently, figures were used, not longhand. The character was originally 3 (for 300), but the foot of that symbol flaked off, inadvertently changing the number to a 6 (for 600).

Q: Even allowing for the fact that the Levites were numbered from age one month and upward, the number of Levites was considerably less than that of each of the other 12 tribes. What is the reason?

A: We will try to remember to treat that point later.

Num. 3:40 And the LORD said unto Moses, Number all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.

Num. 3:41 And thou shalt take the Levites for me (I am the LORD) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.

Num. 3:42 And Moses numbered, as the LORD commanded him, all the firstborn among the children of Israel.

Num. 3:43 And all the firstborn males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

Num. 3:44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 3:45 Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD.

Num. 3:46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

Num. 3:47 Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:)

Num. 3:48 And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

The total of 22,273 firstborn Israelite males from a month old and upward exceeded the Levite total of 22,000 given earlier. Therefore, in the exchange of the Levites for the firstborn Israelites who were spared in Egypt, there was a difference of 273. The difference was made up with money according to the fixed sum of 5 shekels for each of the 273 ($273 \times 5 = 1,365$).

This money, or poll of 5 shekels each, was the ransom or redemption money that was used for the sockets of the Tabernacle and for the silver hooks on the Court posts from which the curtains were hung.

Num. 3:49 And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites:

Num. 3:50 Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

Num. 3:51 And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Comment: As we go through this detail and order in regard to the numbering, we can see why it was such a sin for the Israelites to be numbered without authorization later on in their history. The numbering had to be at a specific time and for a specific reason according to the Lord's instructions.

Reply: Yes, God determined the numbering. Otherwise, numbering would be done for ulterior motives, which are usually selfish.

The statement in Numbers 2:33 that according to the commandment, the Levites were not to be numbered did not preclude God from doing the numbering. The number 603,550 excluded the Levites, but then in the very next chapter, Chapter 3, God gave the command for the Levites to be numbered. In the antitype, an example of unauthorized numbering would be a pastor's claim to have a large number in his congregation or membership. The Crystal Cathedral, for instance, boasts of a huge membership. We like to see souls won for Christ, but we must examine critically as to why and how they are won. Sometimes the winning is laudable, and sometimes the motive is selfishness, pride, or another wrong motive.

Num. 4:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 4:2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers,

Num. 4:3 From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

The four divisions of the Levites were numbered in Chapter 3, and now the same four would be numbered again. The difference here was the age category. The Chapter 3 numbering was from one month old and upward. In this chapter the numbering was from age 30 to age 50. Why age 30? That was the age of manhood for priestly service. Jesus was 30 when he began his public ministry. Through indirect reasoning, we know John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus, and hence he was also 30 when he started his ministry.

As we study the numbering of the Kohathites, we will see that the account also furnishes information about their responsibilities in connection with moving the Tabernacle.

Num. 4:4 This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation, about the most holy things:

Num. 4:5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

Num. 4:6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.

Chapter 3 showed an order of importance of the divisions of the Levites: Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. Of course Moses and Aaron on the east side were superior to all of the others and their sons. In Chapter 4, the order of importance is confirmed, for the Kohathites were responsible for “the most holy things.” They were in charge of the Ark of the Covenant, which was the most important and most holy article of furniture in the Tabernacle.

Staves were used to carry the Ark of the Covenant. The two staves went through a pair of rings on both sides of the Ark so that no one would touch the actual article of furniture. But before the Ark could be transported, it first had to be covered, for not only were the Israelites not to touch the Ark, but they were not even allowed to see it. Therefore, although the family of Kohath were responsible for transporting the Ark, before they could even go into the Holy and the Most Holy to handle the Ark with its staves, Aaron and his sons had to cover it. Three cloths were used as coverings, and they are listed in order of placement as follows:

1. The “covering veil,” also called the Veil or the Second Veil, was the curtain that hung between the Holy and the Most Holy. Aaron and his sons took down this hanging, draped it over the Ark of the Covenant, tucked in the Veil, and inserted the staves before the Kohathites could enter the Tabernacle proper.
2. The second covering was a black seal-skin cloth.
3. The top covering was a solid blue cloth. Of all the articles of furniture in transport, only the Ark of the Covenant had an attractive, cheerful outer covering. The blue symbolized faithfulness.

The way the staves were used can be described in more detail. Four men carried the Ark, one person at the front and one at the back of each of the two staves. The person on the left side of the front of the Ark carried the staff with his right hand. The person on the right side used his left hand. The same procedure was followed at the back of the Ark.

Although the Ark was quite small, it was heavy, for the cherubim and the lid were made of solid gold. And the wooden acacia chest underneath was plated with gold, which added to the weight. Therefore, one reason for having four men carry the Ark was its weight. Another reason was stability in transport.

Num. 4:7 And upon the table of showbread they shall spread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread shall be thereon:

Num. 4:8 And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof.

In the Holy were three articles of furniture: the Table of Shewbread, the Candlestick, and the Prayer (or Golden) Incense Altar. Now instructions were given for covering the Table of Shewbread for transport. The pronoun “they” refers to the priests and Aaron’s sons because the Kohathites could not do anything with the articles of furniture until they were covered. Like the Ark, the Table had three coverings. The other pieces of furniture had just two coverings. The outside or top covering for the Table of Shewbread was made of seal skins.

Num. 4:9 And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it:

Num. 4:10 And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar.

The Candlestick had two coverings. Underneath was a blue covering and on top were seal skins. The Candlestick and its vessels were put "upon a bar" and carried by two people on their shoulders. (Staves were not used because the Candlestick was much easier to transport than the Ark and the Table.) During a long journey and depending upon the nature of the terrain, the men carrying the Candlestick could alternate between carrying it on their shoulders and carrying it down, off their shoulders. Made of one talent of solid gold, the Candlestick was heavy, probably weighing 100 pounds. Its shape was conducive to being transported on a bar on shoulders rather than using staves.

Num. 4:11 And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof:

The Golden Altar was first covered with a cloth of blue and then with a covering of seal skins. Thus its coverings were like those of the Candlestick. Quite small in size, the altar was carried with two staves like the Table of Shewbread.

Num. 4:12 And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put them on a bar:

The vessels for the Golden Altar were put in a blue cloth, covered with seal skins, and carried on a bar like the Candlestick. For both, the coverings served as a sack or duffel bag, as it were, which was hung on the bar. The "instruments of ministry," or sacred vessels, included spoons, bowls, tongs, snuff dishes, and snuffers.

The order of transport so far is (1) the Ark of the Covenant, (2) the Table of Shewbread, (3) the Candlestick, (4) the Golden Incense Altar, and (5) the satchel of various unnamed utensils.

Num. 4:13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon:

Num. 4:14 And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it.

Two cloths were used to cover the Brazen Altar: first a purple cloth and then a covering of seal skins. Notice that with the articles of furniture and their accessories, the furniture was first covered with a cloth and then the appurtenances were placed on the cloth, which served as a cushion. Lastly, an outer covering was added. Thus the vessels were sandwiched between the two types of cloth.

It is interesting that the Brazen Altar from the Court, which was not a golden article of furniture, was also covered by Aaron and his sons, i.e., the priests. This altar had four rings, one on each corner, and a platform of grill work that went through the center for stability and also made a walkway for the priests on the outside of the altar. The Brazen Altar was actually a hollow box that was filled with sand. When the priests lifted up the altar preparatory for

transport, the sand dropped out and the hollow box remained.

The ashes from the top of the altar were removed and left behind. Their symbolic meaning is somewhat akin to that of the ashes of the red heifer, which are a remembrance of the Ancient Worthies. In this case, the ashes from the Brazen Altar are a remembrance of certain noble Christians down through the Gospel Age who were martyred yet remained constant in their faith.

The order of march thus far for the tribes and the Tabernacle furnishings can be visualized: Judah and his associates Issachar and Zebulun, Reuben with Simeon and Gad, the Ark of the Covenant, articles of furniture from the Holy, a duffel bag, the Brazen Altar, Ephraim plus Manasseh and Benjamin, and Dan with Asher and Naphtali.

Num. 4:15 And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Num. 4:16 And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest pertaineth the oil for the light, and the sweet incense, and the daily meat offering, and the anointing oil, and the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof.

As the superintendent, Eleazar told the Kohathites which four of their members should carry the Ark, for instance. The oil for the Candlestick, the holy anointing oil, the incense, and the daily meal offering were not covered. Moses and Aaron and his two sons (Eleazar and Ithamar) each carried one item or ingredient. Of the two sons, Eleazar, as superintendent, had a little more priority.

After Aaron's death and up until Jesus' day, there were two high priests so that if the regular one got sick, the other could take over as alternate. Annas and Caiaphas were the two at the First Advent.

Q: When Aaron died, were his garments stripped off and given to Eleazar?

A: Yes.

Num. 4:17 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 4:18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites:

Num. 4:19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden:

Num. 4:20 But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die.

Num. 4:21 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 4:22 Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families;

Num. 4:23 From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them;

all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Now the Gershonites were being treated, and the age category was the same as with Kohath.

Num. 4:24 This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens:

Num. 4:25 And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,

After the furniture was removed from the Most Holy, the Holy, and the Court by the Kohathites, the Gershonites went into the empty Tabernacle to take down the curtains and coverings. The “curtains of the tabernacle” would be the cherubim curtain, which, being in two parts of five strips each, is described in the plural. The two parts were clipped together with taches and placed over the frame of the Tabernacle.

The “tabernacle [tent] of the congregation” was the goats' hair curtain. This second covering was also in two parts, but instead of five strips and five strips, the two parts consisted five strips and six strips. The cherubim curtain was *the* Tabernacle, and the goats' hair curtain was the *tent* of the Tabernacle.

In addition, Gershon was in charge of “his [its] covering,” i.e., the covering that was put over the goats' hair curtain. This third covering was the curtain of rams' skins dyed red. Next came the fourth, or top, covering: the black seal-skin curtain. The sides of these last two curtains were pulled out like a tent and fastened with pins and cords.

The “hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” was the *First Veil*, the veil at the entrance to the Holy. (The Kohathites were responsible for the more holy *Second Veil*, which covered the Ark of the Covenant.)

Num. 4:26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which is by the tabernacle and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve.

Num. 4:27 At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.

Num. 4:28 This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

Now Ithamar came into the picture. He had oversight of the Gershonites and the Merarites.

The Gershonites had quite a burden: the four coverings (cherubim, goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and seal skins) plus the hangings of the Court, which was 100 cubits long and 50 cubits wide. Imagine the weight of the curtains, some of which were like tapestry and others like drapes. Since the account does not say that the Gershonites carried the curtains, how were they transported? Numbers 7:3 tells that they were in covered wagons. All of this detail is interesting, for it enables us to visualize how the Tabernacle was taken down and moved.

Comment: In Uzzah's day, the Ark was put in a wagon like the curtains, but transporting the Ark that way was disobedience, for God had commanded that it be hand-carried with staves.

Num. 4:29 As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt number them after their families, by the house of their fathers;

Num. 4:30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old shalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the service, to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Num. 4:31 And this is the charge of their burden, according to all their service in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and sockets thereof,

Num. 4:32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden.

Num. 4:33 This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service, in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

The Merarites were responsible for the boards of the Tabernacle, the bars, the four pillars into the Most Holy, the five pillars into the Holy, the 100 sockets weighing 100 pounds each, and the posts of the Court and their sockets, pins, and cords. In this case too, covered wagons were used for transport. The Merarites were in charge of the covered wood that was used to structure the Tabernacle arrangement, and Ithamar had the oversight.

Next the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites were numbered. Notice that the sequence was according to order of importance.

Num. 4:34 And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

Num. 4:35 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation:

Num. 4:36 And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty.

Num. 4:37 These were they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

The number of Kohathites from age 30 to age 50 was 2,750.

Q: Was age 50 the upper limitation because of the physical work that was involved?

A: Yes, it was for practical reasons.

Num. 4:38 And those that were numbered of the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, and by the house of their fathers,

Num. 4:39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

Num. 4:40 Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty.

Num. 4:41 These are they that were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of the LORD.

The Gershonites numbered 2,630.

Num. 4:42 And those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers,

Num. 4:43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation,

Num. 4:44 Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred.

Num. 4:45 These be those that were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

The Merarites numbered 3,200.

Num. 4:46 All those that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chief of Israel numbered, after their families, and after the house of their fathers,

Num. 4:47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the service of the ministry, and the service of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation,

Num. 4:48 Even those that were numbered of them, were eight thousand and five hundred and fourscore.

Added together, the three categories totaled 8,580.

Responsibilities were given to the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites according to their status or importance. When the Tabernacle was to be disassembled, the Kohathites acted first because they had to transport all of the articles of gold. Next in importance was the cherubim curtain. But to get to that curtain, the Gershonites first had to remove the seal-skin curtain, the rams'-skin-dyed-red curtain, and the goats' hair curtain. However, if the four curtains were removed in this sequence, the golden boards would have been visible to the Israelites outside in the Camp. Therefore, after the three outer Tabernacle curtains were removed, the boards were taken down with the cherubim curtain over them. Since the Court curtains remained in place until the boards and the Tabernacle curtains were removed, the gold furniture was not seen by the people. In other words, the listing of responsibilities is according to importance and not necessarily in sequence of removal.

In regard to the gold, even the Kohathites, let alone the Gershonites and the Merarites, could neither see nor touch the gold furniture. Consequently, Aaron and his sons had to cover the gold furniture before the Kohathites could move it. The Kohathites dealt with the "most holy things," which could not be seen. The other items, including the gold boards, were "holy" things that could be seen by the Levites. Material was used to wrap the boards to prevent

nicking and chipping.

With so much to be moved and in view of the mandatory procedure, the procession of Kohathites and others marching on foot, plus the oxen and covered wagons, was like a desert caravan.

Q: How much time was required to prepare the Tabernacle for moving?

A: Perhaps about six hours.

Num. 4:49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, every one according to his service, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Q: When the cloud stopped and the Tabernacle was to be set up again, was the procedure reversed so that only Aaron and his sons saw the gold furniture?

A: Yes. Exodus 40 tells about assembling the Tabernacle, whereas this chapter in Numbers tells about the disassembling.

Spiritual Application

Of the first four chapters in Numbers, Chapter 4 begins to put the pieces together as regards the mechanics of the Tabernacle—not only its construction, erection, and setup but also how the different tribes and the Levite families were encamped around the structure. In a general count, the Levite males were first numbered from age one month upward. Then a second count was taken of Levites from age 30 to 50. The purpose of the second numbering was to count those who were engaged in active duty and service for the Tabernacle.

There were three coverings for the Ark of the Covenant: first the Second Veil (the hanging between the Holy and the Most Holy), then a seal-skin covering, and on the outside (visible to the nation) a blue covering. Not only was the Ark the most important article of furniture in the Tabernacle because it represented God and His role and attributes, Jesus, and the Church, but it was the most noticeable because of its blue outer covering. (All of the other articles of furniture had top coverings of seal skins, which were dark brown or black.)

Blue symbolizes faithfulness because that is the color of the sky. Even though storm clouds may completely obliterate the sunlight, blue sky and light are above the clouds. Because the heavens are constant, certain Scriptures identify them with God's covenants to show constancy and faithfulness. We sing a hymn about the sky: "I lift mine eyes, the cloud grows thin; I see the blue above it." No matter how dark the clouds are, the blue of the heavens is above them.

Why was the outer covering of the Ark blue in color? As the hope chest for the world, it contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables of the Law. The blue outer covering, which could be seen, pictures Jesus' faithfulness. Although the world does not recognize him as Messiah or as a new creature, there is respect for him as an individual. The public knows that he stood up for principle, that his life was exemplary, that he healed the sick and fed the poor, etc. Of him it was said, "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46). Therefore, the blue represents what the world can see of Jesus.

Consider Daniel, for example. The only thing that the jealous officials could find against him was his religion, and they knew his habits. Because they knew he worshipped his God three times a day openly on a balcony facing Jerusalem, they were able to trap him with the religious

decree they had persuaded the king to enact. Thus the public is cognizant of one who faithfully practices his faith—in this case, Jesus.

Underneath the blue covering was a seal-skin covering. With the Tabernacle itself, the seal-skin covering was on the outside, and thus it pictured how the public sees the Christian. The world views the Christian as odd, as a misfit in society, as peculiar. Not only does a faithful Christian feel nervous in the world lest water should get in the ship, but also the world is uncomfortable in the presence of a Christian. Both feel out of place in viewing one another. And so, underneath the blue covering was a seal-skin covering for the Ark of the Covenant. The seal skin pictures the Church, the body members, as peculiar people.

Underneath the blue and the seal-skin coverings was the (Second) Veil, the covering that was immediately over the Ark of the Covenant. With cherubim on this curtain, the Veil pictures the new creature. Like the hanging on the gate to the Court, the First Veil had intricate needlework of gold, purple, and scarlet but no cherubim. Incidentally, the Most Holy is sometimes called the Cherubim Room because it had (1) cherubim on the ceiling, (2) two cherubim on the Mercy Seat, and (3) cherubim on the Veil at the entrance.

Why does the Ark represent The Christ? The propitiatory lid, or cover, pictures Jesus, the Head, and the box, or chest, underneath represents the Church, the body of Christ. The cherubim and the Shekinah light picture Jehovah as the Head of Christ.

When set up, the Tabernacle proper was covered by black seal skins to signify that the world views Christians as oddballs. Jesus was pictured by the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, which was *hidden* from the people. But when the Tabernacle was disassembled and in transport, the outer covering of the Ark was blue to picture Jesus as seen by the world to be a good man.

The Ark led the Israelites in the Wilderness of Sinai, yet it was not in front in their order of march. And what about the cloud? The Israelites were to follow the cloud, and its center point was over the Tabernacle arrangement at all times. In other words, the cloud was over the Tabernacle regardless of whether it was stationary or in transit. The cloud moved at the reasonable pace of oxen drawing wagons and people walking, and as soon as it stopped, a pillar extended down from the middle of the cloud to point to where the Tabernacle should be centered. When the Tabernacle was erected, the pillar made a connection with it.

When the Tabernacle was to be moved, what was the sequence of functions performed by the high priest and his sons? (1) They covered the Ark. (2) They covered the Table of Shewbread. From the standpoint of human reasoning, we would expect the Golden Incense (or Prayer) Altar to be the holiest article of furniture in the Holy, but such was not the case. Another proof that the Table of Shewbread was holier than the Incense Altar is that the former had three coverings, while the latter had only two coverings. (3) They prepared the Candlestick for transport. (4) They covered the Golden Incense Altar. (5) They covered the Brazen Altar.

In addition to the Ark, the Table of Shewbread had three coverings: blue on the bottom, scarlet next, and seal skin on the outside. The fact that only the Table of Shewbread had a scarlet covering indicates that this article of furniture was more important in some aspect than the other items in the Holy. With all three—the Table, the Candlestick, and the Incense Altar—the blue covering was on the bottom, whereas with the Ark, the blue covering was on the outside. The scarlet covering on the Table of Shewbread pictures the blood of Christ. As for the bread on the Table of Shewbread, it was called the Bread of Presence or the Bread of Faces (plural), meaning *God's* face, and it was not eaten during the week. Hence God's bread, His promises to the Church, which are the foundation of their hope, are held out for those of the consecrated whom God particularly loves. The shewbread, the bread of God's *presence*, or *face*, which is the

bread of His *favor and hope*, is held out for the 12 *spiritual* tribes of Israel. Those of the consecrated who are more than overcomers, mentally feeding on the Word of hope, will inherit immortality, which is pictured by the golden pot of (incorruptible) manna. (The “manna” was also plural.)

The Candlestick, with its seven lamps, represents the Holy Spirit’s illumination and intellectual understanding, as opposed to the more important spiritual food pictured on the Table of Shewbread. For the Christian, food for the inner man is more important than light, or illumination, because those who are called are to be conformed to the likeness, or image, of Christ. Light cannot be ignored, however.

Like the Candlestick, the Golden Incense Altar was covered, first, with blue and then with seal skins. The inner light of the Candlestick in the Holy could not be seen outside. And so the natural man cannot discern the things of God. Interestingly, the Apostle Paul tells us that as new creatures, we possess *both* qualities; i.e., we can reason as natural men, and we can discern spiritual truths.

Normally speaking, the Candlestick could not be seen outside the Holy in the Tabernacle. However, certain Scriptures indicate there are exceptions in the antitype. For example, the Christian is not to hide his light under a bushel or under a bed but is to put his light on a hill to be seen. The Christian tries his best to witness. Wherever the Bible has gone, it has blessed the nations as the torch of liberty and civilization. The natural man who reads the Bible does get some benefit but not the inner benefit.

The same is true with the Golden Incense Altar, which, as an altar of prayer, can be viewed two ways. In the primary sense, only the consecrated can pray there, yet in another sense, that altar has been a blessing to the unconsecrated. What we are saying, in effect, is that if anyone in this world, regardless of nationality, cries out to God, He can answer that prayer. Therefore, both the consecrated and the unconsecrated can pray. In fact, many of the consecrated have testified that God heard their prayers prior to consecration—and sometimes in a very dramatic way. The distinction is that the altar is the *daily* privilege of the Christian. God is *required* to listen to the prayers of the consecrated. Jesus instructed us to pray in his name to the Father, and we *will get an answer*—yes, no, delayed, quickly, in a way we do not expect, etc. With the unconsecrated, generally speaking, prayers are perfunctory, and sometimes they are even answered by the Adversary. However, prayers uttered in desperation or emergency situations are another matter. God can make exceptions and does answer such prayers.

In summary, the Candlestick and the Prayer Altar are peculiar in that they also have a role with the unconsecrated, but the bread of promise is *only* for the consecrated.

Q: We should not ask the unconsecrated to pray, should we?

A: No, to do so would be wrong.

For those of the unconsecrated who do cry out to God in an emergency and receive an answer to prayer, how they respond subsequently is important. The answered prayer can become either a double blessing or a double condemnation, for if one is miraculously delivered and does not go on to consecrate, he is worse off.

The Brazen Altar was covered, first, with purple and then with seal skins on the outside. Purple pictures royalty. The combination of blue (faithfulness) and red (death)—that is, faithfulness unto death—results in attaining the crown of royalty. The sacrifice of that class, which comprises only the most faithful of the consecrated, will be recognized as the Lord’s goat. The

scapegoat class will not be so privileged, and the differentiation between the two classes is difficult to ascertain in the present life. In that day, many shall ask, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied *in thy name*? and *in thy name* have cast out devils? and *in thy name* done many wonderful works?” And what did Jesus reply? “Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: *depart from me, ye that work iniquity [lawlessness]*” (Matt. 7:22,23). In other words, because the works of the scapegoat class are not being done legally, in the proper fashion, they are not recognized. All of our lives we must try to be faithful in offering the Lord our sacrifice on the Brazen Altar. At the expiration of our career, God will determine whether or not we have been faithful in the way *He has appointed*. For instance, Martin Luther King urged a social gospel with social work. Others do missionary work and/or open schools or hospitals, thinking this is the work of sanctification, but the Bible indicates a person may expend a lifetime in such a noble way and yet not be a member of the Little Flock. To make our calling and election sure, we must do *God’s will in God’s way*, which is sometimes difficult to discern. We do the best we can and hope we are judged faithful in the final analysis to be part of the Bread of Promise and the Brazen Altar Lord’s goat offering. The Great Company will not be so reckoned in the final picture.

In the order of march when the Israelites left Sinai after the second year, the tribe of Judah took the forefront with its two associates, Issachar and Zebulun. Behind them, and sandwiched in between Judah and Reuben, were the Gershonites and the Merarites. Next came the tribe of Reuben and its two associates. Then came the Kohathites followed by Ephraim and two associates, and finally Dan and the two related tribes. Stated succinctly, the order of march was Judah, Gershonites, Merarites, Reuben, Kohathites, Ephraim, and Dan.

In other words, the sequence of the Levites in the order of march was Gershon, Merari, and Kohath. The Kohathites were separate because they handled the “most holy things.” Based on Numbers 3:19, we know that Moses, Aaron, and Aaron’s sons were included with the Kohathites in their march, for Amram was their father and grandfather, respectively. The genealogy line was Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Amram’s two sons (Moses and Aaron).

Q: Where is this order of march shown?

A: In Numbers 10. It is remarkable that scarcely any days passed (less than two months) from the last verse of Exodus 40, when the Tabernacle was set up, until Numbers 10, and the Tabernacle remained stationary during this time. Meanwhile, God gave many instructions to Moses including the numbering of the tribes and the designation of duties and responsibilities.

When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, they went through the Wilderness of Shur to Mount Sinai and stayed there in the Wilderness of Sinai for a little more than a year. In other words, the Wilderness of Sinai is different from the Wilderness of Shur.

The march toward the Holy Land from Mount Sinai with the Tabernacle took place after the Passover. In fact, from the time the Tabernacle was set up in Exodus 40 to the time the Israelites started their journey toward the Holy Land was a period of 50 days, and the Gospel Age began at Pentecost, on the 50th day after Jesus was crucified. Some Jewish scholars think the journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai was also a 50-day journey, and this could very well be correct. If so, the significance of Pentecost is enhanced even further.

Faith accepts the fact that the answer to some of our prayers is no. As Christians, we do not try to confuse the distinction between faith and reality. And that is what makes us a peculiar people. We are different from the world because we have put all of our eggs in one basket and are living for the future life based on what God says in His Word. To the world, these promises are nebulous, but to us, they are very real.

Notice that several times, including in the order of march, Gershon was given more importance than Merari. By being in charge of the cherubim curtain (called “the tabernacle”) and the other hangings, Gershon was more important than Merari, who handled the boards, posts, pins, pillars, etc.

The Ark was journeying toward the Holy Land, yet the Pastor said that the destiny of the Ark is the Most Holy of the Temple. (Spiritually speaking, the Ark was seen in the Temple.) A question arises: How could the Kohathites (picturing the Ancient Worthies) and the Gershonites (picturing the Great Company of the Old Testament)—*both pre-Christian classes*—plus the Merarites (picturing the Great Company, a *secondary* class of the Gospel Age), be represented in the order of march? Hebrews 11:24,26 gives an answer by saying of Moses, an Ancient Worthy, “By faith Moses ... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter ... *Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*” Galatians 3:8 also answers the question by saying, “The scripture ... preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” In other words, the Old Testament furnishes shadows of things to come. The New and Old Testaments are equally important, both being the Word of God. In fact, the Old Testament is three times more voluminous than the New. The Bible is not to be divided. The Apostle Paul mentioned the Ancient Worthies as being the ashes of the red heifer (Heb. 9:13). Hebrews 11:40 states that the gospel Church must be complete before the Ancient Worthies can be resurrected. The Ancient Worthies and the Little Flock are part of the same package; one is pre-Christ and the other is post-Christ. These classes are on trial for life prior to the setting up of the Kingdom and will be honored accordingly.

The difference between the righteousness of faith to the Ancient Worthies and the righteousness of faith to the Little Flock is the difference between the spirit of fellowship and the spirit of sonship, respectively. The Ancient Worthies had communion with God but in a different way than the Little Flock in the Gospel Age.

Comment: This order of march was given for practical reasons as well, because the wagons that carried the coverings for the Gershonites and the boards for the Merarites arrived at the destination ahead of the furniture and could thus be set up first. By the time the Kohathites arrived with the articles of furniture, the Tabernacle was already in place.

Reply: Yes, it took hours for the hundreds of thousands of Israelites to get to the location where the cloud stopped. As the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun arrived, they began to pitch their tents in their allotted places. The Gershonites and Merarites started to set up the Tabernacle. Next Reuben and the two associated tribes put up their tents. By the time the Kohathites arrived, the Tabernacle had been set up. Similarly, a mathematical procession was followed in crossing the Red Sea.

Q: While marching, did the Israelites still have to perform the morning and evening sacrifices?

A: No, because all the furniture was covered until the host stopped and the Tabernacle was set up.

Q: Since the shewbread was changed once a week, was travel always completed within one week so that it could be changed?

A: In most cases, yes, for several reasons.

Before starting Chapter 5, we will consider why Gershon (picturing the Great Company class

prior to the Gospel Age) was ranked ahead of Merari (picturing the Great Company class *during* the Gospel Age). A certain principle is in operation; namely, those with more light who fail to live up to that light should not be favored more than those who, with less light, were equally faithful. In other words, in the Gospel Age, the Christian has had much more light than the consecrated did in Old Testament times. Therefore, in the order of march and in other ways, the Gershonites were given a higher rank than the Merarites.

Comment: And even *within* a class—whether it is the Little Flock, the Ancient Worthies, or one of the two Great Company classes—the same principle operates. Down through the Gospel Age, and particularly during the Dark Ages and the Inquisition, little truth (or light) was available, yet some made their calling and election sure based on just the “oil” and the “wine” (Rev. 6:6). Star will differ from star in glory according to the light available and how faithfully it was used (1 Cor. 15:41).

Reply: Yes, it is a general principle with all four spiritual classes.

Comment: The Great Company class of this age has the opportunity to be of the Little Flock, unlike the Great Company class of prior ages, for Jesus had not yet died on the Cross.

Num. 5:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 5:2 Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead:

Num. 5:3 Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell.

Num. 5:4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Comment: At any given time, there must have been a fair number of those who were without the camp.

Reply: Yes, and on a temporary basis for most of them, although of course a leper had to remain outside the camp for the duration of his leprosy. If, when the priest looked at the leprosy after a period of seven days, it had not progressed any further, the party was required to wait another seven days to make sure he was cured. Then, if all was favorable, he could come back into the camp, provided he followed certain regulations. The fact a stipulation for leprosy was stated in the Book of Numbers indicates that morality was given a high priority.

Comment: These were practical instructions for the communal type of life in the Tabernacle arrangement.

Q: What was the significance of not touching the dead?

A: One reason was to show that death is an enemy for the human race.

Comment: From a former study, the following is summarized: “Adamic death has left weaknesses in each of us that must be dealt with. A sin totally Adamic is wholly forgiven when asked for. A sin partially willful requires expiation.”

Reply: Yes, that is the better reply. When mankind are raised from the tomb in the Kingdom, they will still have the deficiencies of character that were developed under the present reign of

sin and death. These character weaknesses will have to be eradicated in one way or another. Adamic sin can be freely forgiven, but willful sin is not forgiven in any age. For instance, Saul was in the company of those who stoned Stephen. When he became the Apostle Paul and was Spirit-begotten, he had to have corresponding experiences and retribution to offset the willful sin of holding the coats of those who did the stoning. The degree and kind of willfulness determines whether stripes are needed. And of course willful sins *before* consecration are one thing, and willful sins *after* consecration are another. In the present life, we do not have the capability to distinguish between a sin of Adamic weakness and a sin that is partially or wholly willful except in certain cases.

Comment: Verse 2 lists three categories of sin: leprosy, an issue of blood, and touching the dead. The Israelites were warned to be on the alert for these three conditions.

Reply: Yes, and this instruction was given before the Israelites left Mount Sinai to begin their journey. In fact, several more chapters in Numbers continue to be preparatory before the Israelites moved.

The lesson for the Christian is that we are living in an age of corruption and uncleanness, and we must be extremely careful lest we become contaminated. The Lord has a high standard. Without holiness shall no man see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). In other words, our innermost desire must be to please the Lord and to lead as holy a life as we can under the rules and regulations of Scripture.

A person does not usually get leprosy from touching a leper. Nevertheless, a leper was not allowed to let another person touch him. His or her responsibility was to cover the mouth and cry "Unclean!" so that no one would approach too close. Spiritually speaking, leprosy was considered a punishment for sin. Leprosy is a big subject, for there are different kinds and degrees of the disease.

"So did [past tense] the children of Israel" (verse 4). For a while, the Israelites obeyed these instructions.

Num. 5:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 5:6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass against the LORD, and that person be guilty;

Num. 5:7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed.

In one sense, this was a trespass against the Lord, and in another sense, it was a trespass against a neighbor. The "fifth part" was a 20 percent fine against the one who committed the trespass. For example, with money, the guilty party had to restore 20 percent interest plus the principal. Notice that the person also had to confess his sin.

Num. 5:8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.

Num. 5:9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his.

Num. 5:10 And every man's hallowed things shall be his: whatsoever any man giveth the priest, it shall be his.

If the one trespassed against died and had no heir or close relative, the indebtedness was recompensed to the priest. Also, in connection with any kind of offering, a designated portion went to the priest.

Num. 5:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 5:12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him,

Num. 5:13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner;

Num. 5:14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled:

Num. 5:15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

The jealousy offering pertained to suspected infidelity on the part of the wife. Why was this presented only from the standpoint of the woman? Because in the antitype, the man represents Jesus, who does not sin, and the woman represents the Church. From a natural standpoint, however, a man would be just as guilty as a woman.

There were two possibilities: (1) the woman was innocent, or (2) the woman was guilty. The husband had the right to initiate a trial of jealousy to determine his wife's guilt or innocence. Suppose he found his wife pregnant but had no awareness of how she had gotten into that condition. It could be that his suspicions were wrong, for there were no witnesses that adultery had been committed. (If she were discovered in the act and had not cried out to indicate rape, she would be put to death, and the jealousy offering would not be used.) This was a case of either secret sin or secret innocence, and the husband had the right to bring the matter to the priest for adjudication.

For the trial, the husband brought a barley offering to the priest: "the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal." To indicate that this was a somber offering, no oil or frankincense was put on the barley. If guilty, the woman was fearful, for she knew she would be exposed.

Num. 5:16 And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD:

Num. 5:17 And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water:

Num. 5:18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse:

"Holy water" was water from the Laver. The woman had to drink a mixture of holy water and

dust from the floor of the Tabernacle. To the guilty woman, the holy water became the “bitter water of the curse”; i.e., when the woman was guilty, the water mixture proved to be a curse.

Why was the dust that was mixed into the holy water taken from the *floor* of the Tabernacle?

Comment: As part of the sand floor in the Tabernacle, the dust pictured judgment.

Reply: Yes, and incidentally, this Scripture proves that the floor in the Holy and the Most Holy of the Tabernacle was dirt or sand.

Those who go into Second Death are likened to salt that has lost its savor and is unfit except to be trodden underfoot. The holy water of the Laver was clean until dirt was put in it.

Q: What is the significance of the woman’s head being uncovered?

A: The uncovered head symbolized exposure. If she was guilty, her sin would be exposed.

Why was the offering called “the offering of *memorial*”?

Comment: If the sin had occurred, it would be brought into remembrance; it would be exposed.

Reply: The offering was a memorial of iniquity for the guilty woman. Moreover, it was the “offering of [the husband’s] jealousy.” Therefore, if the woman was humiliated in this manner but was found to be innocent, the shame attached to her husband.

Num. 5:19 And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse:

Num. 5:20 But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband:

Num. 5:21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;

Num. 5:22 And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen.

Num. 5:23 And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water:

Num. 5:24 And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter.

The charge was repeated again with the presumption, first, that she was innocent and then that she was guilty. If the woman was guilty, her thigh would rot and her belly would swell. In other words, she would die a very shameful death. The “thigh” (i.e., her reproductive organs), the area of sin, became bloated. This method was the only recourse a husband had for discovering secret sin.

Comment: It took faith on the part of the innocent woman to trust that the test would manifest her innocence.

Comment: Proverbs 6:30–35 reads, “Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry; But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold; he shall give all the substance of his house. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away. For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.”

Reply: Notice how severely the thief was penalized, even though he stole because he was hungry. He had to restore sevenfold. However, adultery was even more serious.

Comment: The husband’s jealousy was so strong that no matter how much he was paid, he was not happy.

Num. 5:25 Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman’s hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar:

Num. 5:26 And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water.

Num. 5:27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

Num. 5:28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed.

Num. 5:29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled;

Num. 5:30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law.

Num. 5:31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity.

By extension, verse 31 implies that if the woman was innocent, then her husband was guilty of iniquity, and the shame was upon him. Some kind of redress would follow. Moreover, the innocent woman was guaranteed she would “conceive seed” and bear a child. This reward was significant, for every woman hoped to be the one to bear the Messiah.

Comment: If the innocent woman was barren, this experience would turn out to be a blessing, for she would subsequently have a child.

Num. 6:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 6:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto the LORD:

The mention of a woman is unusual here. Either a man or a woman could take the Nazarite vow, which was called a separation unto the Lord. The vow could be either temporary or for a

lifetime. In antitype, the lifetime vow represents a vow of consecration.

Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist all took the Nazarite vow. With Samuel, it was his mother Hannah who committed him to a Nazarite vow for life. The fact that Samuel acquiesced to that vow gives insight into his character, for it is to his credit that he respected his mother's vow, and even more to his credit that he was faithful unto death.

Num. 6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.

The one who took the Nazarite vow was to refrain from all drinks made from grapes, both fermented and unfermented, and from grapes themselves whether fresh or dried (raisins). In other words, *nothing* from the fruit of the vine was to be eaten regardless of the state it was in.

Why was this prohibition given? Because of the antitype. Grapevines tend to grow downward, to gravitate to the earth. Hence they need to be constantly tended, watched, and lifted up.

A grapevine can be favorable or unfavorable in Scripture, and here it is unfavorable. In the favorable sense, Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (John 15:5). His followers are to bring forth fruit based on the Father's Spirit working in them and producing that fruit. In the unfavorable sense, Revelation 14:19 says, "And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God." The unfavorable vine of the earth will be cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Num. 6:4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

The Revised Standard Version is better: "All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins." This prohibition against eating or drinking anything from the grapevine was one condition of the Nazarite vow. Other conditions follow.

Num. 6:5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head: until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth himself unto the LORD, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

The second prohibition was that no razor could be used on the head. Before the vow was made, the head had to be shaved—and the body too as far as possible. The point is that the individual started from scratch when the vow was made, and the hair was allowed to grow from the beginning of the period of separation until its conclusion.

From the standpoint of appearance, it is easier for a man to be bald than a woman. Thus, more sacrifice and humility was required for a woman to voluntarily take the Nazarite vow. Although the Scriptures do not mention any woman who took this vow, the very fact the female gender is included indicates that someone back in history did so.

Q: Was the woman mentioned because of the antitype?

A: Yes.

Num. 6:6 All the days that he separateth himself unto the LORD he shall come at no dead body.

The three stipulations were (1) not partaking of any product of the grapevine, (2) not cutting the hair, and now (3) not coming into proximity with a corpse.

Num. 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die: because the consecration of his God is upon his head.

Even if the dead person were the individual's father, mother, brother, or sister, the prohibition applied. In other words, one had to be very circumspect lest he become unclean. When Nadab and Abihu died because of disobedience, the other two priests, Eleazar and Ithamar, as well as Aaron, were not allowed to mourn. But here in Numbers 6, disobedience was not a factor.

Comment: The wife or husband is not included in this prohibition. That would be a hard requirement, especially if one took the Nazarite vow for life.

Reply: What is purposely omitted should not be in the picture.

Comment: Under the Law, the priests could defile themselves for immediate family, but a wife is not mentioned.

Reply: That is because the spouse was considered to be part of the individual.

Comment: The situation with the Prophet Ezekiel was an exception. He was told not to mourn for the death of his wife.

Reply: Yes. And let us consider the priests. Jesus did not take the Nazarite vow because it was a particular vow with spelled-out preconditions. His commitment was *wholehearted* and not confined to the rules and regulations of the Nazarite vow. Neither was the priesthood, another exception, so confined. However, if a death were one of ignominy, such as with Eli's two sons, who were disobedient in the priesthood itself, the death was not to be mourned. An example of disobedience was their making exorbitant demands upon the people who brought offerings. In the antitype, this would be like passing the collection plate around twice.

"Because the consecration of his God is upon his head." In a figurative sense, Jesus made a remark along this line: "Let the dead bury the dead." One who was interested in becoming his disciple said, "Master, I would like to follow you, but first, let me tend to matters at my father's funeral." Jesus' reply, which was particularly suited to that individual and *his* need, manifested wisdom. Why? The answer was given on another occasion when Jesus said, "If you want to be my disciple, you should sit down and count the cost" (Luke 14:28). Unlike the tactics of many evangelists, Jesus did not try to convert people through emotion. While emotion plays a part with many in their original consecration, the deciding factor should be the realization of the sobriety and the responsibility of becoming a disciple of Christ. Once the vow is made, a person cannot look back or remove his hand from the plow (Luke 9:62). Therefore, when Jesus said, "Let the dead bury the dead," the individual was being tested and was being forced to make a decision.

In summary, as long as the Nazarite vow was in operation, those who took the vow could not come near death even under extreme conditions of brother, sister, father, or mother. To come near the dead rendered the individual unclean. This requirement shows the importance of a vow to the Lord. That vow is more important than family. Some fail to make their calling and election sure because they love their spouse, children, or parents more than God. The consecrated are tested along this line. Of course waverings will occur in relatively little matters (for instance, marital obligations sometimes prevent attendance at a meeting), but on

important matters, decisions must be made according to the Lord's instruction and principles.

If possible, and depending upon the degree of seriousness in a prayer matter, some thought should be given in advance before beginning the prayer. The purpose is to give the individual time to precondition himself or herself. One type of preconditioning is to fast in the hope that the Lord will hearken to the prayer and incline His ear to what is considered to be a need. It is not that the individual is questioning God's wisdom.

Num. 6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy unto the LORD.

Num. 6:9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

If one who was under the Nazarite vow became defiled through contact with death, he had to go through a cleansing ritual. Even Miriam had to go outside the camp for seven days. By her attitude in failing to recognize Moses as God's servant, she figuratively spat in Moses' face (Numbers 12).

Verse 9 was a case of accidental contact with death when someone nearby suddenly died. Details are not given as to how the contact occurred, just that it was not intentional. Two examples would be the death of a baby that was being held or the sudden death of a party through a heart attack.

When the individual shaved his head after the seventh day of separation for his uncleanness, the eighth day became a fresh start. In other words, after shaving the head, the individual had to start his Nazarite vow all over again for the length of time originally specified. Stated another way, the vow had to be renewed for the same period of time.

Num. 6:10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Num. 6:11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.

As part of the cleansing, on the eighth day the person had to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the door of the Tabernacle. To make atonement for the individual, the priest offered the two birds, one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. This offering was not difficult for the party to make. In fact, it was a simple offering that even the poor could afford. The only lesser offering was a handful of flour.

"For that he sinned by the dead." Instead of Satan's being gradually bound, he is getting more and more control. As a recent illustration, a group of people on television, including scholars, were quoting from the Bible and then questioning how God could be a God of love when He did so-and-so. This was *human* thinking. God intends to show ultimately that the wisdom of this world is foolishness, but in the meantime, He sometimes lets the foolish dominate the day. Depending on the nature of the question, it may take only one to unsettle a person, so such thinking is dangerous and should not be listened to. This illustration is an example of an "unclean thing" we should not touch. It is essential for us not only to read the Bible but also to meditate on its principles.

The early chapters of Leviticus contain many laws on sin and trespass offerings, and they all

start with “If any man sin through *ignorance*.” The point is that a sin of ignorance is not simply excused, but if and when the individual becomes aware of the sin, he must make amends. This is *God’s* thinking, not man’s. If we do not understand a matter, we should simply trust that God has a good reason for it. For instance, an article the Pastor wrote about the four attributes of God shows the difference between human philosophy and God’s thinking. In the article, the four attributes (Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Power) were seated at a conference table discussing God’s plans for the future. When Wisdom suggested a plan, the other three attributes (Justice, Love, and Power) acquiesced to the leadership and prominent role of Wisdom. The reason for mentioning the article is this: When God devised His plan, how could He tell anyone about the depth of His love and affection for others and His interest in and concern for them? On a human level, to say “I love you” is cheap and easy, for love is shown by demonstration and power, not by talk. The point is that Wisdom determined the necessity for the permission of evil. Not only did God see that the permission of evil was the best way, but He wanted to honor His Son, whom He so loved, and He saw that the best way was to have him die on the Cross, one of the most painful, ignominious deaths possible. Would any human being think along this line? No! The very fact God chose to use a temporary permission of evil means it is the best method to bring out His concern and love for the human race and especially for His Son and the Church—as well as for yet unborn and uncreated beings and for already created angelic beings. It takes a knowledge of God to have faith in and respect for Him and His precepts. David said “the law of the LORD” is to be man’s meditation day and night (Psa. 1:2).

Num. 6:12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering; but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

When a person sins through ignorance, he is not morally responsible. The person is not developed enough to recognize that he has committed a trespass. But as the person develops and grows and then later recognizes that a sin was committed, he should try to make amends. Therefore, even an accidental brushing with death, a touching or getting near death, required cleansing under the Nazarite vow.

The spiritual lesson is that when the Christian finds himself in an unholy atmosphere, he should RUN as far away as possible like a scared rabbit. Such fleeing is an example of making straight paths for the feet. “Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way” (Heb. 12:13). We should not allow ourselves to get into an environment that is unholy. Such defilement is often gradual and subtle, but it is like smoke in a room. We are not doing the smoking, but we should get out of the smoke-filled room as soon as possible lest that smoke should get into our system. Thus the principle here in Numbers 6 of separation to the Lord is the carefulness of the Christian in his walk and how easy it is to become defiled. The defilement can occur gradually, little by little, or it can occur suddenly.

Uncleanness permeates society today. When going through the checkout at a supermarket, for example, we pass magazines that thrive on immorality. Even television ads in prime time can be harmful. There is no question that the Devil is getting more and more influence. Even though so far in the Laodicean period, Christians are not being burned at the stake, there are many dangers, especially with mental battles. This chapter on the Nazarite vow underscores the difficulty of the vow of separation or consecration, and it shows the necessity for seeking forgiveness and cleansing on a daily basis.

Comment: The Apostle Jude picked up this principle when he said to hate even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). Trying to help a brother would seem to be a noble cause, but contamination can result.

Reply: Yes, one can get contaminated by entering into a debate and trying to reason with the unholy one. If anyone who is called a brother is a drunkard, an adulterer, etc., the Christian is not even to eat at the same table (1 Cor. 5:11).

Comment: Today it is often a family member who tries to draw the Christian into the world.

Reply: Yes, the influence must be guarded against. To be forewarned is, to a certain extent, to be forearmed, or prepared.

Num. 6:13 And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Num. 6:14 And he shall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he lamb of the first year without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering, and one ram without blemish for peace offerings,

At the conclusion of the predetermined term of the Nazarite vow, the individual (male or female) who had thus set himself apart to the Lord had to present certain offerings. In other words, before he was released from his obligation, he had to bring three animals, plus lesser offerings, “unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,” i.e., into the Court at the door of the Holy. The animals, which were not large, were probably tethered together. The order of offerings was (1) burnt, (2) sin, and (3) peace. The burnt offering was a (young) male lamb without blemish of the first year. The sin offering was a (young) female lamb without blemish also of the first year. The peace offering was a mature animal: a ram without blemish.

For the burnt offering, a lamb was offered according to the manner prescribed in the Law in the Book of Leviticus. In other words, it was cut in pieces, and the pieces were laid to the head, representing The Christ. We should keep in mind that this service of Numbers 6 was not Leviticus 8, 9, or 16, the especially important chapters for the Church to understand in the Harvest. Rather, the service dealt with another area, for in the antitype, it is one of the sacrifices *subsequent* to the Day of Atonement. We should also keep in mind that the Nazarite vow was voluntary, freewill—and not obligatory because of a trespass. A person could voluntarily enter the Court and make this vow for a specific length of time. When the time expired, the individual was required to bring three animals.

A burnt offering was wholly burnt on the altar, picturing acceptance by fire to God. The fact that the burnt offering was the first of the three offerings is significant. It shows that the individual who brings the offering in the Kingdom must remember the office of The Christ in God’s plan of redemption.

The sin offering was radically different in that it was a *female* animal. Moreover, it was a *young* female animal. In two other instances, a female animal was brought for an offering. (1) Leviticus 4:32 states that if an individual of the congregation sinned, he had to bring a female lamb without blemish. That offering applies to the next age, after the Tabernacle (of the Gospel Age) has been finished and the antitypical priesthood completed. The lamb represents an individual of the congregation—that is, his (or her) appreciation of and holding to Christ for redemption and salvation. (2) Another female offering was the red heifer or, more specifically, the ashes of a red cow, which picture the Ancient Worthies—and therefore also the next age.

In the Kingdom, the people will be judged according to their works, not according to faith. Faith will operate in the next age but in a completely different manner than the present faith justification of the Church. Of course faith has to be evidenced by works, but it is faith that actually justifies in the Gospel Age. In the Kingdom, a measure of faith will be needed to

recognize why an offering is accepted, but there will be no question that Jesus exists and that he is the Messiah. Thus men will walk by sight in the Kingdom, not by faith, and they will be judged according to their works (Matt. 25:31–46; John 10:16). (Incidentally, the Muslim faith is the Antichrist system, as it were, to Christians in lands such as Turkey where there is no Papacy.)

The Nazarite vow was in effect for a temporary or short period of time. Its purpose in antitype is for the offerer to show that he is in the right spirit for his sacrifice to be accepted. Stated another way, his denials and sacrifices (shaving the head, abstaining from fruit of the vine, etc.) evidence his sincerity in wanting to be nearer to God. The vow demonstrates self-abasement before the Lord. When the vow is fulfilled, it is acceptable, for in the mini-period of the vow's duration, the individual develops and gains a victory, as shown by the peace offering.

Psalm 51:19 reads, "Then ... shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." In other words, *at the end* of the next age, perfect men will be required to offer a bullock (a more mature animal) on God's altar. But the Nazarite vow and offerings apply *during* the Kingdom. Thus the Nazarite vow is a beautiful mini-picture of a person who will be trying to draw nearer to God in the Kingdom.

Why is the sequence (1) a burnt offering, (2) a sin offering, and (3) a peace offering? When the individual brings the offerings, he will recognize the office of the Mediator, The Christ. Jesus is a King, a High Priest (a doctor), and a Prophet (a public teacher). In the Kingdom, the people will realize that to draw near to God, they have to follow an orderly procedure through The Christ. In contrast, the Christian now retreats to his private prayer closet. God and Jesus are his "temple." But when a Nazarite vow is fulfilled in the next age, the individual will have to go to the priesthood with the three animals, which picture three types of dedication to the Lord.

Num. 6:15 And a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings.

The basket of unleavened bread pictures truth based on statements, words, and deeds. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. In this age, wafers picture the *hope* of salvation or redemption. The wafers are thin, demonstrating that we see through a glass darkly. They are a foretaste of salvation. The thin wafer is different from a regular pita bread.

But what would the wafers represent in the next age? They would also picture the hope of salvation. Willful sins committed in the present age will receive stripes in the Kingdom. But the deeds of the next age will also be judged.

Num. 6:16 And the priest shall bring them before the LORD, and shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering:

The priest will offer the individual's sin offering and burnt offering. The offerings will be acceptable in the next age based, first, on Jesus and, second, on the individual's works.

The Book of Leviticus begins with burnt offerings of the subsequent-day sacrifices. Leviticus 1:4 reads, "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." Notice that the burnt offering is spoken of as making atonement. The rest of the chapter shows that the burnt offering is cut in pieces, picturing The Christ. Yet, in a way, this sacrifice is also a kind of sin offering. Because (1) God accepted Jesus' sacrifice and (2) the offering of the Lord's goat is for the people, the individual's offering will be accepted. Thus the burnt offering is a different view of the sin offering, and the burnt offering

at the end of the Nazarite vow shows atonement. The individual will realize that his offering would not be acceptable if it were not for The Christ, the male lamb. But when the priest *performed the offerings*, he did so in a different sequence from that listed in verse 14. He offered the female lamb of the sin offering first. The sin offering represents the works of the individual in the Kingdom; i.e., the individual is trying to be justified by his works.

Num. 6:17 And he shall offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering.

“The priest shall offer also *his* [the individual’s] meat offering.” The “meat offering” was a cereal, or meal, offering of flour, wheat, etc. Each animal offering had to be accompanied by a certain amount of cereal offering. The size of the cereal container was proportionate to the size, value, and maturity of the animal. Leviticus 1 shows that a handful of flour could be considered a sin offering under certain circumstances, even though there was no blood. Flour is an acceptable offering for those who are incapable of deeper understanding in the present life. When such mentally deficient individuals first come back from the tomb, they will not understand blood redemption, but they will understand the hand that feeds them. Even animals understand that much. Thus all who come forth from the tomb will be expected to make an offering, even just a handful of flour, in recognition of their desire to please God and to comply with His rules and regulations. But as they grow and develop into “bullocks” in the Kingdom Age, they will be required to give a cereal offering proportionate to their development at a given time. By the end of the Kingdom Age, all will be “bullocks” and will, therefore, be required to give a full cereal offering, i.e., a full-grown steer.

Num. 6:18 And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

Num. 6:19 And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven:

Num. 6:20 And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD: this is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

The individual both began and ended his Nazarite vow with the shaving of his head. Stated another way, the person began his vow with a bald head and ended his vow with a bald head. The hair that grew during his holy period of separation unto the Lord became acceptable to the Lord. And what does the hair represent? The hair symbolizes Kingdom Age *deeds* through which the individual proves his sincerity of wanting to be in harmony with God. The hair was put in the fire under the peace offering, for it was acceptable.

The principle behind the poignancy of this vow is illustrated by the poor husband and wife in the O. Henry short story *The Gift of the Magi*. To show their love for one another, she cut her beautiful long hair and sold it to raise money to buy him a watch chain. Meanwhile, he sold his watch to buy a comb for her hair. A woman who took the Nazarite vow showed her sincerity toward God by cutting her hair. The vow was a humbling experience with regard to not only diet (no fruit of the vine) but also outward form and show. Now we get a feeling of why the hair became an offering and how pleased God was with the period of separation. In antitype, not only is the individual brought more into heart harmony with the Heavenly Father, but also his hope of salvation is growing.

The priest acted as the mediator in making the offering, and he got a portion of the offerings for himself. This arrangement illustrates that the individual who is helped in the next age will have a sense of gratitude for the member of the Little Flock who has assisted him. And the reward for the particular saint will be his joy in having helped the individual.

Num. 6:21 This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto the LORD for his separation, beside that that his hand shall get: according to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation.

In addition to the Nazarite vow, the person may have vowed something extra. It might be just words of praise to feel closer to God, but it would be in addition “to the [Nazarite] vow which he vowed.” The supplementary vow would also be acceptable.

Num. 6:22 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 6:23 Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

Num. 6:24 The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

Num. 6:25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

Num. 6:26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Num. 6:27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

This familiar blessing is often quoted, but notice that it was to be invoked upon the “children of Israel,” not upon the priesthood. Hence it is actually a blessing for the next age, although it can apply *in principle* to us now. While in the Kingdom, the world of mankind will come into harmony with God as individuals, those who are successful will, as a group, enter into the age beyond. They will be accounted worthy to enter “that world [age]” (Luke 20:35,36). “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom [that was] prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matt. 25:34).

“And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel.” God’s name will not be put on the individual until he passes the test in the Little Season and is accounted worthy to enter the age beyond the Millennium.

The Book of Numbers is important, yet it is probably one of the least studied books of the Bible. Studying the besetments of the Israelites helps us to know what not to do.

Q: The Nazarite vow could be either temporary or for a lifetime. If it was a lifetime vow, how could verses 13–21 be fulfilled, for the vow had to be kept unto death. Therefore, would these verses apply only to a temporary vow?

A: The Nazarite vow is called a “temporary” vow. In Scripture, we know of only three individuals who fulfilled a lifetime vow. Therefore, why direct so much attention to the exception? In the Gospel Age antitype, the Nazarite vow for the Christian would be fasting and praying. For example, if a person feels that a cloud has come between him and the Father, he should fast and pray in a heart-searching way.

Many areas of Scripture can be gone into more deeply. For example, the dimensions and

description of Ezekiel's Temple are so clear, sharp, and mathematical that even a natural person could be taught. Of course the spiritual lessons are another matter; they are reserved for the consecrated.

Num. 7:1 And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them;

Num. 7:2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered:

On the day that Moses had fully set up, anointed, and sanctified the Tabernacle and all of the instruments and the altar, the 12 princes of Israel presented a different and separate type of collective, or communal, offering.

Num. 7:3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle.

In all, six covered wagons and 12 oxen were offered, that is, one-half wagon and one ox for each tribe. The wagons were essential for transporting portions of the Tabernacle (boards, curtains, etc.).

Q: Was a joint decision made as to what the offering would be, or were freewill offerings overruled to work out equally to a certain number of wagons and oxen?

A: The account does not say, but there must have been some kind of agreement because of the similarities of the offering for each of the 12 princes.

Num. 7:4 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 7:5 Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service.

Num. 7:6 And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites.

Num. 7:7 Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershon, according to their service:

To the Gershonites, one group of Levites, were given two wagons and four oxen so that they could transport the heavy curtains and veils. Because of the nature of their service, the Gershonites did not need as many wagons as the Merarites. Stated another way, the wagons and oxen were apportioned according to the load and amount of material to be transported.

Num. 7:8 And four wagons and eight oxen he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

The Merarites, being responsible for transporting the boards, sockets, and posts, were given four wagons and eight oxen.

The service of Gershon and Merari was under the supervision of Ithamar.

Num. 7:9 But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.

Since the sequence of importance was Kohath, Gershon, and Merari, verse 9 tells why the Kohathites were not mentioned ahead of the Gershonites. It was because “the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders.” What the Kohathites were assigned to transport—the articles of furniture—was carried on their shoulders and not in wagons.

Num. 7:10 And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

Num. 7:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

Each individual tribe was responsible for bringing a certain type of offering consisting of several parts. These offerings were made in connection with the dedication of the altar, whereas the earlier communal offering of wagons and oxen was simply to provide the means for the conveyance of the Tabernacle.

Q: Is there a significance to the phrase “on his day”? “Each prince [offered] on his day.” Why did the tribes offer one after the other for 12 days, rather than all offer on the same day?

A: One reason was the size of the offering. If all 12 had offered together, there would have been too many animals to handle. Also, the offering was more impressive by stretching it out over 12 days.

Num. 7:12 And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah:

Now we are starting to consider the offering of each prince for the dedication of the altar. Judah, the most important tribe, offered first, followed by the two tribes associated with him. Next came Reuben and his two tribes, then Ephraim and his two tribes, and finally Dan and the two tribes associated with him.

With each of the 12 princes, an abbreviated lineage is given, going back only one generation. Of the tribe of Judah, Nahshon was the prince and his father was Amminadab. Then the lineage jumps back to Judah, omitting the generations in the intervening 215 years that the Israelites were in Egypt.

Num. 7:13 And his offering was one silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:14 One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense:

The enumeration of the offering of each of the 12 princes on behalf of his tribe began with the metal (silver and gold) utensils. The weight of the silver and the gold was as follows:

Silver charger	130 shekels
Silver bowl	70 shekels
Gold spoon	10 shekels

The silver charger and bowl were filled with fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering, and the large gold spoon (like a ladle) was full of incense. Flour mixed with oil made a kind of dough. When the Israelites left Egypt, the women carried unleavened dough in their front apron or skirt. The Israelites ate this dough for the seven days of the Passover Feast. Now it was more than a year later for this setting in Numbers 7.

The large silver charger would have been brought from Egypt as part of the gifts the Egyptians bestowed on the Israelites after the tenth plague at the time of the Exodus. It was offered representatively on behalf of the entire tribe of Judah, more than 74,000 people (Num. 1:27). Since 3,000 shekels weighed 100 pounds, then 1 shekel weighed .03 pound. Thus the weight of each silver charger was 3.9 pounds, which was not such an exorbitant offering for a tribe to give.

Num. 7:15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Notice that three animals were given by each tribe for the burnt offering: a young bullock, a mature ram, and a young lamb (probably a male) of the first year. What did these animals represent? According to the law of the burnt offering, all three animals were cut into pieces (Lev. 1:6). The fact there were three animals made it an unusual burnt offering.

The antitype of this offering seems to be the next age. The ceremonies of Leviticus 8 and 9 preceded the offerings in Numbers 7. As described in Leviticus 8, the consecration of the priesthood took seven days. Leviticus 9 tells of events on the eighth day, among which was the consuming of the burnt offering by miraculous fire. The burning represented God's acceptance (it was as if He had eaten the offering), and the altar was sanctified henceforth. After the installation of the priesthood into office—that is, after the eighth day—the people could bring their offerings. Thus the ceremonies of Leviticus 8 and 9 preceded the offerings of Numbers 7. The Tabernacle was mechanically set up on the first day of the first month of the second year (one year after the Exodus), but the priesthood had to be subsequently made fit for office.

Another point about the burnt offering: it was fully consumed except for the skin (the animal was "flayed," or skinned). Therefore, all three animals of the Numbers 7 burnt offering were fully consumed by fire—which means that on each of the 12 days, three animals for a burnt offering were cut in pieces and fully consumed by fire.

In the next age, natural Israel has to be acquainted with the significance of the offerings that literally took place back in the type. Of course we study the offerings from an antitypical standpoint, but as the Book of Ezekiel shows, a similar *literal* ceremony will take place at the dedication of the Third Temple, and the offering will be miraculously consumed by fire. When that future literal ceremony occurs, it, too, will have a spiritual meaning. The bringing of these future offerings will picture Israel's mental appreciation of God's dealing with them and of The Christ.

The fact that *three* animals were cut in pieces and offered as a burnt offering in Numbers 7 shows that the offering of Jesus and the offering of his Church are inseparable. The world will understand much more when the Third Temple arrangement goes into effect, for the future offerings will be done in a very specific manner that the people will fully appreciate. First, however, the people will have to be prepared—just as we, as Christians, could not attempt to discuss Numbers 7 without first studying *Tabernacle Shadows*. Otherwise, this chapter would be utter confusion. And we should keep in mind that the antitype of this chapter is the next age.

Of the three animals for a burnt offering, the young bullock represented Jesus in a special sense, but nevertheless, the Church was included in a subtle way by the animal's being cut into

pieces. This is speculation, but the three animals would seem to represent the following. With the young bullock, the first of the three burnt offerings, *Jesus* is emphasized, but the Church is there secondarily. The second offering, a ram, emphasizes the role of the *Church* more, but *Jesus* is shown by the head of the ram. The third burnt offering emphasizes the *individual's* role—*his* appreciation and recognition—even though the animal was cut in pieces like the bullock and the ram.

The role of individuals needs further clarification. In the next age, works will be important. For instance, in Leviticus 16 regarding the Day of Atonement, first a bullock was offered as a sin offering and then a goat. The goat represented the Church, but the sin offering was for the Adamic sin *of the people*, not for themselves. Although the bullock covered the goat and made it acceptable, the goat was offered for the sins of the people, not for the under-priesthood. And so the people will be made to realize that the reason their offering is acceptable for a burnt offering is because of the bullock and the ram.

To repeat: It was unusual to have three animals for a burnt offering. Usually there were just two. The three burnt offerings are summarized below:

Young bullock = primarily *Jesus*, the Church secondarily
 Ram = primarily the Church, but *Jesus* is there secondarily
 Young lamb = the individual's appreciation

It might be questioned how an individual in the Kingdom Age could be represented in this burnt offering. Eventually in the Kingdom, the people will “offer bullocks upon thine altar” (Psa. 51:19). “Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.” The bullocks represent not merely physical perfection but also a maturity of development, for perfection of the body does not automatically make one morally clean. Satan was created perfect, but when he meditated a usurpation, he became morally unclean. The earliest chapters of Leviticus show the simplest burnt offering to be a handful of cereal, then a lamb, a goat, and finally a bullock. The offering of a bullock will not necessarily be at the end of the Kingdom Age, for as each person develops into maturity, he will make that offering. For instance, those who come forth from the tomb early in the Kingdom should reach maturity of development much sooner than those who are last to be resuscitated.

By the end of the Kingdom, all generations then living will have developed to human (or physical) perfection, but moral perfection is also needed. Satan will be loosed in the Little Season to test the moral development of the people. In other words, those who live into the ages of ages will have been *tried and proven*. First, they will be brought up to the condition of physical perfection that Adam had before he sinned, and then they will be given a test just as Adam was. And like Adam, many will fall, but many others will be saved.

Comment: Since a bullock is to be offered by those who reach maturity and perfection, it is reasonable that mankind will be able to bring lesser offerings as they are making progress, as they are *in the way toward perfection*. A lesser offering will demonstrate a heart condition of desiring to praise and please the Lord.

Reply: Knowledge and character development are not the same. The people will come to physical perfection as individuals long before the final group test of the Little Season. Down through the Kingdom Age, it will not take 500, 600, 700 years for individuals to reach physical perfection, but even when they are physically perfect, God will be judging them according to the knowledge they have and their works. In fact, the purpose of the dedication and cleansing of the altar is to make the people's offerings acceptable. In the Gospel Age, only the Church's

offering is acceptable, and fortunately, we are judged according to our faith, not our works.

Num. 7:16 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Normally, based on Leviticus 16, we think of a goat for a sin offering as representing the Church, but let us consider Ezekiel 43:21,22, “Thou shalt take the bullock also of the sin offering, and he shall burn it in the appointed place of the house, without the sanctuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they did cleanse it with the bullock.” Notice, the goat is offered on the *second* day. On the day that the altar is dedicated, a bullock alone will be offered as a sin offering. Then for seven successive days, a goat will be offered. The bullock’s being offered first, pictures Jesus’ death at the end of his ministry of 3 1/2 years, which occurred at the beginning of the Gospel Age. Fifty days later came the offering of the Church at Pentecost, and the offering continues throughout the Gospel Age until the end of the seventh, or Laodicean, period of the Church, which is pictured by the last of the seven days. During the Gospel Age, the goat is being offered, “fill[ing] up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Col. 1:24).

Now, here in Numbers 7:16, we read of just a goat for a sin offering with no mention of a bullock. Hence this offering must be viewed in a different manner. We should remember, however, that the burnt offerings *preceded* this sin offering. In other words, the type was showing that in the next age, the Church will have very close dealings with mankind. The people will not deal with Jesus direct. He will be the High Priest of the Kingdom Age, the Ruler, the King, etc., and the Church will be the underpriests of the spiritual order. Just as in natural child rearing, the mother nurtures (or nurses) and the father disciplines the child, so it will be on the spiritual level in the next age. When the people come to the Temple, they will realize and appreciate why God waited so long to open their eyes with regard to Messiah’s Kingdom—that it was because He was selecting a priesthood. Even though the members of the Little Flock will not materialize, they will each be responsible for thousands and thousands of people. And Jesus will be over all.

The point is that the goat illustrates the closeness of the Church to mankind in dealing with and instructing them. During the Kingdom Age, the Church will be in the forefront, and Jesus will do most of the disciplining to make sure nothing gets out of hand. Any questions or difficult situations will be taken to him—or, rather, first to the apostle that a saint is under and then to Jesus if necessary. Revelation Chapter 7 shows this relationship by describing the Church as consisting of 12 spiritual tribes. The hierarchy of rulership, starting at the bottom, will be as follows: people, a saint (a king and priest), an apostle, Jesus (and at the end of the Kingdom: God). The closeness of the Little Flock to the people was shown in the type by the priest’s getting the hide of the animal. In other words, the particular priest who accepted a sin offering, a peace offering, etc., represented a member of the Little Flock. The Church in glory will get the satisfaction, the heart appreciation, and the enthusiasm of rescuing individuals of the human race from death. Mother Eve, the mother of billions, will be very closely related to the people in the Kingdom.

Of course the Great Company will be messengers between the Little Flock and the Ancient Worthies. For each member of the Church in glory, there will be an Ancient Worthy. Stated another way, an Ancient Worthy will be a mouthpiece for each member of the Little Flock. And, based on similarity of temperament, each Ancient Worthy and his corresponding saint will deal with a particular segment of mankind.

Num. 7:17 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Four different animals constituted the peace offerings: oxen, rams, goats, and lambs—all males. In some way, the oxen represented Christ, even though there were two. The five rams pictured Jesus in another way.

The total number of animals that each prince brought for the burnt, sin, and peace offerings is significant:

Young bullock	1	Oxen	2	
Ram	1	Rams	5	Total: 21 animals
Lamb	1	He goats	5	
Goat	1	Lambs	5	

The total amount of money in shekels (a weight) that was given by each of the 12 princes is also significant (Num. 7:13,14):

Silver charger	130 shekels	
Silver bowl	70 shekels	Total: 210 shekels
Gold spoon	10 shekels	

Notice that there is a mysterious relationship between the total number of animals and the total number of shekels, for 210 is a multiple of 21; that is, $21 \times 10 = 210$. Moreover, as we read through this chapter in Numbers, we see that all 12 princes made identical offerings. In other words, on 12 different days, the *same* offering was made.

We will consider the money first. The total of 210 shekels was the offering of one prince on one day. For 12 days, the total would be 210×12 , or 2,520, the number of years marking Gentile Times.

Now consider the animals. If 21 animals are multiplied by 12, the result is 252, and 2,520 is a multiple of 252; that is, $252 \times 10 = 2,520$. The number 2,520 is mentioned five or six times in the Bible in various ways. For example, it is shown in the cherubim curtain of the Tabernacle when the loops on the two sections are added together ($1,260 + 1,260 = 2,520$). The following Scriptures are justification for concluding that 2,520 is a time period.

1. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams about seven cows and seven ears of corn (animals and vegetables, respectively) to represent seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, that is, $7 \times 360 = 2,520$ (Gen. 41:1–32).
2. Earlier, in Genesis 15:9, God told Abraham to take a heifer three years old, a she goat three years old, a ram three years old, and a turtledove and a young pigeon, each one year old. (Again animals represent years.) The total of their ages was 11 ($3 + 3 + 3 + 1 + 1 = 11$), and $360 \times 11 = 3,960$. The 2,520 and the 3,960 both end up with the year 1914.
3. The handwriting on the wall was "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin" (Dan. 5:25). If the shekel weights for these amounts of money are added, the result is 2,520 ($1,000 + 1,000 + 500 + 20 = 2,520$).

Since the number 2,520 is built into the Tabernacle arrangement, the question might be asked, "What does 2,520 have to do with the Tabernacle, which pictures the Church in the wilderness?" Although the antitype pertains to *Christians* in the Gospel Age, the type was fulfilled by *literal Israelites*, or Jews, traveling to the Promised Land. It is true that the wilderness wanderings covered a period of only 40 years, but the Tabernacle represents a transition from

one condition to another. The term “Gentile Times” refers to the 2,520-year period of time when the Jews were cast off from God’s favor and Gentiles predominated. God pronounced the judgment against King Zedekiah: “Thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, ... Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: ... it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it [to] him” (Ezek. 21:25–27). What happened at the end of Gentile Times, at the end of the First World War? The exaltation of Israel began there, and the Second World War raised Israel a little higher still. While in 1878, Jews could buy land in Israel, the only land available to them was swampland considered unfit for habitation. However, the Jews realized how important it was to get a foothold in Israel, so they bought land and sent volunteer suicide squads there to drain the swamps, knowing that many would contract malaria and die. The Arabs laughed at the Jews’ acquisition of wasteland, but the development in Israel was providential.

Many Old Testament pictures have both a natural and a spiritual application, but the brethren usually consider only the spiritual picture for the Christian. Consider the 3,960-year prophecy given to Abraham. The time prophecy literally applied to him and was given in answer to his question “Whereby shall I know that I will inherit the land?” God replied that there would be a marked change in history at the end of 3,960 years, which is the same year as the end of Gentile Times, that is, 1914.

The account continues with the remaining 11 princes each presenting the same offering as Nahshon of Judah.

Num. 7:18 On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer:

Num. 7:19 He offered for his offering one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:20 One spoon of gold of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:22 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:23 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

Num. 7:24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, did offer:

Num. 7:25 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:26 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:28 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:29 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

Num. 7:30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, did offer:

Num. 7:31 His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:32 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:34 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:35 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Num. 7:36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, did offer:

Num. 7:37 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:38 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:40 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:41 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Num. 7:42 On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, offered:

Num. 7:43 His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:44 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:46 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:47 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Num. 7:48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, offered:

Num. 7:49 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and

thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:50 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:52 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:53 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Num. 7:54 On the eighth day offered Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh:

Num. 7:55 His offering was one silver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:56 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:58 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:59 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Num. 7:60 On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, offered:

Num. 7:61 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:62 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:64 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:65 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

Num. 7:66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, offered:

Num. 7:67 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:68 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:70 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:71 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Num. 7:72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, offered:

Num. 7:73 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:74 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:76 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:77 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

Num. 7:78 On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, offered:

Num. 7:79 His offering was one silver charger, the weight whereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

Num. 7:80 One golden spoon of ten shekels, full of incense:

Num. 7:81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering:

Num. 7:82 One kid of the goats for a sin offering:

Num. 7:83 And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: this was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

Num. 7:84 This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold:

The previous verses in this chapter pertain to the offerings, or gifts, that the princes of the 12 tribes of Israel brought in connection with the dedication of the altar of the Tabernacle. Each of the 12 princes brought exactly the same offering. We have considered the total of each prince's offerings, but the Scriptures also give totals for the shekel weight and the animals of all 12 princes combined.

Num. 7:85 Each charger of silver weighing an hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

Num. 7:86 The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece,

after the shekel of the sanctuary: all the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels.

The shekel weight of the various silver vessels (2,400) plus the gold spoons (120) adds up to 2,520, a mystical number. The calculations are as follows:

130 shekel wt.	70 shekel wt.	1,560	10 shekel wt.	2,400
<u>x 12</u> chargers	<u>x 12</u> bowls	<u>+ 840</u>	<u>x 12</u> spoons	<u>+120</u>
1,560	840	2,400 silver	120 gold	2,520 total
		shekel wt.	shekel wt.	shekel wt.

Num. 7:87 All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering; and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve.

Num. 7:88 And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty. This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed.

The total number of animals was 252, a multiple of 2,520.

Burnt offering:	12	bullocks
	12	rams
	12	lambs of 1st year
Sin offering:	12	goats
Peace offering:	24	oxen
	60	rams
	60	he goats
	60	lambs of 1st year
	252	

Thus there was a relationship, a chronological significance, between the numbering of the animals and the shekel weight of the precious metals. The Pastor did not go into this subject, but in the *Second Volume* in a completely different way, he came to the same conclusion about the significance of the 2,520 years. He showed that the date 1872 was the end of 6,000 years from Adam's creation and 1874 was the end of 6,000 years from his fall. In emphasizing the importance of the seven times ($360 \times 7 = 2,520$), the Pastor referred to Leviticus 26, which warned that seven times of punishment ("Gentile Times") would come on Israel if the nation continued in disobedience. The seven times began with the removal of the crown from Zedekiah in 606 BC, and they ended in AD 1914.

Chronology is the backbone of prophecy. Otherwise, how could we tell where prophetic time periods begin and terminate? We need a framework in which to attach the beginning of fixed prophetic time periods.

Num. 7:89 And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.

This was a new experience for Moses with the recently constructed Tabernacle. Before the Tabernacle was built, the Book of Exodus tells about Moses' going into a tent, the cloud coming down on the tent, and the Lord's speaking to Moses at the door of the tent (Exod. 18:7). The account does not mention a Holy and a Most Holy in this "tabernacle," nor does Scripture give

measurements. Therefore, although the cloud was over the first tent, or tabernacle, this Numbers account about the official Tabernacle tells not merely that there was an exterior descent of the cloud pillar but that it penetrated the Most Holy and shone as the Shekinah light between the two cherubim to manifest the Lord's presence. Now when the Lord spoke, He spoke in the Most Holy.

It is remarkable how Moses had the mental and physical strength to comprehend and supervise the construction of the Tabernacle in such a short period of time. Several activities were occurring at the same time, but of necessity, they must be described separately.

Moses heard "the [audible] voice of one [God] speaking unto him ... from between the two cherubims." In other words, the Shekinah light between the two cherubim represented God in a special sense. Earlier Moses also heard an audible voice when he ascended Mount Sinai and spoke with God almost face to face.

Chapter 8 is an arbitrary division. Verses 1–4 should be part of Chapter 7, for they tell what God said to Moses in the Most Holy.

Q: Doesn't the word "between" really mean "above and between"? The Shekinah light was above and between the cherubim.

A: Exodus 25:22 is a proof text: "And there I [God] will meet with thee [Moses], and I will commune with thee from *above* the mercy seat, from *between* the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony."

Num. 8:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 8:2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.

Num. 8:3 And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.

"When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light *over against the candlestick*," i.e., over against the main stem. The end of each of the seven branches of the Candlestick was a little table on which an almond-shaped lamp sat. The snouts of six of the lamps pointed toward the main, or central, stem of the Candlestick. In other words, the three lamps to the right of the main stem pointed left toward the center, and the three lamps to the left of the main stem pointed right toward the center. The lamp on the central stem, which pictured Christ, pointed forward. The position of the snouts of the seven lamps illustrated John the Baptist's words: "Behold the Lamb of God."

The main stem (Jesus) had four knops and four flowers. In contradistinction, the other six branches had just three knops and three flowers each. Thus the three on a given branch plus the four on the main stem added up to seven, the number of completeness. The symbolism also shows that Christ unites the antitypical Candlestick.

Aaron kept the seven lamps burning in the Holy. As the wicks needed trimming and oil had to be replenished in the vessels, Aaron tended the lamps one at a time. Meanwhile, the other six lamps kept burning. The account here is describing the *initial* lighting of the lamps. Of course when the Israelites were in transit, the lamps were not burning but had to be relit when the Tabernacle was set up again.

Num. 8:4 And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the candlestick.

The Candlestick, which weighed one talent of gold, was beaten out of *one piece*, or lump. It was probably first cast in a vague shape to be the height and width of the Candlestick. Next the hammering process began and the various branches were separated and formed. What intricate and skilled work was needed to hammer out the branches, knops, and flowers all in the right shape, size, and proportion! God's Spirit helped the craftsmen Bezaleel and Aholiab. No doubt they had natural talent, but it was supplemented with supernatural capabilities. Earlier God had given Moses the pattern for the Candlestick. The lamp stand was beaten but not the small separate lamps that it supported.

The lamp stand represents several things, one being the Church. Jesus said of the Church in a collective sense: "Ye are the *light* of the world" (Matt. 5:14). In each of the seven stages of the Church, a multitude of Christians hold forth the light of truth, the Word of life. Jesus likened each individual Christian to a light: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a *candlestick*; and it giveth *light* unto all that are in the house. Let your *light* so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:15,16). If we could, we would like to set up our light on a hill (Matt. 5:14). For this reason, it is nice to see a cross on a hill as a reminder.

Being of beaten work, the Candlestick also symbolizes the discipline, trials, and development of the Christian Church through various hard experiences all down the age. The final result of the new creature is a marvelous work.

In regard to the Ark of the Covenant, the top slab and the two cherubim, which constituted the lid, were made of one piece of beaten work. In this instance, the Church is not pictured. If the slab, the two cherubim, and the Shekinah light are considered, the four attributes of God are represented. In another sense, the Shekinah light alone represents God as giving instruction and information according to His will and thinking. From another perspective, the Apostle Paul said that Jesus is the slab, the propitiatory (Greek *hilasterion*) for our sins; that is, he is the actual slab on which propitiation is secured.

We can easily see how the "beaten" aspect applies to Jesus, for he needed to be perfected to qualify as earth's High Priest. He needed to come down here and participate in the sufferings of mankind in order to be a sympathetic High Priest (Heb. 2:10,16,17; 4:15). Even without the experience of being with sinners and seeing their problems firsthand, Jesus would be a very good High Priest, but lives would be lost because he would not be as sympathetic and merciful. Therefore, the One who was without sin needed discipline.

But what about God? He does not need discipline, but as the God of all patience, He suffers His name and character to be maligned. The two attributes that are particularly maligned are Love and Power. People question His Power: "If there is a God, why doesn't He do something?" They also question His love; for example, "Why does God let infants die?" To the world, God lacks the interest, empathy, and power to heal and cleanse, whereas the observation of nature should tell everyone that God does have the power. One reason God sent His Son to die on the Cross was to demonstrate love and to show that this sacrifice was very costly. Jesus' death on the Cross is the best way to teach mankind and future generations about the Divine Plan, and the temporary permission of evil manifests the degrading influence of sin. Also, God's plan, which is the best method, shows how character development can occur with free-moral-agency fallen human beings who read about God and Jesus in the Bible and then dedicate their lives.

Num. 8:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Verse 5 starts a new section.

Num. 8:6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

Num. 8:7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

Here the Levites (who picture the Great Company) are being installed into office. Later we will learn that they are the servants of the priesthood (the Little Flock). The Ancient Worthies will also be the servants of the priesthood.

Leviticus 8 concerns the consecration of the priesthood. Now Numbers 8 tells of the installation of the Levites. Both chapters involved a cleansing, but the more visible and thorough cleansing of Numbers 8 was a process. Water was sprinkled on the Levites, all their flesh was shaved including the scalp, and their clothes were washed.

Comment: The previous chapter about the Nazarite vow prepares us in principle for this shaving of the flesh.

Reply: Yes, and the Levites went through this cleansing in Numbers 8 only once. They subsequently washed only their hands and feet at the Laver. At the Memorial, Peter wanted to be washed all over, his attitude being, “Don’t just wash my feet, Lord.” He did not like the idea of the Master’s kneeling down and washing his feet.

The more thorough cleansing of the Levites reminds us of the Great Company’s having to wash their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. The Tabernacle structure and associated ceremonies give us the whole plan of God, but it is so condensed that few understand it. On the other hand, all sincere Christians understand what is necessary in the New Testament. If the Lord could shrink a camel to go through the eye of a needle, He could also shrink Tabernacle shadows into a condensation of the whole gospel message. Stated another way, the gospel is the enlargement or outgrowth of the Tabernacle. Paul refers to this relationship as the shadow and the reality (Heb. 8:5).

Q: A principle was established with the Nazarite vow that each time defilement occurred, the person had to shave his head and start the vow all over again. Therefore, wouldn’t the shaving of the heads of the Levites show that after the Church is complete, the Great Company will have to rededicate themselves, recognizing that they are starting over, that they are really on trial, and that it is a life or death issue?

A: Yes, it will be a fresh start for the Great Company, and this perspective will become much stronger when the overall picture is seen. Later we will also see when this cleansing took place.

Q: A similar ceremony was followed for leprosy. Is there any connection?

A: The priesthood is pictured as a leprous hand. It is marvelous how the Pastor came to some conclusions without going into real depth.

Num. 8:8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.

Num. 8:9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:

With regard to the installation of the priesthood, the congregation was gathered together to witness the cleansing and the clothing of Aaron and his sons for the honorable position of ministering the Tabernacle service. Now here, too, there was a public revelation of the inauguration. The antitype will be significant in the future, that is, after the Church has gone beyond the veil. Interesting work will be done after the feet members are off the scene but before the establishment of the Kingdom in glory and honor.

The first young bullock, which was accompanied by a meal offering, was a burnt offering (Num. 8:12). The second young bullock was a *collective* sin offering.

Num. 8:10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

Num. 8:11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

Aaron offered the Levites before Jehovah. In the antitype, this offering will begin down here in the future. As we have been taught in the Harvest message, the Great Company was not considered as a class down through the Gospel Age. They will not become a type until the Church is complete beyond the veil.

“The children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites.” This action represented the children of Israel’s recognition, acquiescence, and compliance with the Lord’s arrangement that the tribe of Levi *from their midst* would be substituted for the firstborn of Israel in the land of Egypt, who were hallowed unto God in the day of their Passover redemption. For God had said, “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD” (Num. 3:45).

“Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD ... that they may execute the service of the LORD.” The Levites performed a service, but what kind of service? In the ceremonial aspect, they were behind-the-scenes helpers, performing the more menial types of service. In the antitype, they will be messengers for the Church. In other words, the underpriests helped Aaron, the high priest, with the Tabernacle service in a more visible way, while the Levites helped in the background. The underpriests performed their service in public in connection with cutting and flaying the animals, whereas the Levites performed their service while the Tabernacle was in transit. Both types of work required effort and labor, but more honor was attached to the service of the underpriests.

The underpriests were kept very busy on many days of the year. As a reward, the hides of the animals were given to them. In principle, the Christian is rewarded similarly in connection with faithfully performing the Lord’s will in the present life.

Num. 8:12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

The instruction had been given previously, and now came the performance. In this age, as shown here, the sin offering precedes the burnt offering. After the Atonement Day sacrifices of the Gospel Age are complete, the Kingdom sacrifices will take place. At that time, the burnt offerings will occur first, followed by the meal, peace, trespass, sin, heave, etc., offerings. In

other words, the sequence will be different in the Kingdom.

The purpose of one young bullock for the sin offering and another young bullock for the burnt offering was “to make atonement for the Levites.” The Apostle Paul said, “They [the Ancient Worthies] without us should not be made perfect,” meaning that the Church must be complete before the Ancient Worthies are raised from death (Heb. 11:40). The Pastor added the reasoning that even the Great Company has to be complete before the Ancient Worthies can come forth because the merit of Christ’s Ransom sacrifice has also been loaned, or imputed, to them until they are finished as a class and are off the scene.

Num. 8:13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD.

Num. 8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

Num. 8:15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering.

The Levites did “the service of the tabernacle.”

Num. 8:16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

When there was an exchange of the Levites to replace the firstborn of Israel whom the Lord saved in Egypt, the selection or numbering of the Levites, as well as the numbering of the firstborn, started at age one month. However, different age categories applied to other numberings of the tribes of Israel and the Levites. The numberings started with one month old, 20 years old, 25 years old, and 30 years old, and some numberings had no upward limit, such as the exchanging of the Levites for the firstborn of Israel, which was one month and upward. The selection of the men of war started at a certain age but had no ceiling because it was according to ability. Since Moses was at the prime of life at age 120, it can be assumed that 50 was a relatively young age (Deut. 34:7). Therefore, men of war could be older than 50. But with the priesthood and the Levites, a ceiling was established at age 50. The exception was the high priest, who served until his death unless he became senile or incapacitated, in which case there was an arrangement for replacing him.

Q: Why did the numbering of the Levites and the firstborn start at age one month?

A: Most newborns who died did so within the first month. Thus, to number the Levites and the firstborn sooner would have resulted in inaccurate figures a few days later in many instances.

Num. 8:17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

The firstborn who died in Egypt were not only the Egyptian people but also their cattle—as well as the primary idols of that nation (Exod. 12:12). Conversely, the firstborn of Israel who were passed over, or spared, were the cattle as well as the people.

Because the Levites proved their loyalty to God in killing their brethren who had sinned in connection with the golden calf, they were selected to replace the spared firstborn of all the tribes. Slaying their brothers was a hard order to obey, but the Levites responded promptly

and effectively. An exchange had to be made so that all of the priests would come from just one tribe, and obviously, God saw that the tribe of Levi had a good characteristic, or trait. Genesis 49:5-7 speaks of Levi as being cruel. "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.... in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel." An interesting fact is that when a person with this particular character trait is converted, he has a special strength. Horses are similar. A spirited horse is difficult to break, but when broken, it is the best horse, the most enduring. Evidently, those in the tribe of Levi were smitten with remorse for their forebears. At any rate, they were chosen as a tribe to replace the firstborn of the various tribes of Israel.

Num. 8:18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

Num. 8:19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

Earlier chapters told of the disposition of the tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle. The four divisions of the Levites were immediately around the structure, and of these Aaron and his two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, being descendants of Amram and Kohath, were the only ones on the east side. The other 12 tribes were broken down into four triad groupings. With the Tabernacle in the center of the camp of Israel, verse 19 is saying that the Lord selected the tribe of Levi and placed them around the Tabernacle to act as a buffer zone between the civil life of the 12 tribes and those dedicated to holy service. To a certain extent, this arrangement preserved the sanctity of the Tabernacle, for if children had played near the Tabernacle, there would have been violations. The tents of the Levites prevented too much familiarity with the Tabernacle on the part of the other 12 tribes. That familiarity breeds contempt even among the most holy is shown by Jesus' statement that a prophet is without honor in his own country or among his kinsmen. Thus the principle of a buffer zone was a practical one. Another practical benefit of the Levites' being nearest the Tabernacle was that their location was the most convenient for the services they performed.

Num. 8:20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

Num. 8:21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

Num. 8:22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

The process of purifying the Levites and washing their clothes was somewhat similar to the earlier installation of the priesthood. After the Levites were purified, they were given as a gift to the priesthood. To be a priest required more than just being a child of Levi. One had to be a son of Aaron as well. In other words, those of Aaron were a particular group of Levites, in contradistinction to the Merarites, the Gershonites, and the Kohathites.

Num. 8:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 8:24 This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

Num. 8:25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more:

Num. 8:26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

With this group of Levites, the age for service began at 25 and continued to age 50. (With the priesthood, the starting age was 30 and went up to 50.) Thus these Levites were acting as apprentices in their service. Although all of the Tabernacle service was holy, these Levites performed the more common tasks. As apprentices, they became familiar with the work of the Tabernacle. Then, when the time came for the next tier, or level, of service, they were more useful. That is why verse 26 says they shall “keep the charge, and shall do no service,” meaning the service detailed earlier for the Gershonites, the Merarites, and the Kohathites.

Num. 9:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying,

Num. 9:2 Let the children of Israel also keep the passover at his appointed season.

Num. 9:3 In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it.

Num. 9:4 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, that they should keep the passover.

Num. 9:5 And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel.

Now we will digress a little to get a feel of the calendar and the timing of events of the Israelites after they crossed the Red Sea. Verses 1–3 give a date: the *14th day of the first month of the second year*. This date takes us back to Exodus 40:1,2. “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, On the *first day of the first month* [of the second year] shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.”

Several events were taking place at the same time, as will be explained. The last chapter of the Book of Exodus tells that the Tabernacle was reared (or set up) and anointed on the *first day of the first month of the second year*. Since the Book of Numbers begins with the second year, we are backtracking.

The preparation for leaving Egypt began with the *first day of the first month (Nisan) of the first year*. And Moses told the Israelites that this was the start of a new calendar. The “beginning of months” commenced at that time. “The LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the *beginning of months*: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the *tenth day of this month* they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house” (Exod. 12:1–3). On the tenth day, a lamb was chosen, and on the 14th day, the lamb was slain. On the 15th day, the Passover feast began. Then there was a numbering of days to Pentecost. All of these dates were predicated on the calendar established before they

left Egypt. Thus, from the time that God told Moses about the “beginning of months,” it took one full year until the Tabernacle was finished and erected at the foot of Mount Sinai.

In Leviticus, we read about what God told Moses to do. Chapters 1–7 tell the procedure to follow when an individual Israelite went to the Tabernacle for whatever reason (burnt, sin, trespass, etc., offering). Although the first seven chapters tell what service was to be done, the service was not performed at that time. Moses was just being instructed. Leviticus 8 describes the installation of the priesthood, which required *seven days*. Leviticus 9 tells of service on the *eighth day*, and Leviticus 10, which also took place on the *eighth day*, informs us of the destruction of Nadab and Abihu. The instruction in the rest of Leviticus was also given on the *eighth day*. Thus the entire Book of Leviticus took place in *just eight days*. Chapter after chapter begins with “And the LORD spake unto Moses.” Other chapters say, “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron.” In other words, there was no movement and no time, just instruction.

Moses was a most unusual individual, for he had to keep all this instruction in his head. We can be sure he was handpicked for this role. As a person, he was as great as, or greater than, the Apostle Paul, but Paul lived under the more favorable conditions of the Gospel Age. There is a comparison between the two. Moses had to retain all this information so that when the time came for the performance, he would know what to do. He wrote down all that the Lord told him, and the resultant scroll was put in the side of the Ark of the Covenant. The stone tables were inscribed with only the Ten Commandments, so all the laws and rituals on the scroll were inserted, like a sword in a sheath, into a leather pouch of some kind on the side of the Ark.

In addition, Moses had to do administrative work. Before the Tabernacle was set up, he told the laborers to line up, and he inspected their work one by one. For instance, he made sure the sockets were constructed correctly, and he examined the bars, the skins, and the curtains. For Moses to do this inspecting, he had to know the patterns and have them in his mind, for there was not enough time to read from the scroll. After this inspection, the materials were put together for the actual erection of the Tabernacle.

To review and continue: The Tabernacle was set up on the *first day of the first month of the second year*. The Book of Leviticus covers the next *eight days*. The Book of Numbers begins with the *first day of the second month of the second year*; i.e., it starts one month later than the setting up of the Tabernacle (Num. 1:1). Numbers 7 tells that the 12 princes of the 12 tribes of Israel each brought an identical offering of silver chargers, silver plates, golden spoons, animals, etc. But notice, the account says that the prince of the tribe of Judah was the first to bring his offering, which was on the *first day of the first month*. The prince of the tribe of Issachar brought his offering on the *second day*, the prince of Zebulun on the *third day*, the prince of Reuben on the *fourth day*, etc., for 12 days, one prince and his offering for each day.

Meanwhile, something else was happening. The priesthood had to be established, so the washing and clothing of Aaron and his sons took place in the Court in public view. Thus, while the priests were in the Tabernacle and the Court for seven days, seven of the 12 princes were bringing offerings. Notice the italics for *did offer* and *offered* in the King James. The animals were not slain or offered at that time but were simply being collected for subsequent use. That is why Numbers 7:84–88 gives the total number of silver chargers, silver bowls, oxen, rams, etc., that had accumulated. In other words, all of these items and animals were stacked up *outside* the Tabernacle arrangement (not in the Court where the priests were). To have brought the offerings into the Court would have interrupted the installation of the priesthood.

The accumulated offerings were significant for several reasons. One reason is that the Levites depended on donations from the Israelites for their living, and the animals were necessary for their needs. The number of animals each prince brought for peace offerings is meaningful: two

oxen, five rams, five male goats, five lambs of the first year. Peace offerings were treated like sin offerings in regard to the inner fat of the animals, but the priest who was on duty, and thus did the offering, got the right shoulder of every animal he offered. The breast was given to Aaron and his sons, that is, the priesthood. This case was an exception, therefore, for at other times, the people were privileged to eat of the offerings they brought. The animals brought by the 12 princes became a stockyard of provisions for the Levites, of whom there were 22,000 (Num. 3:39). From these arrangements we can see that the Israelites will need instruction and explanations in the Kingdom of what they were doing with the animals and why.

After the princes brought their offerings for 12 days, the events of Numbers 8 took place. A date is not given, but the dedication of the Levites as a class took place after the 12 days, i.e., on the 13th day. In the next chapter, Numbers 9, God told Moses that the Israelites were to observe the Passover, and the slaying of the lamb occurred on the 14th day. On the 15th day they observed the Passover, and then followed the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted for seven days.

The calendar was filling up. With several events taking place at the same time, and with some of the events requiring more than one day, the account jumps back and forth with dates, so we have to sort them out chronologically. Now we are in a position to see why the Book of Numbers starts with the *second* month. The numbering in Chapter 1 of those who were able to go to war was from the age of 20 years upward to an indefinite ceiling. From a Christian standpoint, the principle is that those who have the capability are expected to war and fight a good fight of faith. "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war!" The Christian walk is a fight of faith and a war against evil principalities and powers; it is also a war against the flesh and the world. In other words, *action* is expected with maturity. The babe is not to go to war, but as the Christian develops, he becomes increasingly responsible. There are many types of activity in the Lord's service: prayer, tracting, public speaking, visiting the sick, etc.

The installation of the Levitical priesthood in the type harmonizes with the antitype. After the selection of the priests (the Little Flock) came the dedication of the Levites (the Great Company). These two classes were separate and distinct, for the Levites were called or numbered *after* the selection of the priesthood, not before. Down through the Gospel Age, there has been only one hope, the hope of the high calling, but after the Little Flock is complete, there will be a calling, as it were, of the Great Company. In the type, the Levites existed before they were washed and clothed, as well as afterwards, but they were dealt with *afterwards* as a distinct class. The distinction is also seen in Leviticus 16, for the scapegoat was sent out into the wilderness *after* Aaron had made an end of reconciling the Holy place, that is, after the blood of the bullock and the Lord's goat had been sprinkled on the Mercy Seat. These Old Testament types are fraught with meaning, but they could not be understood until, first, Jesus brought to light life and immortality, thus opening up the high calling. The Apostle Paul and others in the early Church had considerable understanding, but a great dearth of understanding followed until many areas of study and understanding opened up in the Harvest at the end of the Gospel Age—areas such as chronology, the Tabernacle, history, character development, prophecy, and doctrine. Some are given to exhortation, some to public speaking, some to evangelizing, etc.

Verses 1–5 tell of the first Passover in the wilderness, which was in the first month of the second year. The selection of the Levites took place on the 13th day (the day is not stated, but it was the next day after the 12 princes had all brought their offerings). Thus the number 13 is a spiritual number implying suffering. Jesus was the 13th member at the institution of the Memorial, and the Church class, as members of his body, are marked by the same suffering experience. But even the Great Company will experience suffering, for they must wash their robes white in the great tribulation. In contradistinction, the number 12, which is related to the

12 tribes, is natural. When the Levites are included, the tribes number 13, and the tribe of Levi has a spiritual antitype. On the 20th day of the second month of the second year, the Israelites left Mount Sinai and began to journey (Num. 10:11).

CALENDAR

FIRST YEAR

1st month (Abib or Nisan)

- Day 10 - Passover lamb was selected in Egypt
- Days 11-13 - Israelites removed leaven from their homes
- Day 14 - Passover lamb, picturing Jesus' death, was slain in Egypt
- Day 15 - Passover lamb was eaten on the 14th after 6 p.m., the start of day 15; Israelites left Rameses the next day (on the 15th)
- Days 15-21 - Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread
- Day 16 - Cloud covered nation at Succoth

3rd month

- Day 6 - Pentecost on 50th day from the 16th of Nisan (could not be observed)

SECOND YEAR

1st month (Abib or Nisan)

- Day 1 - Tabernacle was set up and anointed at Mount Sinai; pillar of cloud connected to Tabernacle; Moses lit lamps of Candlestick; Moses publicly washed Aaron and his sons; prince of Judah brought his offering
- Days 1-7 - Installation (consecration) of priesthood (Leviticus 8)
- Days 1-12 - Princes brought offerings as detailed below (Numbers 7)
- Day 2 - Prince of Issachar brought his offering
- Day 3 - Prince of Zebulun brought his offering
- Day 4 - Prince of Reuben brought his offering
- Day 5 - Prince of Simeon brought his offering
- Day 6 - Prince of Gad brought his offering
- Day 7 - Prince of Ephraim brought his offering
- Day 8 - Leviticus 9 took place with the offering being miraculously consumed; Nadab and Abihu were destroyed; instruction in rest of Book of Leviticus was given; prince of Manasseh brought his offering
- Day 9 - Prince of Benjamin brought his offering
- Day 10 - Prince of Dan brought his offering; Passover lamb was selected in Sinai
- Days 11-13 - Israelites removed leaven from their tents
- Day 11 - Prince of Asher brought his offering
- Day 12 - Prince of Naphtali brought his offering
- Day 13 - Dedication of Levites (Numbers 8)
- Day 14 - Passover lamb, picturing Jesus' death, was slain in Sinai
- Days 15-21 - Feast of Passover/Unleavened Bread

2nd month

- Day 1 - Israelites were numbered (Numbers 1-4)
- Day 10 - Passover lamb was selected (by those who were defiled the first month)
- Day 14 - Passover lamb was slain (by those who were defiled the first month)
- Day 15 - Passover lamb was eaten after 6 p.m. (by those who were defiled the first month)
- Days 15-21 - Feast of Passover (for those who were defiled the first month)
- Day 20 - Cloud moved and Israelites left Mount Sinai
- Day 23 - Cloud stopped at Paran; Tabernacle was set up; Israelites camped

Num. 9:6 And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they

could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

Num. 9:7 And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?

Num. 9:8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.

The Israelites were to observe the Passover in the wilderness as they had done previously in Egypt. However, “certain men” could not keep the Passover because they had become “defiled by the dead body of a man.” Hence “they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day [the 14th day of Nisan]” to inquire of Moses what to do. The men stood there while Moses went into the Tabernacle to get instruction. (Verses 9–14 give the answer.) Presumably the “certain men” went to Moses earlier in the day because the Passover lamb was slain at 3:00 in the afternoon, which was between the two “evenings.”

Num. 9:9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 9:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.

Num. 9:11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Num. 9:12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

Not only did the answer given to Moses benefit the men who inquired, but because anyone could become defiled, the answer was broadcast to the nation. All were to know the Lord’s decision. The Passover could be kept exactly the same way a month later, i.e., the second month. Notice that no excuse was given for failure to observe the Passover altogether. Since enough time would elapse in a month to make special and more diligent preparation against becoming defiled a second time, no leeway was given for missing the second observance.

Q: Does this instruction have an antitype?

A: The precedent is applicable to the Memorial for the Christian. At the First Advent, the Passover was supplanted by the new ceremony called the Lord’s Supper. Although the Memorial is a different institution, the principle is the same. Therefore, if a Christian is unable to observe the Memorial at the regular time, he should observe it a month later on the 14th day. That way the spirit of the occasion will be preserved.

In spite of the fact that the Israelites were journeying in the wilderness, they were to observe the Passover, which had been instituted a year earlier in Egypt. Now, a year later, the Tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month of the second year, so the Passover could be observed under a new arrangement. Instead of applying the blood to the doors and lintels of their houses, the people applied it to their tents according to the instruction. The Lord does not think lightly of ceremonies He institutes. Hence there was culpability, a death penalty, for failure to observe the Passover except for the extreme circumstances enumerated. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” Thus when a Christian becomes aware of the Memorial,

it is important for him to observe it according to his level of understanding. Similarly, natural Israel was expected to heed the instruction of Jehovah regarding the Passover.

As set forth in Exodus, the lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. None of its bones were to be broken, and all of the lamb was to be eaten. “Unleavened bread” represents doctrine. Paul speaks of the “unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor. 5:8). The “bitter herbs” symbolize the trials and persecutions that are necessary for Christian development. First, however, they showed Christ’s sufferings as the antitypical Passover Lamb. Persecution is a natural accompaniment to the spiritual experience of a Christian.

From one perspective, the night of the Passover is a picture of the Gospel Age. The eating of the lamb in memory of Christ lasts the entire Gospel night, and it must be finished before morning because the Bible establishes a time limit for the completion of the Little Flock, i.e., before the dawning of the morning. When the Israelites were fleeing Egypt, many had to leave their homes before dawn in order to reach Rameses, the starting place for the Exodus, which was to begin on the 15th day of Nisan. Although the Exodus account does not state the starting time, the Israelites probably left Rameses at high noon. For those Israelites who had to leave their homes for Rameses while it was still dark, their way was illuminated because it was the time of the full moon. (The cloud and its luminescence did not start until they got to Succoth a day later.)

Num. 9:13 But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

A man who was clean, was not on a journey, and had no excuse was obligated to keep the Passover lest he be cut off in death. If one missed the opportunity of the second month, reason tells us that the person should be cut off.

If a person could not observe the Passover with literal items as instructed, he had to at least do it in a substitutionary, make-believe way. The Lord would accept such an effort the second month as being all that was possible under the circumstance *as long as the individual had tried his best to avoid entanglements*. The spirit in which the Passover was observed by a person on a journey would be the important factor.

Comment: The antitype would be the same. If it were impossible for a Christian to obtain the emblems, he could go through the service mentally.

Reply: Yes, it would be like a child who pretends and plays house. The service would be very real under the circumstance. Prayer and meditation would be involved. In other words, when the Law was instituted, the Israelites were given perhaps 50 trial cases. A library of events is recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Although that library does not cover every situation, principles and precedents can be drawn and applied to other cases. And that is the purpose of a law—to be as simple as possible and yet ingeniously complete enough that principles can be extracted for all experiences in life. When the New Testament does not supply sufficient instructions, we should go to the Old Testament to find incidents of what and how God thinks. The entire Bible is needed in order for one to be fortified with understanding.

Num. 9:14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

A “stranger” was a proselyte, one who had adopted the Hebrew faith and thus *permanently* sojourned with the Israelites, one who was there not on a casual basis but with a heartfelt commitment. Ruth was a notable stranger. The reference was particularly to a stranger who was resident in Israel.

There is a slight intimation here that the gospel would go to the Gentiles. If a Jewish community in a foreign land was observing the Passover and a stranger dwelled among them who was wholly in sympathy with Israel’s God and customs and wanted to keep the Passover, the Gentile convert could participate—and could ultimately participate in the gospel when the door opened in AD 36.

“Ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.” For “stranger,” the King James margin has “proselyte” or “sojourner,” which is true but with the added thought of becoming a resident in the land.

Num. 9:15 And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning.

Num. 9:16 So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.

Num. 9:17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.

These verses give more definition about the action of the cloud than when the Israelites left Egypt. The cloud began to cover the nation at Succoth, the first stop, that is, after a day’s journey from Rameses. At that time, there was no Tabernacle, so the cloud canopy covered just the nation as they were in transit, fleeing from the Egyptians. The pillar of the cloud, which the Israelites could see, led them. When the pillar and cloud stopped, the people stopped. The One guiding the cloud and pillar knew just where to stop them so that the Israelites at the rear would reach the location designated for rest. From the time the Israelites left Succoth, the cloud was a shadow by day and a light by night.

But now we are reading about something new. On the day that the Tabernacle was erected at the beginning of the second year in the Wilderness of Sinai, smoke filled the structure (Exod. 40:34,35). God’s presence was made manifest by such dense smoke inside the Holy and Most Holy that no one could enter. The pillar of the cloud connected over the Most Holy. How did the people know that the Tabernacle was filled with smoke? The First Veil was not airtight, so smoke seeped out through the seams. Seeing not only the smoke coming out of the Tabernacle but also the cloud connecting to it, the people realized the Lord’s presence was in there, and common sense told them not to enter.

In the daytime, the pillar was like a column, and the very brilliant Shekinah light did not penetrate except on certain occasions. Thus the people were shielded from the extreme brightness. At nighttime, the pillar was luminescent, enabling the Israelites to see that it rested on the Tabernacle.

With the smoke seeping out, the people also knew that the pillar did not just end at the roof of the Tabernacle but that it penetrated the roof at least momentarily. When the smoke subsided, the Shekinah light was no longer shielded in the Most Holy. In other words, the “wrapping” was removed.

Therefore, the pillar connected to the Tabernacle at the time the structure was reared. Then, later, from that cloud, a bolt of energy darted forth to consume the sacrifice on the altar that is described in Leviticus 9. Stated another way, fire burst out of the cloud and consumed the offering on the altar. Fire burst out similarly when Nadab and Abihu were destroyed. Previously just a canopy was spread over the nation. But when the Tabernacle was erected, a pillar dropped to make a unique column connection between the Tabernacle and the cloud. It was as if God were saying, "I am with you. This is my sanctuary, my residence." God's "foot" was the connection. In fact, there was so much intelligence in the cloud that the people called it the "angel" in the cloud (Exod. 14:19). The cloud represented Jehovah's presence, but that presence was shielded, for no man can see God at any time and live.

When the pillar retracted, the Israelites did not leave immediately but began to prepare for the move. They packed tents and belongings and were ready to start in perhaps an hour. The pillar's going up into the cloud was the signal. An hour later the cloud slowly started to move at a rate of about two to four miles per hour. When the cloud stopped, the Israelites stopped right where they were. A finger may have descended from the cloud to indicate exactly where the Tabernacle was to be erected.

Num. 9:18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents.

Num. 9:19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

Num. 9:20 And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

God's providences for their journeyings and stoppings were so unique that the Israelites had no difficulty in interpreting them. The pillar of the cloud was particularly important.

As interesting and startling as the phenomenon of the cloud was, we hear nothing about it because Satan has so blinded the minds of the people.

Comment: The antitype of the cloud would be the Lord's providences in our lives. Of course our providences are not always easy to discern, but we should look for them so that we do not either run ahead of the Lord or fail to follow His leadings.

Num. 9:21 And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

Num. 9:22 Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed.

Num. 9:23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Of the journeys, probably the greater percentage logically began in the morning so that the Israelites had a full day's travel and then the normal sleep cycle at night.

Q: Was a watch set up each night to alert the nation if the pillar retracted up into the cloud in preparation for a journey?

A: There may or may not have been a watch, but with 2 million people, surely someone would see the pillar being drawn up and sound the alarm. Then, via the grapevine, all of the Israelites would be notified quickly.

Comment: The very mention of “two days, or a month, or a year” indicates there was a time when the Israelites were in one spot for only two days and in another spot for as long as a year.

Reply: Yes, and the first stop was just three days later.

Num. 10:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 10:2 Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

There were two trumpets, each made of one piece of silver. Symbolically, this would show the harmony within the Old Testament and the harmony within the New Testament—they are each *one* piece. And together there is *one* harmonious message.

Here the silver is a symbol of truth, of a message. In the early days of America, newspapers had such titles as *The Clarion*, *The Sentinel*, *The Herald*, and *The Trumpet* to signify that they were a message. Although the message was on paper, it was just as effective as a voice. Stated another way, the “voice” was expressed in writing.

Q: Did the “journeying of the camps” occur when the cloud was moving?

A: Yes, and the trumpet was blown when it was time for the Israelites to move. As will be seen, the trumpets were blown in various ways for various reasons.

Num. 10:3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Num. 10:4 And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

The basic use of the trumpets was “for the calling of the assembly,” “for the journeying of the camps,” and for the gathering of the congregation to the door of the Tabernacle. Sometimes one trumpet was blown to gather just the princes to the door of the Tabernacle, and both trumpets were used to sound an alarm when the nation was going to war. In addition, the shofar (ram’s horn) was sometimes used for another purpose.

There were two types of assembling. When a particular type of blowing occurred, it meant “Pay attention, for something important will be announced!” On such occasions, the people got out of their tents and stood at the door to find out what was happening. The way the trumpet was blown conveyed the message, i.e., whether the people were to assemble as a congregation on the east (front) side of the Tabernacle or just their leaders (princes).

Num. 10:5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.

Num. 10:6 When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys.

In connection with the Israelites' taking their journey, only the camps on the east and south sides are mentioned. What about the north and west sides? The Israelites were so well regimented that they knew the order of march. Of the 12 tribes, Judah was first with its two subsidiary tribes, Reuben was next with its two tribes, and then eventually came Ephraim followed by Dan. The Levites, who knew the sequence of march, were interspersed. For example, the Kohathites, who carried the Ark by hand on poles and other articles of furniture, followed Reuben and its two tribes.

When the alarm was blown the first time, the camps on the east side (Judah, etc.) began their journey. When the alarm was blown the second time, the camps on the south side (Reuben, etc.) started their journey.

Num. 10:7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm.

The same two silver trumpets were used, but *the way in which they were blown* indicated the reason. When the trumpets were blown for war, the Hebrew word was one that the Romans later used: *tantara*. This sharper, more distinct sound signified alarm and danger. When one trumpet was blown, the princes assembled. When two trumpets were blown, the congregation assembled. For the princes and for the Israelites as a whole, the trumpets were blown not to sound an alarm but to indicate an announcement. In other words, "Moses would like to see you; he has an important announcement."

Num. 10:8 And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

Notice that the two priests, not Aaron, blew the trumpets. Eleazar and Ithamar were the two priests after Nadab and Abihu died.

Num. 10:9 And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies.

Num. 10:10 Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God.

The silver trumpets were used even in connection with the ceremonial feasts, and they were blown over the sacrifices (burnt offerings and peace offerings) and "in the beginning of months." We hear no more about this role except perhaps a little in the Book of Psalms. Similarly, salt had to accompany sacrifices, but only once is that fact mentioned. Salt had to be thrown on all offerings. Much is said, chapter after chapter, about the offerings, but only once do the Scriptures tell about the salt.

When the priests blew the trumpets, sometimes they had to blow joyously and sometimes solemnly. To give an illustration, at children's camps in this country, a wake-up call is often played on the bugle: "You gotta get up, you gotta get up, you gotta get up in the morning." In the evening, taps are played: "Day is done, gone the sun...." In other words, the *type of melody*

played by the *same* trumpet(s) indicated joy, solemnity, war, “I want to see the princes,” “I want to see the entire congregation,” etc. Such blowing took the right lips and a good pair of lungs, so the Lord would have overruled that the two priests had strong and skilled lips. By nature, therefore, Eleazar and Ithamar were skilled trumpeteers.

Comment: The tantara for the Christian at the end of the age is Hymn No. 164:

Lo! The day of God is breaking,
See the gleaming from afar!
Sons of earth from slumber waking,
Hail the bright and Morning Star.

Chorus

Hear the call! O gird your armor on,
Grasp the Spirit’s mighty sword;
Take the helmet of salvation,
Pressing on to battle for the Lord!

Trust in him who is your Captain;
Let no heart in terror quail;
Jesus leads the gath’ring legion,
In his name we shall prevail.

Onward marching, firm and steady,
Faint not, fear not Satan’s frown,
For the Lord is with you always,
Till you wear the victor’s crown.

Conqu’ring bands with banners waving,
Pressing on o’er hill and plain,
Ne’er shall halt till swells the anthem,
“Christ o’er all the earth doth reign!”

Num. 10:11 And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony.

Num. 10:12 And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran.

“On the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year ... the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony,” and the Israelites began their first journey transporting the Tabernacle. They left Mount Sinai and traveled three days to the Wilderness of Paran, where the “cloud rested” (Num. 10:33).

The beginning of the Jewish calendar was the first day of Abib (or Nisan). On the 10th day of Abib, the lamb was selected for the Passover, and on the 14th day the Passover lamb was slain. The 15th day of Abib marked the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Passover. Of course, according to Jewish reckoning, the 15th day technically began after 6:00 p.m. the night of the 14th, and it was at this time (i.e., after 6:00 p.m.) that the lamb was eaten. The next morning, which was still the 15th of Abib, the Israelites left their homes and gathered at the city of Rameses, which was the starting point of the Exodus.

Since verse 11 states that the pillar of the cloud withdrew from the Tabernacle on the 20th day of the second month of the second year, we know that this occurred one year, one month, and five days after the start of the Exodus. In the meantime, the Israelites had been encamped at

Mount Sinai for a year and had built and erected the Tabernacle.

Notice that the Israelites left the Wilderness of Sinai 50 days after the erection of the Tabernacle, for the Tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month of the second year. Since they had been at Mount Sinai for more than a year, this first journey was like the start of a second Exodus, this time from Sinai. The number 50 is associated with Pentecost, but since the Israelites did not raise crops in the Wilderness of Sinai, they could not wave a sheaf offering and fully observe Pentecost, as God had instructed, until they entered the Promised Land. Nevertheless, in one sense, the erection of the Tabernacle was like a resurrection, just as the waving of the sheaf offering was a symbol of Jesus' resurrection. The Tabernacle was the foundation of all the ceremonial sacrifices of the priesthood. With the Israelites' starting their wilderness journeys 50 days after the erection of the Tabernacle, there is an antitypical correspondency to the beginning of the Church, the beginning of its journey. From one standpoint, the Gospel Age began at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came on the waiting disciples. And on the 50th day, the Israelites began their journeys in the wilderness, which would consist of 42 stops before they entered the Promised Land.

The erection of the Tabernacle is described in Exodus Chapter 40. Not only did Moses have to anoint the furniture on the day of the erection, but he publicly washed Aaron and his sons. The washing tells us that the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood (Leviticus 8) began the day the Tabernacle was erected. The priests were in the Court of the Tabernacle, and for seven days, they ate unleavened bread, etc. The point is that the priests could not start their consecration until the Tabernacle was erected.

Now we can begin to establish a calendar. On the first day of the first month of the second year after leaving Egypt, the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood began. During this time, there were no services of the people. On the eighth day (that is, after the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood), the events of Leviticus 9 took place, in which Aaron took the lead and different sacrifices were made of a bullock, a goat, and a peace offering. A miraculous fire subsequently came down from the cloud and consumed the offering on the altar, and the people prostrated themselves and worshipped.

When we read Leviticus 8 and 9, we do not know where they fit into the calendar. All we know is that the consecration of the priesthood took seven days, and then public work began on the next (or eighth) day. Thus Exodus 40 and this chapter in Numbers are needed to determine the calendar.

What happened on the ninth day (other than the prince of Benjamin bringing his offering) we do not know, for when we read Leviticus 10 through the end of the book, we get only an explanation of the Law for various sacrifices and ceremonies. In other words, the ceremonies were not performed at that time; the account is merely giving us instruction.

On the tenth day of the first month of the second year, a lamb was selected in preparation for the observance of the Passover, for God told Moses in Numbers 9:1-3 that the Israelites were to keep the Passover exactly as they had done in Egypt. On the 14th day the lamb was slain, and on the 15th day, which began in the evening, the lamb was eaten.

What did the Israelites do in the period between the tenth day and the 14th day of that first month while they were still in Egypt? They housecleaned, as it were, to make sure there was no leaven in their homes.

Now the calendar has a gap, for the account is silent about what happened from the 22nd day of the first month until the beginning of the second month. However, at the dedication of

Solomon's Temple, there were *two* seven-day periods, which filled out the rest of the month on the lunar calendar. Each lunar month consisted of approximately 29 1/2 days, but the month was considered in whole numbers as having 30 days. If every month had been reckoned exactly at 29 days plus a fraction, the agricultural season would have been thrown out of whack when the Israelites entered the land. Also, the reckoning of Pentecost, which was the time of the first fruits and the waving of the sheaf offering, would have been affected. The point is this: Whether or not the Israelites observed an extra, or second, week in connection with the Tabernacle we do not know, but they definitely observed the first week, which was a part of keeping the Passover.

In the first month of the second year, an additional activity began on the day the Tabernacle was erected: the princes of the 12 tribes started to bring their offerings, Judah being the first. Each day for 12 days, a prince brought an offering. Thus the civil standpoint took place during the first 12 days. The princes did not bring their offerings into the Court, for the consecration of the priesthood was occurring there. The offerings were stored and tagged (or numbered) for burnt, sin, or peace offerings. In other words, the priesthood got a bonanza supply of meat plus silver, gold, grain, incense, etc.

Q: Where were the offerings stored?

A: The Levites were camped around the Tabernacle, and the offerings were stored at their tents, which were outside the Court. Since the Levites had no inheritance in the land, this arrangement enabled them to make offerings; they had something to give.

The accumulation of money, food, and animals gave the Levites a start, but from that time on, they got a continuing revenue from other sources. The service of the Levites was the Tabernacle and not the raising of crops or the building of houses.

For 12 days, the princes were occupied in bringing offerings. Meanwhile, for the first seven days, the consecration of the priesthood was taking place. Not only the 12 tribes but also the Levites observed the Passover and applied blood to their tents. On the 14th day of the first month, all of the people ate the typical lamb.

About a half month later, the numbering of the tribes took place, namely, in the second month on the first day. The number of Israelites was known much earlier by the amount of money that was collected, for a ransom of half a shekel had to be paid for each individual. The money indicated a total of 603,550 males. What was not known, however, until the numbering described in the Book of Numbers took place, was how many of each tribe comprised that total.

The events of the seventh chapter of Numbers occurred earlier than the numbering of the first chapter, which took place on the first day of the *second month* of the second year (Exod. 40:3; Num. 1:1; 7:1). Numbers 7 starts with the setting up of the Tabernacle, which occurred on the first day of the *first month* of the second year.

After the priesthood was dedicated, another event had to happen before services could be performed in the Tabernacle, and that event was the dedication of the Levites. On the 13th day of the first month of the second year, the Levites were dedicated.

On the 14th day of the second month, the Passover lamb was slain for those who were defiled in the first month. The lamb was eaten at night, at the start of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was the beginning of the Jewish day. Therefore, when the 20th day of the second month arrived and the cloud moved, signaling the Israelites to move, the defiled Israelites who were

observing the Passover a month late had just enough time to finish the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For the first Feast of Passover, or Unleavened Bread, the Israelites carried unleavened dough with them as they fled from Egypt (Exod. 12:34).

When the Israelites left Egypt, the cloud covered them on the second day of the Exodus, i.e., from Succoth onward. (This would be the 16th day of the first month of the first year.) Obviously, the Israelites did not have any wave sheaf offering marking Pentecost that year because of the circumstances. Accordingly, we can draw the lesson that when it was *impossible* for the Israelites to observe the type through no fault of their own but *because of providence*, the Lord excused them, but they were required to observe the type as soon as they could the next time. Actually, the Israelites could mark Pentecost as far as the number 50 was concerned, but they were unable to wave a sheaf offering. We equate the waving of the sheaf offering to the resurrection of Jesus, the hope of the Church. It was just as important for Jesus to be raised from death as it was for him to die. Otherwise, as Paul said, we are all following a dream, and our hope is vain. The waving of the sheaf offering corresponded timewise with Jesus' resurrection, that is, with his ascension to the Father. At Sinai too, the Israelites could not wave a sheaf offering, so the nearest thing to the beginning of the resurrection was the erection of the Tabernacle itself, the beginning of a priestly arrangement. (Incidentally, since Pentecost occurred on the 50th day, it was a Jubilee day.)

From Succoth on, the cloud covered the nation and the pillar of the cloud led them, but not until the Tabernacle was erected a year later did the pillar connect to it. In fact, one of the signs that the Tabernacle was finished and erected was the cloud connection to the structure. The cloud did not disappear until the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

When were the lamps of the Candlestick lit in the Tabernacle? When the Tabernacle was erected, the various articles of furniture were placed in it, and Moses lit the lamps on that day. However, the Book of Numbers seems to contradict by saying that Aaron lit the lamps of the Candlestick (Num. 8:1-3). The lighting is mentioned as though it happened on the 13th day of the first month when the Levites were installed in office, and not on the first day of the first month. But notice the wording of the account (paraphrased): "Aaron, when you light the lamps [candles], be sure that they give light over against the candlestick." Every day the lamps had to be trimmed to make sure they did not go out, but the point is that as they were trimmed, the *particular lamp being worked on* did go out. In other words, six lamps were burning while the high priest trimmed the wick of the seventh lamp and filled the vessel with a new supply of oil. As Aaron replaced the lamps on the lamp stand, he was to make sure that he turned the noses in the right direction to point toward the main stem. Thus there is no contradiction between what Moses and Aaron did. The Candlestick was originally lit the day the Tabernacle was erected, and Aaron was given further instruction later on in the first month.

Exodus 40 mentions several points that are not normally considered. Notice, verse 35 says that Moses could not enter the Tabernacle because the glory of the Lord filled it. Then verse 36 says, "And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys." What is the explanation? The entire chapter, all of Exodus 40, occurred in one day *except for verses 36-38*. The last three verses are merely a commentary, an observation.

The consecration of the priesthood is described in Exodus 29. This chapter is the same as Leviticus 8 except that Exodus 29 gives *instruction only*. The service was performed later, as related in Leviticus 8. Exodus 29 describes what should be done, and Leviticus 8 records what was done—that is, how and when the priesthood was actually consecrated.

Many have confused ideas when it comes to precision and accuracy of understanding. In the

Kingdom, God will make sure the world of mankind comes to an accurate understanding of the truth. In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, we find what appears at first to be discrepancies, but the accounts harmonize when they are carefully examined. The wording was intentionally phrased so that (1) we will know when we have the truth straight and (2) those who are not hungry and not truly interested will not understand. When the Holy Spirit was in operation in Old Testament times, it caused confusion, or babble, to come forth from the false prophets. However, when that same Spirit went through the right channel, it guided with truth in the form of here a little, there a little, precept upon precept. To onlookers not in the right heart attitude, those very words were confusion. For instance, the disciples were all speaking in different tongues on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. Those who did not have the right heart attitude viewed the situation as bedlam and considered the disciples to be fanatics.

Num. 10:13 And they first took their journey according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Num. 10:14 In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies: and over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

Num. 10:15 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethaneel the son of Zuar.

Num. 10:16 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.

Num. 10:17 And the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward, bearing the tabernacle.

The transportation of the Tabernacle skins and boards by the Gershonites and the Merarites, respectively, was sandwiched between Judah and its two accompanying tribes and Reuben with its two tribes.

Num. 10:18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies: and over his host was Elizur the son of Shedeur.

Num. 10:19 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

Num. 10:20 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

Next came the triad that Reuben oversaw.

Num. 10:21 And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary: and the other did set up the tabernacle against they came.

Num. 10:22 And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies: and over his host was Elishama the son of Ammihud.

Num. 10:23 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

Num. 10:24 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of

Gideoni.

The Kohathites, who bore the sacred furniture by hand, were sandwiched between the Reuben and the Ephraim triads. In verse 21, the supplied words “the other” refer to the Gershonites and the Merarites. Because these two divisions of the Levites had the articles for the erection of the Tabernacle, they had to be in the forepart of this caravan of armies. When they arrived at a destination for a period of time, they set up the Tabernacle. Of the 42 resting places, the minimum stay was just two days (Num. 9:22).

Num. 10:25 And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rearward of all the camps throughout their hosts: and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

Num. 10:26 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran.

Num. 10:27 And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan.

Num. 10:28 Thus were the journeyings of the children of Israel according to their armies, when they set forward.

The “armies” consisted of all males of a certain age category, “all that are able to go forth to war,” from 20 years of age and upward (Num. 1:1–3). How the women, the children, and those too old to go forth to war traveled we do not know. The very fact the account omits this information indicates it is not important for us to know from a spiritual or typical standpoint, but the supplied information is important as a type.

Num. 10:29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

Num. 10:30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

Hobab was the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses’ father-in-law, also called Reuel (Exod. 2:18). If Raguel was still alive, why didn’t Moses ask him to accompany the Israelites? To take the head individual would have left the people underneath the priest of Midian without a shepherd. Instead, therefore, Moses asked Hobab to go with the Israelites. The request shows Moses’ humility.

Num. 10:31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

Num. 10:32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the LORD shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

The account does not tell what Hobab’s final decision was except that initially he said, “I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred” (verse 30). Subsequently Moses tried to urge or persuade Hobab to reconsider accompanying the Israelites, saying that the Lord would bless him if he would go with them and be their guide. Like Raguel, Hobab would have been thoroughly familiar with the terrain and all of the valleys of the Wilderness of Sinai. Later there is a hint that Hobab did accompany the Israelites, for the lineage of Israel includes

some of his progeny. “And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people” (Judg. 1:16).

Num. 10:33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days’ journey; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days’ journey, to search out a resting place for them.

Num. 10:34 And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp.

The first of their journeys, which lasted three days, took them to Paran. The big cloud moved with them; that is, when the Israelites broke camp at Mount Sinai, the large canopy cloud moved with them and covered them. “The cloud of the LORD was upon them *by day*, when they went out of the camp.” This verse suggests that the journey began in daylight.

Num. 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

Num. 10:36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

Here we get an insight into Moses, who persuaded Hobab to go with the Israelites. Moses was allowed a certain degree of liberty, and when he needed advice, he asked God. When the nation was ready to leave Mount Sinai, they broke camp and began their journey with Judah at the front, followed by Gershon, Merari, Reuben, etc. Notice that the blessing was asked not when Judah began to move but when *the Ark* began to move. This shows Moses’ appreciation of *the Lord* and putting *Him first*. “When *the ark* set forward, ... Moses said, Let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.” Throughout the 40 years, whenever the Israelites arrived at a destination and the Ark was placed in the Most Holy, Moses prayed, “Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.”

Num. 11:1 And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.

Chapter 11 starts a different part of the Book of Numbers, which now becomes a study of human nature. In fact, in most instances, it is a study of *depraved* human nature because of the murmurings and complaints of the people and the troubles Moses, as the Lord’s agent, had in leading them.

The Book of Numbers contains certain interesting facts about the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. One fact is that in their journeys, there were 42 stops. The location of each stop is given a name, but what happened at the stops is not always explained. Also, how long the Israelites stayed at each stop is not stated. And in some cases, the stops are randomly listed; that is, they are not listed in sequence.

Moses and the Israelites were at Mount Sinai for approximately one year. The Book of Numbers tells about the Israelites’ leaving Mount Sinai to begin their wanderings and where and when the first journey ended; i.e., at the beginning of the wilderness wanderings, the Israelites stopped and encamped after just three days. The Book of Numbers also furnishes a lot of detail about what happened at the conclusion of the 40 years. As for the years in between, relatively little information is given. The very fact there is a time definition at both the beginning and the end of the journey suggests these periods are more important than the

vague time in between.

The Book of Deuteronomy is Moses' summation of how the Lord dealt with the Israelites in Egypt at the time of the Exodus and during the wilderness wanderings. Moses drew certain conclusions and then gave his benediction and blessing at the end of the book.

We are more or less familiar with the end of the wilderness wanderings: the crossing of the Jordan River, the fall of Jericho, the beginning of the subjugation of the land, etc. In antitype, the events that occurred at the end of the wilderness journeys refer to the end of the age. Since there is strong definition at the beginning and at the end of the journeys, we can assume that the time period in between pictures the Gospel Age. In the type, there were 42 stops, whereas the Book of Revelation shows seven "stops," or stages, of the Church. The first journey in the type started on the 50th day, that is, on the Day of Pentecost, and as far as the Church is concerned, the Gospel Age began with the Day of Pentecost. Stated another way, the wilderness wanderings of the Church of Christ started with the Day of Pentecost.

When the Israelites left Mount Sinai, the cloud rested in Paran (Num. 10:12). (According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, Paran means "full of caverns.") The three days' journey seems to picture the three years from AD 33 to AD 36. This is a remarkable definition because these three years were the end of the 70 weeks of exclusive favor to Israel as prophesied by the Prophet Daniel. The conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile, took place in AD 36, marking the end of exclusive favor to Israel and the admittance of Gentiles into the body of Christ.

Of the 42 names given to resting places in the wilderness, some are specific spots (such as a particular valley between certain hills) and some are regions. Understanding this distinction eliminates some seeming conflicts or contradictions. For example, Paran is a region, whereas Taberah (Num. 11:3) is a particular place. We will consider some related texts. "And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath" (Deut. 9:22). "And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them" (Deut. 33:2). From one standpoint, these names are all part of the Wilderness (or peninsula) of Sinai. An illustration more familiar to us is to say we have a state, a county, and a town. Within the Wilderness of Sinai are regions such as the Wilderness of Shur and the Wilderness of Paran. Mount Sinai, the specific spot from which the Law went forth, is also in the Wilderness of Sinai. Seir is a synonym for Edom. Because of its central location, we think of Petra as the capital of Edom, but sometimes the Scriptures describe Edom as extending from that area all the way down to the Gulf of Eilat. Thus Paran, Mount Sinai, and Edom are all part of the Wilderness of Sinai from one standpoint.

Let us now consider the three-day journey from Mount Sinai to Paran. When the Israelites left Egypt, they fled *in haste*, fearing for their very lives and wanting to separate themselves as far as possible from Egypt. Thus the three days' journey from Egypt covered a much greater distance than the three days' journey to Paran, which was traveled at a normal pace. In fact, the distance to Paran over wadis and mountains was only about 20 miles for the entire three days.

The clause in Deuteronomy 33:2 "from his right hand went a fiery law for them [the Israelites]" is interesting. The first demonstration of this "fiery law" was in Paran at Taberah where the Israelites displeased the Lord and some perished.

Num. 11:2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

Num. 11:3 And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt

among them.

Taberah usually means “place of burning,” but a vowel or pronunciation change gives a second meaning as “place of feeding.” Moses called the site the “place of burning.”

What happened at Taberah? When the people complained, God was displeased. In anger, He sent a fire that consumed Israelites who were in the outskirts of the camp. The account does not state the nature of the murmuring, but presumably it was because of the difficulty of the journey in the desert. Of course this journey occurred after the Israelites had been resting quietly for a year during the Tabernacle’s construction. The psychology of journeying is interesting. It is one thing to flee in fear, but it is quite another matter to flee simply because that is the instruction. When the Israelites fled Egypt in haste and fear, the only complaining occurred when they reached the Red Sea and thought they were trapped.

Q: What kind of “burning” occurred at the outskirts of the camp?

A: It may have been a fever.

Num. 11:4 And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a-lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

Num. 11:5 We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic:

The incident with the quails occurred sometime later. Since the account does not state how much later, it might not have taken place in the Paran region.

Notice, a “mixed multitude” was in the midst of the Israelite host. Where did this mixed multitude come from? When the Israelites left Egypt, some of the Egyptians accompanied them, and the murmuring started with this element. Now again, a year later, there was a reference to the vegetables and fruit they had left behind in Egypt. These individuals were getting tired of the manna.

Comment: “Mixed multitude” is translated “rabble” in the Revised Standard Version. “Now the *rabble* that was among them had a strong craving.”

In the antitype, controversy arose when Gentiles entered the Church. Some Jewish Christians felt that in order for Gentiles to become Christians, they should become Jews and obey the Law. The misconstruing of the Law was troublesome until Paul eventually, through God’s providence, quieted the issue. On the one hand, to believe a Christian is justified by the Law is very damaging to faith. On the other hand, the principles and instruction of the Law are purifying, helpful, and upbuilding for the Christian. Hence the Law is both destructive and beneficial depending on how it is used and the individual’s heart condition.

The first, or Ephesus, stage of the Church is described as “desirable” because the great majority of professing Christians were so pure that pretenders were afraid to join with them. Also, the account was known of how Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying to the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the mystery of iniquity was already at work in the Ephesus period with a *minority*. And so the “burning” at Taberah in the type occurred on the *outskirts* of the camp, and the bulk of the people were undamaged.

When the Israelites stopped in Paran after a three-day journey, the account does not state how long they remained in that location. Arriving at Paran can be likened to AD 36 in the antitype,

and subsequent experiences took place from AD 36 onward.

Problems developed further in the Apostle John's day. Proof of this statement is Revelation 2:6, where Jesus said, "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the *deeds of the Nicolaitans*, which I also hate." Jesus commended the Church of Ephesus at large, but when individuals manifested the Nicolaitan attitude, their effects were terminated abruptly by an apostle. For example, John pointed out Diotrephes by name, and he was excommunicated (3 John 9–11). In the Smyrna period, certain harmful doctrines began to infiltrate that affected not just individuals but little groups. By the third stage of the Church, Pergamos, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans escalated noticeably.

In summary, then, this part of the Book of Numbers gives the history of the gospel Church. However, we cannot particularize except at the beginning and the end of the Gospel Age.

Num. 11:6 But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.

Num. 11:7 And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

Num. 11:8 And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.

Num. 11:9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

The complaints in this instance arose from the "mixed multitude," but others not in the right heart attitude joined in. What were the complaints? In Egypt, they had a varied and delicious diet: melons, fish, cucumbers, garlic, and leeks. They were really finding fault with God and the manna He supplied. A sufficiency of manna was provided, but the lack of variety was their complaint.

The manna is described as being like coriander seed and the color of bdellium. "Bdellium" is first mentioned in Genesis 2:11,12, "The name of the first [river exiting the Garden of Eden] is Pison: ... which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And ... there is bdellium and the onyx stone." The Pison River, with gold picturing the divine nature, is a description of the Little Flock. The onyx, referring to the black onyx stones on the shoulders of the high priest, pictures the dark soil of earth, from which God raises up a class who will be a part of Messiah's government. On the two black onyx stones were engraved the 12 names of the tribes of Israel, six on each stone, according to their natural birth (Exod. 28:9–12).

The true origin of the manna is difficult to pinpoint, but the Scriptures provide a few clues. The manna, called "angels' food," came from heaven with the dew (Psa. 78:25). In other words, at the time of dew, the manna was mysteriously deposited from the atmosphere. Being hard like kernels of corn, the manna had to be ground with a mortar and pestle. Moreover, it had the flavor of oil and honey. "The house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey" (Exod. 16:31). Therefore, since the manna was pleasant to the taste, the complaint was not about flavor but about the lack of variety.

In antitype, the "manna" from heaven, the Word of God, contains a lot of variety and nutriment. Just as the literal manna was a complete food and could sustain the Israelites, so the Bible is a complete spiritual diet for the Christian. As to variety, the Israelites could drink milk

and make cheese from their flocks, and occasionally they could eat meat such as a lamb chop. At certain stops, dates were even available. The point is that instead of rice, wheat, or bread, their main diet was manna, which they could supplement, so what did the people really have to complain about?

Comment: They lusted for garlic and onions to spice up their food.

Reply: In longing for their previous food and customs, they had difficulty overcoming the habits of Egypt (the world in antitype).

The murmurers did not present a fair assessment, for they slanted their complaints as if there were no variety at all. In wanting the food and fellowship of Egypt (the world), they looked back to former pleasures. They wanted the fleshpots of Egypt; i.e., they wanted to satisfy their desires for worldly lusts and pleasures.

One problem was that they forgot the *miraculous* nature of the food supply. Neither the manna nor the cloud was the norm of nature. Carrying this principle over to the Kingdom Age, we can say that even though the world will have Jesus as their Messiah, some people will forget the miracle aspect, and then familiarity begins to breed contempt. Even when the world travels by sight in the Kingdom, many will fail to get life. The principle is the same, for what more could the Israelites have had to visually demonstrate God's care?

Comment: Since the manna was like coriander seed, the Israelites had to pick it up in tiny quantities. With Scripture, too, it is here a little, there a little (Isa. 28:10). Not only did the Israelites have to work to collect the manna each day, but they had to grind, beat, and bake it. And that is what we must do with Scripture. Not only do we find a little truth here and a little truth there, but we must use it—we must *chew and digest* it.

Reply: Yes, we must masticate the truth so that the digestive system can extract nutriment and absorb it.

Q: Since the manna tasted like honey and oil, does honey picture the sweetness of the truth? When the Apostle John took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, the taste was sweet like honey (Rev. 10:10). Does the oil picture the unction of the Holy Spirit?

A: Yes, when we first get the truth, the sun shines on us, and then later we are tested with persecuting experiences (described by John in the end of that verse as being bitter in the belly).

Q: Numbers 11:7 says that manna was the color of bdellium, and since Exodus 16:31 says that the manna was white, can we conclude that bdellium was white?

A: That is correct because manna was like a pearl, and that is why some erroneously think of the manna as gum oozing or dripping from a tree.

Manna was like a seed that had to be ground into flour with an oily taste. It was a condensed food, "angels' food," with plenty of vitamins and nutriments—a complete food.

When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon the dew. While the dew is described as being deposited, it occurred in another way. For instance, if a house is very cold inside and the weather is warm outside, a distillation will occur on the window. Or if the weather is extremely cold and the house is warm inside, the window will also have a distillation. One distillation appears on the inside of the pane and the other on the outside of the pane, but the outside, which is primarily where the cold is, condenses into water. The dew is

mysteriously extracted from above, and there it is in the morning. In the desert, the night was cold, and so was the ground, or desert floor. Warm air that was collected in the thermal blanket of the cloud mixed with the warm air under it and condensed. Therefore, from one standpoint, the dew fell on the ground, but from another standpoint, the dew came up from the ground, for the cold ground produced the condensation. The manna was another matter, however. It came from above and then was picked up on the ground.

Num. 11:10 Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

“The anger of the LORD was kindled greatly.” Sometimes we think of God as being without emotion—that He is taciturn and serene. However, He can get fed up, as will happen in Jacob’s Trouble. His fury will rise up into His face against Gog and Magog (Ezek. 38:18).

Num. 11:11 And Moses said unto the LORD, Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me?

Num. 11:12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers?

Num. 11:13 Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat.

Num. 11:14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me.

Num. 11:15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness.

While the murmuring started with others, it was contagious and extended to the main body of the Israelites, resulting in an emotional trauma. Imagine the people weeping as families! The murmuring and crying were difficult for Moses to bear. When he talked to God, the Lord had mercy on him, for Moses was an overworked servant because of his *conscientiousness*. Being so burdened, he was getting physically and emotionally depleted. He was saying, “Look at this multitude. Do you expect me to carry them like a baby to the Promised Land?” Feeling overwhelmed, Moses even prayed that he might be blotted out.

Comment: The principle enunciated in the New Testament applies here—that we will not be tested beyond what we can bear but will be given a way of escape. The Lord provides a way of escape before the experience completely sinks us.

Reply: Yes, that aspect will be treated in subsequent verses.

God was angry at first, but the anger built up until it was *steaming* anger because the people were murmuring against *His* providential care and *His* miracles.

By adding that “Moses also was displeased,” the account gives us a little insight into his character. It was his conscientiousness that produced the burden, whereas leaders who are unconcerned for the destiny of the people under their charge do not feel burdened. On another occasion, Moses reasoned with God, “You brought the Israelites out of Egypt. If they are all destroyed for disobedience, what will happen to your reputation?” God did not find fault with Moses, and neither should we.

Comment: Perhaps God permitted this experience of feeling overwhelmed to come upon Moses so that Moses would not feel he could do everything. It is necessary for us to realize and feel our weakness at times so that we will go to the Lord in prayer.

Reply: The Lord expects us to work out our salvation up to a certain point. When a situation is beyond human effort, we need help from above. For example, when Peter was shackled to two different soldiers and the chains dropped off their hands, the angel told him to put on his clothes. Peter could have been clothed miraculously, but it was good for him to exert some effort himself. Accordingly, we are expected to do certain things for ourselves and not to be completely passive. Christians who sit back and attribute everything to providence may be happy and relaxed and feel no stress, but we should be active and *expend energy* in doing the Lord's will.

Num. 11:16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee.

Num. 11:17 And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.

The instruction to take 70 men might seem to be needless repetition, for Jethro had given advice to Moses earlier, before the Tabernacle was finished, to take these 70 princes to do the judging. However, they were not relieving Moses from the burden here. The 70 were told earlier that if a matter was too hard for them to settle, they should take it to Moses. The problem was that nothing but complaints were being taken to Moses, and even families brought complaints. Here God said He would "take of the spirit" of Moses' wisdom and understanding and anoint or put it on the 70 so that they could assist him. The thought is not that Moses' spirit would be diminished. Rather, it was a principle that is illustrated by a candle. If a person with a lit candle lights an unlit candle, the first candle is not diminished in any sense. The instruction was given to Moses in the midst of a very emotional trauma.

Jesus later imparted the "spirit" to the 70 he sent out, but that laying on was superficial compared to character development. The 70 were helped mentally but not morally. Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*; unto him ye shall hearken." Based upon this text, the Jews should have seen that Jesus is the Messiah.

Num. 11:18 And say thou unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt: therefore the LORD will give you flesh, and ye shall eat.

Num. 11:19 Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

Num. 11:20 But even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the LORD which is among you, and have wept before him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

Num. 11:21 And Moses said, The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month.

Num. 11:22 Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?

Moses' reply was understandable under the circumstances. Not seeing how so much "flesh" would be provided to feed 2 million people for a whole month, he asked, "Shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together ... to suffice them?" He reasoned that if all the flocks and herds were slain and all the fish of the Red Sea were gathered, the quantity would not be sufficient. But God's method did not involve herds or fish but quail, which would transport themselves to the site of the Israelites and cover the ground.

Num. 11:23 And the LORD said unto Moses, Is the LORD'S hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.

Supplying "flesh," or meat, for 600,000 men of war (or 2 million Israelites) for an entire month would seem to be an impossible task. And even when God provided quail for a month until the people were sick, the complaints did not end. We attribute their attitude to depraved human nature, but that is only partially true. Their attitude was a combination of craving or lustful desires plus depravity. In the next age, people will have similar problems.

Comment: Also, the Israelites were guilty of continually forgetting.

Reply: They did not receive their experiences mixed with faith.

Num. 11:24 And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.

Being "round about the tabernacle" means the 70 came forward from their tents past the Levites into the Court on three sides of the Tabernacle structure. (Going behind the Most Holy would have been forbidden.) Probably the resting of "the spirit" upon them was done in a dramatic, visible fashion to give them more of a sense of the transfer of the Spirit. It would be somewhat like the imparting of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, when a tongue of flame sat on the head of each of the assembled specially anointed disciples. Subsequently the 12 apostles could speak foreign languages.

Num. 11:25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

"And the LORD came down in a cloud" over the Tabernacle proper. In most cases the pillar of the cloud was over the Most Holy because of the connection with the Shekinah light, which was between the wings of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant. However, on certain occasions, the pillar came down on the door of the Holy, i.e., over the First Veil. Such a transfer from the Most Holy to the door of the Tabernacle would have occurred at this time. To hear a voice coming out of the cloud would have been very startling—a mysterious presence and voice!

The 70 elders, who call to mind the Sanhedrin, "prophesied, and did not cease." Their unceasing prophesying is a reminder of King Saul. Although he was not in the proper heart condition, the Holy Spirit temporarily empowered him to prophesy at length as a sign. Verse 25 seems to indicate that whenever the 70 elders spoke publicly as representatives of the people, they spoke under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Num. 11:26 But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.

The prophesying of Eldad and Medad was similar to that of the other 68 elders except that they spoke in the camp among the people.

Comment: According to Young's *Analytical Concordance*, Eldad means "God is friend," and Medad means "love."

Num. 11:27 And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.

Num. 11:28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

Num. 11:29 And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

Notice the exclamation point at the end of verse 29. Moses spoke these words with emphasis. What a wonderful character he had—no envy at all! Also, he was called the meekest man in all the earth, and it is unusual to find meekness in a person who has great knowledge. Moses' office and responsibility demanded that he speak as the Lord instructed him. On another occasion, Moses wanted to give his life on behalf of the nation if doing so would mean the salvation of the nation. His attitude was similar to that of Jesus, who actually gave his life for the nation of Israel (and the world of mankind).

Comment: This account is a reminder of the incident with Jesus when the Apostle John was disturbed that one not in their midst was casting out devils (Luke 9:49,50). Jesus answered the same way Moses did: "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us."

God promised to raise up a Prophet like unto Moses, and this account in Numbers is another example. There must be 50 to 70 such instances of similarities between Moses and Jesus. If studied, this message would be very powerful to the Jew because it was Moses who made the statement in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." The Jews should ask, "How is Jesus like Moses?"

Q: Can we draw the principle here that we are not to stereotype the kind of service one should do for the Lord? There are many ways to serve the Lord.

A: Yes. One elder used to preach that to be faithful, a Christian had to go door to door colporteur. It is true that colporteur was done in the Pastor's day, but at that time, people were more receptive. Today many communities require registration with the town hall and a permit in order to go from house to house. In addition, a prejudice has developed because of the Watchtower and Bible Tract Society. Some JWs are quite aggressive out of misguided zeal, for they feel that if they do not preach their message, their own salvation is jeopardized. Each of the consecrated should soberly and reasonably assess his or her own talents and serve the Lord accordingly as opportunity permits.

Num. 11:30 And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

After the transfer of a dispensation of the Holy Spirit to the 70 elders, they disbanded and each

went back to his own tribal situation in the camp. They now had added ability.

Num. 11:31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth.

Num. 11:32 And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp.

Like the opening of the Red Sea in the Exodus, this miracle has been minimized. Writers on the Old Testament who traveled to Egypt and Sinai noticed that on certain occasions, flocks of quail flew over the Red Sea, and at times, they even flew low. However, more is involved here. A quail, like a pheasant or a chicken, is not designed to fly long distances because its wings are weak and its body is a little on the plump side. As Bro. Russell and others have suggested, there must have been a down draft of wind that increased the fatigue of the already tired birds. As a result, the quail fell about the camp of the Israelites. This incident involved a *tremendous* horde of birds and thus was a *mighty* miracle.

The quail were “two cubits high upon the face of the earth,” two cubits being 36 inches. It has been suggested that when the down draft came, the Israelites knocked the birds down and collected them. However, the account does not say that. Rather, the birds fell exhausted on the ground: “a wind from the LORD ... brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp.” All the Israelites had to do was to go and pick them up.

Psalms 78:26–28 reads, “He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.” This Psalm is a further confirmation that instead of being batted down because of low flight, the quail fell on the ground and lay there exhausted. Also, the takeoff of quail is more difficult because of their weight. They expend a lot of energy just to get airborne.

Notice, the quail did not fall *in* the camp but “*round about* the camp.” When the quail fell on the ground, the disbursement was the equivalent of a day's journey on either side. In other words, the quail fell in an area outside the camp of Israel, in an area that was not occupied. What is “a day's journey”?

Comment: When the Israelites traveled leisurely, they covered about 20 miles in three days. Therefore, a day's journey would be at least seven miles in each direction.

Reply: Yes, the quail were like a locust plague, which can cover seven or eight miles.

Now let us get down to the specifics. The *least* amount of quail collected by one individual was 10 homers. Since a homer is the equivalent of 11 bushels, the least amount per person was *110 bushels*. With each bushel being 8 to 10 inches high and about 16 inches in diameter, we get some idea of the *magnitude* of this miracle. Even though the quail would not be pressed down in the bushels, a huge number of the birds was collected. How large an area would the baskets fill? The 110 bushels would fill a room 20 feet long by 20 feet wide with the bushels three deep, one on top of the other, to a height of 36 inches. What a huge amount of food for each family! In other words, instead of the quail flying 36 inches above the ground, the thought is that the pile of collected birds was 36 inches high.

For 36 hours, the Israelites did not sleep but continually collected quail. They were kept busy, for they also had to prepare the quail by plucking their feathers and eviscerating them.

Num. 11:33 And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague.

“While the flesh was yet between their teeth ... the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people.” All the people ate quail, but only a segment of the people died—enough, however, to result in a mass burial. Those who died of the “very great plague” were the ringleaders in complaining about the manna, the ones who were the boldest and most aggressive in verbalizing their dissatisfaction. They were smitten quickly *while they were eating*. But what about the rest of the people? God said the nation would eat quail for a month, and He meant it.

The account seems to imply that the Israelites had to eat quail for a month. Otherwise, a lot of the collected quail would have been wasted. We can also conclude that the Israelites had to stay at Kibroth-hattaavah for at least a month following the arrival of the quail so that they would be filled to the gills with meat. No doubt Moses made sure that the people ate what they had lusted for and craved!

Q: Would the manna have ceased for the entire month?

A: Although the manna technically did not cease until the Israelites entered the Promised Land, it probably did stop for that particular month to impress the lesson.

Comment: The wording of Numbers 11:19,20 seems to indicate the Israelites ate quail exclusively for that entire month. God said, “Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; But *even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you.*”

Reply: Even with all of these experiences, the nation did not learn. Thus it became necessary for all to perish except Joshua, Caleb, and the young generation who came out of Egypt. Even though the people *saw and experienced*, they did not reform. Many brethren think that almost everyone will be saved in the next age, but that is not the case. Only those with tried and proven characters will get eternal life. All are guaranteed ample opportunity “to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,” but many will fail (1 Tim. 2:4). If a person willfully disobeys right away, he will be dispatched right away. The 100-year trial and the Little Season will eliminate all discontents. All who do not love God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength will go into Second Death whether in this age or the next.

Psalm 78:29–32 reads, “So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.”

Num. 11:34 And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.

Num. 11:35 And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.

The length of stay at both Kibroth-hattaavah and Hazeroth, the next stop, is not given.

Comment: The definition for Kibroth-hattaavah is “graves of lust” or “graves of craving.”

Reply: When we consecrate, we give up the world, but the temptation is to want to return to the leeks and the onions and the things of the past. We get tested along these lines.

The Israelites’ desires for meat were illicit, for they were really complaining against Jehovah. Their failure to enter the Promised Land was due to two factors: (1) they forgot and (2) they lacked faith. Many times when brethren are going through deep waters, it is helpful for them to review how the Lord previously led them to their present point. When properly considered, past providences are an encouragement. As each Christian reflects on the past, certain experiences will come to mind where there is no doubt that God intervened providentially. Remembering His grace is helpful.

Num. 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

Moses was over 80 years of age at this time, so Miriam and Aaron, both being older, were at least in their 90s and perhaps Miriam was over 100. With the three being related as brothers and sister, this is a case of “familiarity breeds contempt” to some extent. Even with Jesus, two of his stepbrothers did not believe he was the Messiah until Pentecost.

Called a “prophetess,” Miriam led the singers when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, and Aaron was given to Moses for a mouthpiece (Exod. 15:20). Now they voiced their complaint about “the Ethiopian woman,” Zipporah.

Q: Were they murmuring because the Ethiopian woman was of a different race?

A: That was the excuse but not the real reason.

Q: Were the Israelites forbidden to intermarry in this manner?

A: There was no such prohibition. Moses married Zipporah when he was in the wilderness, and the Law had not been given at that time. The real gripe is stated in the next verse. Later on, Korah’s rebellion occurred for the same reason.

Num. 12:2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

Miriam and Aaron complained because they wanted more authority and public recognition. Their murmuring may have been a result of the disbursement of power to the 70 elders. That providence on behalf of others, plus their family relationship and the fact that they were talented, pressured their old nature to complain. God heard their words.

Comment: A seemingly minor complaint can be grievous or even life-threatening. Therefore, we should watch our words to make sure they are always in line. It is no small matter to grieve the Holy Spirit or the Lord.

Reply: Jude 8 cautions against speaking “evil of dignities,” and Jesus warns against offending “little ones” (Matt. 18:6). The individual being criticized may be one of the Lord’s chosen ones. To step on the toes of such a one is dangerous, so we should watch our words.

Num. 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Num. 12:4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

Num. 12:5 And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

The LORD spoke *suddenly* to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation.” They did so, and “the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood ... [over] the door of the tabernacle.” The pillar retracted up into the cloud, moved forward, and came down over the Tabernacle door.

Comment: We would think that Aaron and Miriam were trembling at this point. Or perhaps they thought the Lord had heard them and was about to rectify matters.

Reply: Whatever the case, the Lord’s subsequent dealing with them was a surprise.

With all the authority Moses had, it is remarkable that not only did the power not go to his head but he “was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” Eventually we will come to the smiting of the rock, but that incident is misunderstood.

Num. 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

Num. 12:7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

Num. 12:8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

The Revised Standard version reads, “And he said, ‘Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; [for] he is entrusted with all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech; and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?’”

The high-mindedness of Miriam and Aaron needed to be put down. Moses was more than a prophet, but God was saying to Miriam and Aaron, “If you were *even* a prophet.” They had not even been given a vision, let alone experienced what God had done to Moses. They were merely given instructions as to what to do. For example, at the time of the consecration of the priesthood in Leviticus 8, Moses took the leading role—it was he who washed and clothed Aaron. In effect, the Lord was saying to Miriam and Aaron, “Aren’t you satisfied with the role you now occupy? If you were a level higher, you would have a vision, but you have not even had one. Moses is so far above you that I do not talk to him in a vision but mouth to mouth.”

Comment: This incident is a reminder of David and Saul. When an Amalekite returned and said he had killed King Saul, David slew him, *even though Saul had given such an instruction*. The principle was “touch not God’s anointed” (2 Sam. 1:1–16).

Reply: Yes, Miriam and Aaron should not have “touched” Moses in the manner they did by airing their ill feeling towards him.

Comment: The incident also reminds us of David earlier when his brothers complained against

him for daring to think he could fight against Goliath.

Reply: Yes. He was the youngest and the most removed in some respects. When he heard the news that Goliath had been insulting the Israelites and the God of Israel for a whole month, he reacted courageously and with faith. Goliath had been daily challenging the Israelites by saying, “Let us resolve this combat by having two champions. I will represent the Philistines. Now you choose a representative, and we will settle this matter once and for all.” Of course Goliath, as a giant, knew he was much better equipped from the standpoint of the flesh than any of the Israelites. And Joseph was another individual whose brethren resented and envied his favoritism, such as dreams from the Lord.

This incident in Numbers is an interesting character study and a very helpful lesson in noting divine providence on behalf of others.

Comment: God was lowering the boom on Miriam and Aaron when He asked, “Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

Reply: Yes, they knew they had sinned. God said, “My servant Moses is ... faithful in all mine house.” In the Hebrews 11 listing of the Ancient Worthies, several verses are devoted to Moses. “By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned” (Heb. 11:23–29). Instead of just one simple statement as with several other Ancient Worthies, Moses is given multiple credits.

“Even apparently” in verse 8 means “even in a visual fashion that can be unmistakably seen.”

Num. 12:9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

Num. 12:10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

The fact that the brunt of the visual rebuke was on Miriam tells us that she was the instigator and that Aaron was weak in this situation.

Q: How did the cloud depart “from off the tabernacle”?

A: It departed from over the door, or First Veil, of the Tabernacle. We are getting a moving picture here, as it were, and sometimes things in motion are better than a static form. For instance, a three-dimensional model of the Tabernacle is more impressive than a two-dimensional drawing, but the highest dimension would be where there is movement. The movement of the cloud makes it personal—as though someone were in the cloud, especially when a voice issued forth from it. No man can see God and live, but on certain occasions, people could hear a voice (Exod. 33:20).

Comment: Imagine how Miriam must have felt when she “became leprous, white as snow”!

Reply: Subsequent verses show that she was shut out of the camp for seven days, and the Israelites did not journey from that location until she was allowed to return.

Comment: For a woman of her age (in her 90s or over 100) who was accustomed to respect, the experience with leprosy was severe.

Reply: As the older sister, she had become like a mother to the nation in a matriarchal sense.

“Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.” What a shock for Aaron to behold Miriam’s sudden leprous state!

Num. 12:11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

Num. 12:12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother’s womb.

Num. 12:13 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

The nature of Moses is shown in this spontaneous, impassioned prayer. He did not seek vengeance. Moses was saying in effect, “Have mercy,” but that is not always the Lord’s way.

Miriam would have been in shock when she saw the expression on Aaron’s face as he looked at her. But why was Aaron not struck with leprosy as well?

Comment: Because he was the high priest.

Reply: That is one reason, for if he were leprous, he could not perform as high priest. Out of deference to the office, therefore, Aaron did not become leprous. And that is why, regardless of who is President of the United States—be it Nixon, Clinton, or whoever—the office should be revered. Afterwards is another matter entirely; then the judicial process should be followed.

Comment: Another reason only Miriam became leprous is that God could see she was the more responsible party.

Reply: Yes, she was revealed as the instigator.

What a wonderful, touching reaction on Moses’ part! He burst out and cried spontaneously to the Lord on Miriam’s behalf. Sometimes in prayer, we are so emotionally distraught that we similarly cry out, “God help me!” At such times, there is no formal introduction.

Comment: Instead of asking God direct, Aaron showed deference to Moses, God’s representative, by saying to him, “Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and ... sinned.”

Num. 12:14 And the LORD said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.

Deuteronomy 25:5–10 tells of a provision under the Law in which spitting showed shame: “If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband’s brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her. And it shall be, that the

firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." This procedure was followed in the Book of Ruth when a closer relative declined his responsibilities, and Boaz then married Ruth.

When Miriam and Aaron voiced their grievance to Moses about their not sharing in his authority, it was spitting not only in Moses' face but also in the Lord's face, for Moses was the Lord's representative before the nation. As a prophetess, Miriam had some distinction and honor. She also composed music. Aaron was not only the high priest but also the mouthpiece of Moses in other matters. Thus they should have been content in the Lord's arrangement, but with Moses' being the youngest of the three, his disparity was very meaningful in the family relationship. When Miriam was struck with leprosy, Aaron spontaneously requested forgiveness, and Moses, having the right attitude, prayed, "Heal her *now*, O God." Apparently, he was afraid the leprosy would become terminal, for in the quail incident shortly before, the chief murmurers died very suddenly while the meat was still in their mouths (that is, before they even chewed it).

Q: Under the Law, wasn't a leper shut out from the camp for an additional seven days to make sure the leprosy was truly cleansed? Was Miriam cured when she was shut out, or did she still have leprosy?

A: When a person was wholly white, the procedure was a little different than the general law of leprosy. However, there was a judgment process in which the priest had to examine the type of leprosy in order to mete out the corrective conduct and action to be taken by the afflicted one. In other words, the individual still had to appear before the priest.

Q: Didn't Miriam also have to bring an offering?

A: Yes, we can assume she had that kind of leprosy, and it brought a degree of shame on her, particularly because she was such a prominent woman and a matriarch of the nation. From that day forward, she no doubt dared not murmur anymore.

Num. 12:15 **And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.**

The Israelites remained in the same location until the seven days of Miriam's banishment had expired. Their stationary position accentuated her condition.

Comment: For the Israelites not to journey would mean the cloud did not move.

Reply: Yes, and something must have happened previously to make them think they were going to move. When Miriam and Aaron complained and she was struck with leprosy, her judgment delayed the move.

Q: Would the people have seen the pillar retract up into the cloud but the cloud not move?

A: That is possible. Numbers 12:10 states, "And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle;

and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow.” When the Israelites were to begin a journey, the lifting up of the pillar was the alarm, or signal, but the movement of the cloud was delayed until they had adequate time to fold their tents and get ready. In this case, the cloud did not move horizontally for seven days.

Num. 12:16 And afterward the people removed from Hazereth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

At the expiration of the seven days, the people left the wadi of Hazereth between the mountains and pitched in the region of Paran. On a tour in Sinai a number of years ago, we entered the Sinai peninsula from Eilat, which is at the northern end of the Gulf of Eilat. After proceeding for two or more hours, we came to a very striking valley with sufficient room for the Israelites to encamp for a considerable period of time.

Num. 13:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 13:2 Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

Num. 13:3 And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

“And ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come” (Deut. 1:22).

“Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice” (Deut. 9:23).

Notice, in Numbers 13:1,2, the Lord said, “Send thou men,” but Deuteronomy 1:22 tells that the suggestion to spy out the land actually came from the people. The suggestion would have sounded logical to Moses, for the spies could find out whether or not the cities were walled, how extensive they were, how to conduct the armed forces, etc. However, other Scriptures tell us that the problem was a lack of faith and not waiting for the Lord to guide them. God did hearken to the nation’s request to send spies, but the request showed the people’s weakness.

Comment: Another instance of not waiting for the Lord’s way was when Saul offered a burnt offering instead of waiting for the Prophet Samuel to arrive.

Reply: Yes, and even the desire of the people for a king was a rejection of the Lord’s method to deal with them through judges. God granted their desire for a king, even though it was improper. Sometimes He answers a prayer or pleading in order to show the lack of wisdom and the subsequent problems it will bring.

Called rulers and heads of the children of Israel, the 12 who were chosen to spy out the land were chief ones but not the same individuals as those listed in Numbers 1, 7, or 10 as heads, or princes, of the tribes. The 12 here in Numbers 13 were more like deputies. At any rate, there was responsibility because of their positions of leadership.

Num. 13:4 And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.

Num. 13:5 Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.

Num. 13:6 Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

Num. 13:7 Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.

Num. 13:8 Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.

Num. 13:9 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.

Num. 13:10 Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.

Num. 13:11 Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.

Num. 13:12 Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.

Num. 13:13 Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.

Num. 13:14 Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.

Num. 13:15 Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

Num. 13:16 These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

“Oshea,” the son of Nun, was Joshua. Moses later called him Jehoshua, for ultimately Joshua replaced Moses, and his name had to be more in line with that of Jesus.

Num. 13:17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

Moses dispatched the group of 12, telling them to enter the land of Canaan from the south rather than to go across the wadi that connects the Dead Sea with the Gulf of Eilat and then go way up to Madeba and enter the land at Jericho. In other words, they entered Canaan via the nearer route, which was from the south. From a mountain in Petra, there is a wonderful view of this southward approach, and directly across the large wadi, or valley, is Mount Hor, where Aaron was buried. The entrance the 12 used was a little to the left of this tremendous valley.

Num. 13:18 And see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many;

Num. 13:19 And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

Num. 13:20 And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the firstripe grapes.

Moses was reiterating what the people felt was the wise thing to do. They used *human* wisdom instead of trusting the Lord when He said, “Go into the land.” Natural reasoning, or human rationalization, is one of the problems in the Christian walk; unfortunately, it is the usual guide for interpreting divine providences. When we see what happened in the final analysis, Caleb and Joshua were apparently not of this disposition. The suggestion for the delegation

originated with the people, and Moses merely repeated the logical points they had raised.

The time of year for spying out the land was the “time of the firstripe grapes,” which would have been July or August.

Num. 13:21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

Num. 13:22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

The 12 departed to search out the land. As spies, they entered surreptitiously as ordinary people, being careful lest their true purpose be discovered. Evidently, they were divided into two groups of six each, with Caleb as the leader of one group and Joshua as the leader of the other group. Joshua and his group explored the land northward, while Caleb and his men searched the land around Hebron and Bethlehem, which was a sizable territory, for the land slenderizes as it goes northward. Joshua went 300 miles up to Rehob in the far north, up to the entrance of Hamath. Therefore, the area of land searched out was quite large. Joshua’s return route was along the Mediterranean coast. The difference in routes explains why Caleb returned and gave his report first, for he had the shorter, more southern route.

Comment: For Joshua’s group to travel 300 miles in 40 days in unfamiliar territory means they had good navigational skills.

It is interesting that the account states, “Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.” In history, Egypt has always boasted of its antiquity, but here we are told that Hebron was seven years older than Zoan. This time frame would be back in Abraham’s day. Ham was the founder and father of Egypt, and he was succeeded by his son Mizraim. Cush at first occupied ancient Persia and much later founded Ethiopia. Canaan settled in the land of Canaan. Thus we get some idea of the antiquity of the land.

Num. 13:23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

Num. 13:24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

“Brook” should be “valley” or “wadi” (a dry valley except at flood season).

A “branch with one cluster of grapes” was brought back, being borne “two upon a staff”; i.e., the grapes were carried on a staff supported between the shoulders of two men. Unlike the hybrid grapes we purchase today in the supermarket, these grapes were more like the large, blue Concord grapes sold more commonly in the past. Back in history, it was not unusual for a grape to be as large as a plum, and one cluster could weigh from 45 to 70 pounds. The very fertile soil in the past produced such grapes.

Comment: Israel was described as a land of milk and honey at that time, so it is logical that the produce was exceptional (Exod. 13:5).

Reply: Yes, the grapes were an evidence of the richness and goodness of the land. Even now from the air, we can see how extremely fruitful the land of Israel, particularly the bottom two-

thirds, must have been. Terraces can be seen and catch basins for rainfall. Today much of the land is desert and barren, and irrigation is needed to grow crops. However, the land is slowly being brought back to its former fruitfulness.

Many years ago a brother from England gave a sweet, fatherly talk on the seven good things the Lord promised for the land of Israel, and then he drew spiritual lessons. As Christians, we are promised a better land, a *heavenly* Canaan, so it was uplifting to hear spiritual counterparts for the promises to the Jew in regard to the earthly Canaan.

Num. 13:25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

Num. 13:26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

Num. 13:27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

Num. 13:28 Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

Num. 13:29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

The very fact these enemies were mentioned indicates the 12 spies covered the land and wasted no time in doing so. They went along the Mediterranean coast and along the Jordan River. The spies admitted the land was fruitful but felt the stature of the people and the enormous fortifications were a problem.

When the Israelites originally entered Sinai, the Amalekites fought with them (Exod. 17:8–16). The Amalekites were a strong, warlike people who covered a large region, and the Israelites would have to conquer them in order to enter the land of Canaan.

Num. 13:30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

Num. 13:31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

Of the first six spies to return, only Caleb gave a favorable report. The five under his leadership brought back an unfavorable report. Caleb (and later Joshua) recommended that the Israelites go up at once to possess the land. “Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are *well able* to overcome it.” After there was time for the reports to circulate, the people chose to believe the unfavorable report about the stature of the people and the fortifications, concluding that it would be suicide to attempt an entry.

Note: Although Joshua and Caleb were the two leaders, the land was not spied out in two groups of six. Rather, in order to cover the land so thoroughly in *just 40 days*, the six members of each group searched the land independently but under their leader’s direction.

Num. 13:32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that

eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

Although the inhabitants were tall, their stature was exaggerated, and so was the situation in the land. The land was not “a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.” The walls were high at 70 or 80 feet, but the cities were not “walled up to heaven” (Deut. 1:28). Such a negative report sapped the strength and willingness of the people, and they accepted the majority report. Here is a case where the majority were not right.

Fear is the enemy of faith, for it undercuts the nervous system, stamina, and fortitude. Here the ratio of faith was 1 out of 6. “Fear hath torment,” we are told in 1 John 4:18. The majority of the Israelites thought they were using prudence: “Why have the torment? We will not try to possess the land.”

From the standpoint of fear, parents sometimes do not encourage their children to consecrate. The parents fear that the children do not possess a sufficiency of innate courage, etc., to withstand the rigors of consecration. Such an attitude is wrong, for it is not our own courage or strength but *spiritual faith* that conquers the world. God calls individuals with natural faith as a subsoil, and then spiritual faith is slowly added. Even the apostles had little spiritual faith until Pentecost, and then they were emboldened to condemn the nation for crucifying the Prince of Life. Peter said in effect, “You have killed the Messiah!” What a powerful sermon that must have been, for thousands repented (Acts 3:12–4:4).

Num. 13:33 **And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.**

The spies were saying that they felt like grasshoppers in comparison with the height of the sons of Anak and that the sons of Anak looked down on them as if they were insignificant grasshoppers. As “giants,” the sons of Anak were descendants of the *nephilim*.

Q: Weren't the nephilim destroyed in the Flood?

A: The nephilim were destroyed. Only eight people survived the Flood, but of those eight, there were wives. A genetic study would show that the nephilim seed could be carried through at least one of the women. The giant Goliath appeared on the scene in David's day, and he was more than 9 feet tall.

Num. 14:1 **And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.**

The people also wept earlier in regard to their continuous diet of manna and their desire for meat (Num. 11:10). In reality, they were self-centered, for in addition to the manna, they had goats' and camels' milk, and they could eat some of their flocks, which were multiplying. In ancient times, a man's wealth was measured by the size of his herds, so that the larger the flocks, the greater his influence. Therefore, self-gratification was apparently the centerpiece of the Israelites' thinking. The mourning that accompanied their murmuring was a factor in the quail incident, as well as here in connection with the unfavorable report of the ten spies. Subsequently we will see that the ten spies were smitten dead for their disobedience and lack of faith (Num. 14:37).

As regards *spiritual* matters, the *minority* report is usually closer to the truth. However, that is not always true, for sometimes the minority consists of troublemakers, especially in temporal matters.

Num. 14:2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

The Israelites' complaint was ostensibly against Moses and Aaron, but they were actually complaining against God. What were their words? "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!" And then even more startling: "[or even here] in this wilderness!" The Lord would dramatically answer the second part of this prayer (see Num. 14:27–35).

Num. 14:3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

The Israelites' felt they were the prey for people to kill them "by the sword" because they feared the Canaanites, the Amalekites, etc. (Num. 13:29). They were saying, in effect, that they were an unarmed host and that they were untrained for warfare—even though they had been tightly organized, numbered for warfare, given silver trumpets and an order of march, told that God would go before them, and blessed through a prayer by Moses (Num. 10:35,36).

Num. 14:4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Next they said, "Let us appoint a captain to lead us back to Egypt." Nehemiah 9:17 tells that they elected a captain, but God's providence stopped them from actually returning to Egypt.

Q: Would the Israelites have thought, "Now that Pharaoh and his forces have been eradicated in the Red Sea, we can safely return and not be put under hard taskmasters"?

A: That is possible. Perhaps a few even reasoned, "Maybe the Egyptians will be happy to see us return." However, it is human nature for those who are humiliated, as the Egyptians were, to want revenge. Common sense should have told the Israelites that if they returned to Egypt, they would be put not only under taskmasters but under still more severe circumstances.

Num. 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

In bringing their complaint to Moses and Aaron, the people had to go to the Tabernacle. When Moses and Aaron heard the complaint, they fell flat on their faces in supplication before the host. They were horrified at this murmuring against God.

Num. 14:6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

Num. 14:7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.

Num. 14:8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

Num. 14:9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

Joshua, who had returned by this time, and Caleb rent their clothes and then spoke to the Israelites. The two renewed their same theme, which was to the effect that “If the Lord be with us, who can be against us? We will eat [consume] them like bread.” This spirit reminds us of David, who went forth to meet Goliath in the strength and confidence of the Lord with only a stone in his sling. The three Hebrew children also manifested great faith.

Comment: It must have taken great courage for Joshua and Caleb to stand up, rend their clothes, and speak with strength before 2 million people who were in such an uproar. Also, before the Lord gave His response, He waited for two witnesses: Joshua and Caleb.

Reply: Yes, for out of the mouth of two or three witnesses is a thing established.

Although the leadership of the vast Israelite host was in the vicinity of Moses and Aaron, God had to miraculously overrule the acoustics in the desert so that when Moses spoke, the people could distinctly hear him. And even the people’s complaint had to be distinct and succinct so that many would comprehend it. The cloud above the nation may have acted like a reflection board to enhance acoustic effects and enable the incident to be recorded perfectly. The testimony of Caleb and Joshua was heard clearly by many in the forefront. The incident is so startling even just to read that it has no doubt been fully recorded, spiritually speaking, for replay in the Kingdom. For the Lord’s Word to be vindicated by those who had such doubts, the incident would have to be recorded live and unrehearsed.

Q: Where were Moses and Aaron standing at this time?

A: They were either in the Court or just outside the Court gate with those who came to voice their complaint.

Num. 14:10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

Imagine! The congregation wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb for repeating their favorable report—for giving a spontaneous “pep talk,” as it were. The two spoke on their own initiative without being prompted or prodded. For them to speak spontaneously was more to their credit than if Moses or Aaron had directed them to try to change the momentum of the complaints. The beauty of the character of Joshua and Caleb is apparent here.

Q: What people were immediately present—Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, the other ten spies, and the 70?

A: The ringleaders of the complaints were also there. In other words, the leading proponents both for and against the situation would have been at the forefront.

Comment: The word “suddenly” is not in verse 10 because the Scriptures are low-key, but for the people to be that emotionally worked up and say, “Let us stone them with stones,” means they would have taken action right away if the glory of the Lord had not *suddenly and immediately* appeared. And then the Lord’s voice was heard. What a dramatic scene!

Reply: When we go through Scripture as a reading lesson, it is one dimensional, as it were. Therefore, we must enter into the setting and commiserate accordingly. Yes, the “glory of the LORD [suddenly] appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.” When the pillar of the cloud was attached to the Most Holy of the Tabernacle for a month, for a year, or for however long, it was visible to the entire nation. Therefore, for the “glory of the Lord” to appear means that a notable change occurred, such as lightning flashes

or some kind of pulsation. The cloud became *active*. Solomon said that the Lord spoke in a shroud, in a dark cloud, but here the glory of the Lord must have penetrated through the cloud with some type of scintillating light to attract attention (1 Kings 8:12). At that point, only Moses could draw near (verse 11).

Num. 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shown among them?

God spoke out of the cloud—and probably audibly. “How long will this people ... [not] believe me, for *all the signs* which I have shown among them?” When the character of the multiple miracles is considered, it is a sad commentary that the Israelites lacked faith and did not believe God. Conditions will be no different in the next age, for people will come forth from the grave with the same characters and memories they had in the present life, and they will see miracles in the Kingdom Age too. The major difference is that now most people experience a period of suffering and know they are dying; that is, few die so suddenly (of a heart attack, for example) that they have no comprehension of what is happening. In the Kingdom, the miracle of being resuscitated from the tomb will top the agenda, but even that will not be enough for all people to thoroughly repent and get life. What greater miracles could be done than were performed back there in the wilderness?

Comment: Deuteronomy 1:31,32 shows how much God did for the Israelites: “And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God.”

Reply: In Deuteronomy, Moses reviewed and summed up incidents we are now considering.

Num. 14:12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.

Very few people indeed would not take advantage of such an offer to be made the leader of “a greater nation and mightier,” but Moses was the meekest man in all the earth (Num. 12:3). In Moses, the Lord chose someone who could successfully overcome and not get heady. Nevertheless, it is interesting that 40 years of discipline in the solitude of the desert were needed first. Moses had plenty of time to think during those 40 years.

Comment: In Exodus 32:10, the Lord made a similar offer to Moses following the building of the golden calf: “Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them [the Israelites], and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.”

Reply: Generally speaking, people do not weigh or remember important lessons. Human nature is strange.

Num. 14:13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

Num. 14:14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

Moses ignored the compliment and offer that God would make of him an even greater official. Instead, and right away, he wanted no reflection to be cast on God’s character. Moses’ reaction

is the sign of a truly great leader. He said in effect, “What about your character? What will other nations think if you kill all of the Israelites with pestilence?”

Q: Did the people hear God’s words to Moses and vice versa?

A: Probably they did, but we cannot prove yes or no.

Comment: If the people did hear, they were all the more responsible for their subsequent actions and murmurings.

Num. 14:15 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying,

Num. 14:16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

Num. 14:17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying,

Num. 14:18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Num. 14:19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

In the final analysis, Moses was asking that the people be spared (1) primarily lest God’s own reputation be damaged and (2) as a demonstration of His mercy. Actually, God had another plan of how to extend mercy and yet bring punishment, which will unfold in succeeding verses. This current conversation manifests the character of Moses. Although far more important than Moses, Jesus had the same meek, lowly disposition.

Comment: God shows both that He is forgiving and merciful and that He is “by no means clearing the guilty.” Obviously, He knew that if He completely spared the nation of Israel, there would be repercussions.

Reply: Yes, and we are reminded of God’s words to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34:6,7. “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” Here in Numbers 14, Moses was repeating what he had heard God say earlier: “And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou hast spoken.” (The Logos did the actual proclaiming in Exodus 34:6,7, but with the authority of the Father and as the Father had instructed him.)

Moses’ repeating God’s previous words is an example of “claiming the promises.” God’s promises are recorded, but to claim them is the endeavor to make them, as far as possible, a practical reality in our own lives.

Num. 14:20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

This verse reminds us of James 5:16, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth

much.” Here in verse 20, the “righteous man” is Moses. God had said, “I ... will make of *thee* [Moses] ... a greater nation and mightier than they” (Num. 14:12), but when “righteous” Moses prayed, his “effectual fervent prayer” availed much, and the Lord pardoned the Israelites.

Num. 14:21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

Num. 14:22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

Num. 14:23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:

God did not inflict punishment on the disobedient Israelites at that time but waited awhile. In fact, some of the people lived 30 or more years before they died, but the point is that they did not enter the Promised Land. They were told they would perish in the wilderness, but they died gradually, not instantly or all at once; i.e., God did not “kill all this people as *one man*” (verse 15). Moreover, the word “all” is qualified, for only those who were numbered from age 20 and upward (and probably their wives) perished except for Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:29).

Not only did God say that He pardoned according to Moses’ word (verse 20), but He added, “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.” Why was this clause inserted in a seemingly strange place?

Comment: God was saying, “I am pardoning the Israelites to a certain extent now, but ultimately, by the end of the Kingdom, the earth will be filled with my glory. Any who are not at heart loyal to me at that time will be eliminated.”

Reply: That is one perspective. In the distant future, all murmurers and discontents will be eliminated, and only those who are fit for life will survive and live on into the ages of ages following the Kingdom period.

Verse 21 seems to be purposely worded to allow a slightly different emphasis in the Hebrew. Instead of “all the earth,” it can read “all this land.” Since not all know about the Kingdom, this secondary interpretation has been helpful, the thought being that the land promised to natural Israel will be occupied and God’s glory will be manifested there. Some interpret the meaning to be that when Jesus, the antitypical Moses, came at his First Advent, he was a Light that illuminated the whole land. However, Jesus will also be a Light at his Second Advent. The light will start in Israel and increase to embrace the whole world.

Num. 14:24 But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

Why was Joshua left out? This experience took place about two years after the Exodus. When Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land 38 years later, Joshua was more prominent than Caleb. At this time, two years after the Exodus, Joshua was in training; he was slowly being prepared to take Moses’ place. Therefore, Caleb was singled out here and complimented.

Num. 14:25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

This parenthetical comment was probably inserted by Ezra many years later.

God instructed the Israelites, “Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.” In other words, the Israelites were supposed to turn and go on the east side of the Jordan rift all the way down to the Gulf of Eilat, but as the narrative shows later, they went in the *opposite* direction farther and farther away from the Promised Land. Again their stiff-necked ways are startling. However, being stiff-necked is not a peculiarity of the Jew, for it is a characteristic of the fallen human race. How many people *truly* bow the knee and worship Christ in this current age? Very, very few. The Kingdom Age will manifest those who are amenable to instruction.

Comment: Hebrews 3:8–12 and 4:1 read, “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.... Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

Num. 14:26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

Num. 14:28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you:

Num. 14:29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me,

“As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you ... from twenty years old and upward.” God was referring to the people’s words in verse 2: “And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: ... Would God that we had died ... in this wilderness!”

Comment: God’s words in verses 28 and 29 are a sober warning to us as new creatures not to be careless with words. If we recognize we have erred, we should ask for forgiveness immediately. Hopefully, any murmuring is not deep-seated, and we can try to retrieve the words.

Comment: When Jephthah made a rash vow, he had to obey it (Judg. 11:30–35).

It appears from other Scriptures that all of the Israelites murmured, but only the older ones (“from twenty years old and upward”) were held responsible. In that age category, the only ones who were spared were Joshua and Caleb. Those below age 20, the children, were not sentenced to death. The setting of this murmuring was approximately two years after the Israelites had left Egypt. Those who were 19 years old at this time wandered in the wilderness for 38 more years and hence were 57 years old when they entered the Promised Land. The Israelites were 2 million strong when they left Egypt, and 2 million strong when they entered the Promised Land. Since about 1 million died in the wilderness, we know the Israelites multiplied in the desert conditions.

Num. 14:30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make

you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Num. 14:31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

Num. 14:32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.

Num. 14:33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.

Num. 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Num. 14:35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

Up to this point in time, two of the 40 years had elapsed, and 38 years remained.

Comment: More than 600,000 men were numbered. Therefore, if we include their wives, approximately 1 million Israelites died in the wilderness. If we divide 1 million by 38 years, we get an average of 26,315 people who died each year. The Israelites must have been burying dead bodies continually.

Num. 14:36 And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land,

Num. 14:37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

Num. 14:38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still.

Num. 14:39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.

The people *mourned greatly* after Moses explained the judgment to them. Their emotions are a study of human nature. The people did a lot of mourning and weeping, and temporarily they seemed to be sincerely stirred. However, they *soon forgot* the problem.

Num. 14:40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

Num. 14:41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.

Num. 14:42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies.

Num. 14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with

you.

Num. 14:44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

Num. 14:45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

God had said the people would die, yet the very next day they presumed to go up to the top of the mountain that borders the Promised Land. Moses told them not to go, but they went anyway and looked and saw that the land was right there before them. The people said, “We are here! The land is immediately before us.”

Notice the strange reasoning in verse 40: “Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.” Sometimes, in spite of explicit statements of Scripture, God’s professed people bend those Scriptures to suit themselves, and they even think God’s providence is following them—they think He is backing them up. The Israelites felt there was sufficient repentance, for they said, “We should have gone into the Promised Land in spite of the report of the ten spies. We recognize we have sinned, but we will enter now.” Moses had warned them not to go, for if they did, they would be slaughtered. Moses, Aaron, and evidently the Levites did not accompany the people, for they “departed not out of the camp.” The Ark of the Covenant remained behind with Moses and Aaron, who refused to “go up unto the hill top.”

A short while before, the Israelites had said, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (Num. 14:4). Since Nehemiah 9:17 informs us that the people did actually elect a captain, we would assume that when the Israelites went up into the mountain, it was under the leadership of the person who took the place of Moses. Apparently, this false captain reasoned with the people, and they went along with him. By piecing together clues in Numbers, Psalms, Nehemiah, etc., we get some idea of the presumptuousness of the Israelites in their reasoning. Thus they acknowledged they had sinned but then immediately disobeyed. The history of this people is startling.

“The Amalekites ... and the Canaanites ... discomfited them, even unto Hormah.” In other words, as Moses had warned, there was a slaughter. The number of the slain is not given, but it must have been very large.

Comment: Hormah was not named until a later incident in Numbers 21:3. “And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they [the Israelites] utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.”

Reply: Yes, the Book of Numbers is a reviewed history written at the time of Ezra. One meaning of Hormah is “burial ground.”

What about the Amalekites? Shortly after crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites fought with them at Rephidim, and as long as Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands, the Israelites were victorious (Exod. 17:8–13). The Amalekites had been harassing the hindquarters of the multitude like a pack of hyenas. Now the Amalekites are mentioned in connection with another area, so we get some idea of the size of the large territory they occupied.

At this time, how far removed were the Israelites from Sinai? Eilat was about an eight-day journey from Mount Sinai—a rather long distance. And Rephidim was even farther away, being down toward Egypt.

Comment: With the Israelites' being only two years into the wilderness wanderings at this point and with the Lord's permitting them to be defeated because of disobedience, their enemies were now encouraged to oppose them. If the Israelites had obeyed, they would have been victorious in all battles, and eventually the enemies would have given up.

Num. 15:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 15:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you,

Num. 15:3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a freewill offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd, or of the flock:

Here the Israelites were given instructions on what to do when they entered the Promised Land 38 years later. When they made an offering, it had to be done in a certain way. Several kinds of offerings were mentioned including a burnt offering, a vow, a freewill offering (a thanksgiving offering), and an offering that pertained to a solemn feast such as the Passover. All of these offerings, which were limited to an animal from the herd or the flock, were "sweet" offerings, "a sweet savour unto the LORD."

Num. 15:4 Then shall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD bring a meat offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil.

Num. 15:5 And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb.

Num. 15:6 Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third part of an hin of oil.

Num. 15:7 And for a drink offering thou shalt offer the third part of an hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Num. 15:8 And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings unto the LORD:

Num. 15:9 Then shall he bring with a bullock a meat offering of three tenth deals of flour mingled with half an hin of oil.

Num. 15:10 And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half an hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Num. 15:11 Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.

Num. 15:12 According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number.

Num. 15:13 All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

Num. 15:14 And if a stranger sojourn with you, or whosoever be among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; as ye

do, so he shall do.

Num. 15:15 One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD.

Num. 15:16 One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you.

All of the detail in verses 4–16 pertains to or accompanies a burnt offering. In other words, every time a burnt offering was made, it was necessary to have not merely the animal but also a “meat” (meal or cereal) offering and a drink offering. In *Tabernacle Shadows*, the sacrifices of Leviticus Chapters 1–7 are called “sacrifices subsequent to the Day of Atonement.” There is a very close relationship but also a very marked distinction between the subsequent sacrifices and the sacrifices to be performed when the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

Now suppose the Israelites had just entered the land and someone wanted to make an offering. Where would the offering take place? Remember, when they entered the land, they were in a state of war for six years. They had not entered a stable place, and the Tabernacle had not yet been set up in Shiloh. Thus an offering could be made wherever they were at the time. When Abraham entered the land centuries earlier and went to different towns, he built a temporary altar out of field stones and offered a burnt offering where he was. Before the Law came into existence, the burnt offering was everything put together: a sin offering, a burnt offering, a peace offering, a thank offering, etc. When Abel offered a burnt offering, it was also for sin. But when the Law was instituted, it broke up the burnt offering into several offerings or component parts. The Pastor taught that, basically, the burnt offering represented acceptance with God. In Leviticus 8, 9, and 16, which pertain to the priesthood, the sin offering preceded the burnt offering. In the other chapters, which pertain to the people in the Kingdom, the burnt offering was first. The sequence was different because the sin offering pertained to Adamic sin. Offerings subsequent to the Day of Atonement did not have to do with the laying down of the basis for forgiveness. Jesus died on the Cross at the beginning of the Gospel Age, and when the Church class is complete, then the offering of The Christ will be complete for *the* (Adamic) sin of the world (but not for willful individual sins and transgressions). Thus Leviticus 1–7 describe or *picture* sacrifices of the next age. (Note: We are not saying that the billions of people in the next age will literally each have to offer a lamb or a bullock.) For a thousand years in the past, the sacrifices of Leviticus 1–7 were performed, as were those of Leviticus 8, 9, and 16. Leviticus 8, 9, and 16 had to do with the Church, The Christ, whereas Leviticus 1–7 picture sacrifices subsequent to the Day of Atonement.

Therefore, the antitypical entrance of the Israelites into the Promised Land is yet future, and it pertains, first, to the nation of Israel and then to the world of mankind (the “stranger”). The Israelite and “the stranger that sojourneth with you” were to be treated exactly alike. The fact that strangers could participate in sacrifices just like the Jew means that when the New Covenant is made with the nation of Israel in the Kingdom, Gentiles will have to come in under that covenant in order to receive Kingdom blessings.

All of these thoughts harmonize with what the Pastor taught, but he never covered these particular points. Nevertheless, he gave us the keys, and we should *use* them.

Comment: The thought that the Israelites’ entering the Promised Land pictures the Kingdom Age harmonizes with the interpretation in the Book of Joshua that when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, they represented the people in the Kingdom.

The arrangement in Numbers 15 was *temporary*, and it was in effect until the Tabernacle was set up in a fixed place, i.e., in Shiloh, at which point Leviticus 1–7 apply. Since satisfaction for Adamic sin is paid for in this age, the world in the next age will benefit from it *carte blanche*. God will have everyone in the Kingdom to be saved from ignorance and to come to an accurate knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3–6).

In this instance, the offering made “by fire unto the LORD” (verse 3) included freewill offerings, vow offerings, and solemn feasts. The result, the “sweet savour unto the LORD,” means that when the animal (without its hide and dung) was burned completely, when it was totally consumed, it smelled good like a meal. (In contrast, the burning of the hide and the dung caused a stench.)

Now we will consider the quantities. Notice that only three categories of animal are mentioned: a lamb (or a kid of the goats), a ram, and a bullock. (In the Passover, those families who did not have a lamb could, for the sake of expediency, substitute a kid of the goats.) Cereal, oil, and wine had to accompany the animal offerings, and the quantities were proportionate to the size of the animal. As the cheapest and smallest of the three animals, a lamb required the least amount of cereal, oil, and wine. As the animal got larger, the accompanying offerings also got larger.

	<u>Lamb</u>	<u>Ram</u>	<u>Bullock</u>
Cereal	1/10 deal	2/10 deal	3/10 deal
Oil	1/4 hin	1/3 hin	1/2 hin
Wine	1/4 hin	1/3 hin	1/2 hin

The cereal and the oil were mixed together into dough. The wine is called a drink offering.

Thus far we have considered the mechanics of the offerings. Now we will treat the spiritual meaning. First, the burnt offering. Notice that a sin offering is not mentioned. With regard to the Church, a sin offering preceded the burnt offering, for the sin offering pertained to Jesus (the bullock). The burnt offering signifies that when we consecrate and accept Jesus as our Redeemer, we recognize that he *really was the Messiah*, that his death on the Cross was *efficacious* for the eradication of sin, that it was a vicarious or *substitutionary* sacrifice, and that his merit *covers* our sins. The burnt offering also signifies our recognition that Jesus’ sacrifice, or sin offering, was acceptable to God.

The Lord’s goat was offered for the sin of the people. The burnt offering that followed the sin offering of the goat pictures God’s acceptance of our service, or sacrifice, which is a filling up of the sufferings left behind of Jesus. (“Christ in you, the hope of glory” has a deep meaning.) The sin offering had already been taken care of, and its burnt offering, which had also been taken care of, represents the people’s recognition of the previous sacrifice whereby they can approach God through Messiah. A way will be opened for them to make an offering to God, and that way is through the Church.

In antitype, the burnt offering will be the bowing of the knee of the people in the next age, for every knee will have to bow to Jesus and every tongue confess that he is Christ to the glory of God (Phil. 2:10,11). Thus the burnt offering represents the world’s repentance, consecration, and realization of what has been done on their behalf.

Num. 15:17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 15:18 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the

land whither I bring you,

Num. 15:19 Then it shall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye shall offer up an heave offering unto the LORD.

Num. 15:20 Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough for an heave offering: as ye do the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it.

Num. 15:21 Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the LORD an heave offering in your generations.

These verses give the primordial significance of the heave offering, for the heave offering developed later. When the Israelites entered the land, they were to offer a heave offering. When wheat was harvested, the stalks were beaten or manhandled so that the grain fell out onto the threshing floor. The remaining stalks were set aside to be bound into sheaves and used as cattle food. A shovel was repeatedly thrust into the threshed-out grain on the floor, and the grain was tossed up into the air for the wind to carry away the chaff. Of the pile of grain on the floor, the very first portion—the first shovelful, as it were—was set aside to be offered to God. Of course the wheat to be given to the Lord had to be crushed, mingled with oil, and made into dough.

Num. 15:22 And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses,

Num. 15:23 Even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations;

Num. 15:24 Then it shall be, if aught be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

Num. 15:25 And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance:

Num. 15:26 And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people were in ignorance.

Num. 15:27 And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.

Num. 15:28 And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

Num. 15:29 Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

Notice that here a burnt offering was mentioned first and then the sin offering, and that the sin offering took place after the Israelites entered the Promised Land. These offerings were a new arrangement and not like those of Leviticus 8, 9, and 16. In this new arrangement, *if there was a*

sin offering, the burnt offering *preceded* it. Moreover, the sin offering here was for a *sin of ignorance* pertaining to the Kingdom Age. The King James is not clear that, first, *congregational* sin is being discussed and then *individual* sin. The congregational sin of ignorance required a large animal for a burnt offering, i.e., a bullock (verse 24).

For congregational sins of ignorance, the sin offering was a kid of the goats, that is, a young male goat. For individual sins of ignorance, a she goat of the first year was offered. The lesson is that the congregation was more responsible for a sin of ignorance than an individual. A *female* goat *cannot* picture Jesus, The Christ, or the Church. A *male* bullock represents Jesus, and a *male* goat pictures the Church.

Num. 15:30 But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Num. 15:31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.

Second Death is suggested for the individual who sins presumptuously. (Presumptuous congregational sin is not mentioned.) “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people” (Acts 3:23). This class will sin quickly in the Kingdom Age (when the antitypical Israelites enter the Promised Land). The initial coming into the land pictures the living generation, the generation who survive Armageddon, but when those in the grave come forth, they, too, will enter the Promised Land. The dead will be raised in successive waves of generations. When they are first raised, any who sin presumptuously will be cut off in Second Death right away. Jesus will use the rod of iron.

Comment: The Apostle John tells us that if we love the Lord, we will keep His commandments. Here is the negative slant; namely, if we hate the Lord, we will break His commandments.

Num. 15:32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

Num. 15:33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

Num. 15:34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

Num. 15:35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

Num. 15:36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Today’s society could not accept such a penalty. Ignorant of the Lord’s arrangement, the world is drunk in their judgment. On the surface, it would seem cruel that such a harsh judgment should be pronounced on one who gathered sticks on the sabbath day, but the commandment is actually very simple. Anyone who willfully disobeys a simple command that is clearly explained incurs the full penalty. Adam ate of the fruit of a tree *after* he was told that such an act would bring the death penalty. The point is that Adam *knew* he was disobeying. Therefore, what may seem to be cruel is not, for God promises that everyone will come to a clear knowledge of the truth. When people come out of the tomb, what they cannot do will be

explained to them clearly and simply. The gathering of sticks was harvesting wood for a fire to prepare a meal. Eating the meal was not wrong, and a fire could have been prepared, or built, the day before. It is a credit to the Orthodox Jews that they try to obey the sabbath, the Law.

Num. 15:37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

Num. 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a-whoring:

Num. 15:40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

Num. 15:41 I am the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

Verses 37–40 are not talking about fringe on the priests' garments but fringe on the people's garments. On the fringe or tassels of their clothing, the people were to put a "ribband [cord or binding] of blue." The symbolism was that the individual commandments of the Lord would be faithfully carried out and that the people were to keep them in mind.

One has said, and it seems to be true, that Jesus had these fringes on his seamless robe. A Greek word in the New Testament supports this thought. The word is used in the incident of the woman who was healed by touching the hem of Jesus' garment (Matt. 9:20).

Comment: Matthew 23:5 reads, "But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."

Reply: The scribes and the Pharisees exaggerated the fringes on their garments as if to say they were especially holy.

All of the people were supposed to have fringes on their garments, not just the priests, but as time went on, the people became careless and did not obey. Orthodox Jews are the exception, for they have tried to obey at least the letter of the Law.

Num. 16:1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:

Num. 16:2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

Num. 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

The chapter opens by identifying the leaders who instigated the complaint against Moses and Aaron. Two tribes are mentioned: (1) Korah from the tribe of Levi and (2) Dathan and Abiram from Reuben. What was the nature of the complaint? In view of the fact that the entire

congregation was holy, Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves in connection with the control of the direction of the host of Israel in matters that were sacred. Ostensibly, the spokesmen were saying that the complaint was not unique with them but that it expressed the sentiments of the nation. The basis of their declaration that the whole congregation was holy is Exodus 19:5,6. “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” These words were from *God*, for He had instructed Moses to so address the nation. No doubt this was a leading text the instigators had in mind to justify their complaint. “We are *all brethren* in the Lord” was their attitude. Verse 2 mentions that 250 princes, prominent individuals from among the tribes, supported the rebellion, so tribes other than Reuben and Levi were involved.

Moses and Aaron were asked, “Wherefore then *lift ye up yourselves* above the congregation of the LORD?” In other words, they were accused of being presumptuous. Primarily the complaint was directed against Moses, but since Aaron was his brother and Miriam his sister, the implication was that the family members were trying to be exclusive and had lifted up themselves in power. What a dreadful accusation!

Q: Wouldn't the people remember what had happened to Miriam not long before?

A: The Israelites did not receive their experiences mixed with faith and *they forgot* quickly.

Comment: An antitype might be the use of Galatians 3:28 to claim that sisters can assume a public teaching role. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... bond nor free, ... male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Reply: Yes, in the nominal Church, women are getting a voice as ministers.

Comment: Originally Moses handled all matters himself, that is, until Jethro advised him to delegate, or share, authority (Exod. 18:13–24). Many of these 250 princes were no doubt among those with whom he willingly shared authority. Therefore, the 250 should have known that instead of usurping authority, Moses had shared his authority.

Reply: The humility of Moses is an interesting study that would be a talk in itself. Described as being “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth,” Moses manifested his humility on several occasions (Num. 12:3). Of course his exceptional humility was the result of his 40-year exile from Egypt to the Sinai wilderness before God called him to lead the Exodus of the Israelites.

It was *God* who chose Moses at the burning bush, and instead of lifting himself up, Moses did the opposite. He said, “I cannot speak to Pharaoh.” Then *God* chose Aaron, so even Aaron did not choose himself.

Q: Was Korah the ringleader, and then he took Dathan, Abiram, and On with him?

A: Dathan and Abiram were individualists along another line, but Korah, as a Levite, was the ringleader and had the chief gripe. From what Moses said later, he considered Korah to be the primary instigator, even though Dathan and Abiram were responsible.

Q: Since verse 1 is the only time On is mentioned in this incident, can we assume he repented and withdrew from the rebellion?

A: Yes, because no judgment was inflicted upon him. Sometimes people are temporarily persuaded to do something that their heart is not really in harmony with, and when they realize what the action is leading to, they change their thinking.

Num. 16:4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face:

Num. 16:5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the LORD will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

This time only Moses fell on his face. (In other cases, both Moses and Aaron fell on their faces.) Moses' action seems to indicate that he realized the complaint was actually directed against him. The others wanted him to share his leadership in a more democratic fashion. Originally Moses did not want a leadership position.

There is a correspondency with Jesus and Satan, for the Adversary aspired to take over planet Earth as his creation and to be a god in the physical realm. On the other hand, Jesus did not initially aspire to the role of High Priest, Prophet, King, etc., but God chose him. Moses, too, was called *of God*, as was Aaron (Heb. 5:4).

Moses realized the complaint was far from the truth, and his temper was aroused. Incidentally, it is not wrong to be angry, as long as the anger is properly directed. The Scriptures tell us to be slow to anger: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, *slow to wrath*" (James 1:19). To be quick-tempered shows a lack of stability, but a controlled anger is proper. First, Moses was abashed, but when he arose, he was angry. Even though some of the pronouns are supplied words, he would have uttered them, and they would have been spoken *with power*.

Imagine this group's going to Moses in a more-or-less orderly fashion to present their grievance! And what did Moses do? He left the matter up to the Lord, for he could not dictate to God. However, he could ask, "Am I guilty, or are these others guilty?"

Comment: This incident is a reminder of the rebellious Second Death class at the end of the Millennium who go up to the camp of the saints (Rev. 20:7-9).

Comment: Failure to submit properly to authority seems to be a chronic problem. A rebellious element keeps surfacing in the various ages.

When Moses spoke *ex cathedra*—that is, when God instructed Moses to speak certain words—those words were coming out of the temple in heaven, as it were. Therefore, Moses was not merely an honored servant but the earthly mouthpiece God used. The statements he uttered as a result of God's instructing him were just as powerful as if they came from the apostles or Jesus, for they were *God's* thinking. Of course Moses did and said some things that were not right; however, these words and actions were not *ex cathedra* but were of his own nature. Usually Moses' anger was righteous indignation, but in one case, it was improper. Similarly the Apostle Peter was out of line when he said to Jesus prior to Pentecost, "Far be it from thee to go to Jerusalem" (Matt. 26:21-23). But whatever Peter said in his epistles after Pentecost was *God's Word*. Peter was expressing *God's* thinking.

A principle is involved here. There have been Gospel Age prophets such as Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther, and Russell, but none of them were quite on the level with Moses, for Moses spoke the *Word of God*. As stars in Jesus' right hand, the five messengers were divinely *guided* (Rev. 1:20), but that is different from being divinely *inspired*. Being divinely inspired is equated

with the Word of God—it is unequivocal. Nevertheless, as regards the divinely guided messengers, any who opposed, left, or differed with them would suffer loss of some kind. Therefore, prudence would tell the reverential Christian to recognize the leadership of those whom God has raised up—not that such individuals were infallible but that, generally speaking, they were God’s stewards—and their influence sometimes lasted for hundreds of years after their demise.

Num. 16:6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;

Num. 16:7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

Num. 16:8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

Looking at the rebellion, Moses saw that the ringleader was Korah, and that it was centered in the Levitical tribe. Moses directed all of them (“Korah, and all his company”) to bring censers and said that the next day God would manifest whom He would choose as an *individual*. Thus Korah was rebelling against the leadership but under the guise of democracy. He wanted to occupy the place of Moses. It can be determined from Scripture that Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Korah were all about the same age, so Korah was not a young upstart. Apparently, his rebellion was the result of a long-term pent-up feeling.

Comment: The name Korah means “baldness.” Since we think of hair as a symbol of consecration and Korah pictures a Second Death class, it is fitting that his name means he had no hair.

Reply: Yes, “baldness” would signify the lack of consecration and the lack of obedience and submission to divine authority as manifested by God’s providence.

Comment: Moses repeated back to Korah what Korah had said against him (verse 3): “Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.”

The challenge was for Korah and the others to take censers with coals of fire in them and separate incense. When they gathered in the Court the next day, they were to crumble the incense over the censers.

Num. 16:9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

Num. 16:10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Moses spoke as he felt, but his reasoning was entirely correct, for Korah wanted to take Moses’ place and then dispense authority among his family of the Kohathite branch of the tribe of Levi. Of the three divisions of Levites excluding Amram—Kohath, Merari, and Gershon—the Kohathites were the most important and had the most honored position because they carried the Ark of the Covenant and the holy furniture while in transit.

Num. 16:11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

Moses was saying, “Why are you murmuring against Aaron? It is *me* that you are really finding fault with.” His reaction reminds us of Jesus’ words when he was apprehended in the Garden of Gethsemane: “You are looking for *me*. Let my disciples go.”

Comment: Similarly, when the Israelites wanted a king, Samuel took their demand personally, but God said, “They are finding fault with *me*, not you.”

Reply: Yes, the Israelites’ attitude was an insult to God, for *He* had given them judges.

Num. 16:12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up:

Originally Dathan and Abiram approached Moses with Korah, but later they returned to their tents. Now they refused to respond to Moses’ summons: “We will not come up.”

Num. 16:13 Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

Num. 16:14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, continued their response to Moses. Their contention was that Moses did not share the *civil* administration, whereas Korah complained about the *ecclesiastical* authority. Both arguments seem plausible at first. Therefore, we must pause and consider the issues, for the more we reflect on the situation, the more we can see that Korah was out of hand. What Korah was saying was not true. Moreover, he and the others were complaining *personally* to Moses—it was more than just an issue. Dathan and Abiram complained that the Israelites had not inherited the land promised to them. But why not? Because they had believed the unfavorable reports of the ten spies. God had told the Israelites to go up and take the land, but they refused to do so because of the reports—yet they blamed Moses for what happened subsequently. When in their own presumptuousness they tried to enter the land—that is, after being told they must wander in the wilderness for 38 more years—several of them died, and the Amalekites slew many thousands.

Q: Does the word “prince” in verse 13 have a stronger implication? Were Dathan and Abiram accusing Moses of being a dictator and of usurping too much authority?

A: Yes, along civil lines.

Num. 16:15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

Num. 16:16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow:

Num. 16:17 And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer.

Num. 16:18 And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

There were actually 251 people involved (verse 17). When Moses said, “Bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers,” he was talking just to the 250 princes. Then he turned to Korah and said, “Thou also,” singling him out as an individual.

Q: What were censers used for in addition to religious services?

A: They were used for carrying hot coals. A material could be distributed on top of the coals in the censer to extend their warmth for use in rekindling a fire later. At night, censers were used to warm beds. Of course the censers of the Levites were a little different from the common censers in that incense was involved. Censers also served as fumigants. Certain ingredients were burned to counteract or neutralize odors. The burning of another kind of herb kept insects away. Thus these fire pans served several purposes. However, the censers in this incident in the Book of Numbers were used along religious lines. Therefore, since it was forbidden to use the holy incense for anything except the prescribed Tabernacle service with the high priest, the 250 princes and Korah were to bring incense of their *own* choosing.

Q: Even though the incense was of their own choosing, did it symbolically represent their praise?

A: Yes, their worship and heart attitude. Symbolically, the incense was supposed to lift up their prayers before God. Their petition was according to the complaints voiced by Korah.

Comment: What comes to mind is the “strange fire” offered by Nadab and Abihu. This incident with Korah seems to be a counterpart. Korah and the 250 had complained against Moses, and now they would offer strange fire. In both cases, the result was death.

Q: Were Dathan and Abiram part of the 250 princes?

A: No, as we will see. Over the years, many have had difficulty harmonizing the details.

Num. 16:19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

Num. 16:20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 16:21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

What did Korah do? In addition to the 250 princes, he “gathered all the congregation.” In other words, the entire nation was now interested in this contest and wanted to see the outcome. Korah felt rather confident.

Q: Would the whole nation now bear responsibility?

A: Sometimes when we hear something, we do not hear the entire story, and what we do hear is distorted. The people probably gathered just from the standpoint of curiosity and being interested spectators, and Korah was the instigator.

“The glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.” The connection between the cloud and the Tabernacle was a black column, so for the “glory of the LORD” to appear means that something out of the ordinary occurred. Perhaps the cloud revolved a little, or there was

illumination—somehow it changed appearance so that the people knew the Lord was about to speak.

And what were the Lord's words? "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." In other words, God Himself was angry with the complaints.

Num. 16:22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

"Shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" Moses and Aaron were saying that the one chiefly responsible for this rebellion was Korah.

When the glory of the Lord appeared, Moses and Aaron were told, "Stand aside. Get out of the way so that I can consume the whole congregation." Immediately Moses responded, again putting his own life on the line as he had done on another occasion. Previously at Mount Sinai, he had said, "Kill me. Let thy wrath come upon me, but save the nation." Now he was saying, "Do not kill the entire congregation because of the rebellion of this one man, Korah. Destroy Korah, but let the others go." What happened next? When Korah heard Moses' words, we believe he ran out of the Court and went to his own tent.

Num. 16:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 16:24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

Num. 16:25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him.

Num. 16:26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

As just explained, Korah ran out of the Court. The Court was 100 cubits (150 feet) long, and the forepart of the Court was only 50 cubits (75 feet) long. Therefore, it was 50 cubits to exit the gate, 25 cubits to go around the corner of the Court, and another 50 cubits to go to the center part of the Court on the outside. Korah would have been residing in one of the leading tents, but instead of going to Korah's tent, Moses situated himself in a position where he could see, in back of the Kohathites, the leading tents of Reuben, which included the tents of Dathan and Abiram. Moses had a powerful voice to start with, but on this occasion as well as on other occasions, it was made megaphonic. Thus the whole congregation saw Moses exit the Court and walk around, and then they heard him speak to Dathan and Abiram in a megaphonic voice: "Get away from the tents of these *wicked men*. Touch nothing of theirs, lest *you* be consumed in all of *their* sins."

Num. 16:27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

When Moses gave the order to the others to depart from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, "Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children." The account does not state what Korah did; it just mentions his tent. However, it would seem that Korah fled inside his tent.

Num. 16:28 And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind.

Num. 16:29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me.

Num. 16:30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

Num. 16:31 And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them:

Num. 16:32 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

Num. 16:33 They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

Num. 16:34 And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

Num. 16:35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

Moses issued an injunction in the sight of the whole congregation, directing his wrath against Dathan and Abiram and including Korah and all the things that pertained to them. The earth opened up, swallowed them alive in a pit, and covered them over. What a scary and dramatic scene!

What about the 250 princes? Evidently, when Moses went out, they remained in the Court in stunned silence. The Lord originally said to Moses and Aaron, "Step aside. I want to consume the 250 princes." But Moses intervened. Silence followed, and the 250 remained in the Court, not knowing what would happen. All of this took place in a matter of just a few minutes—the length of time it took for Moses to walk this distance, going out the gate and around the Court with the people following. Before Moses could finish what he was saying, the "new thing" happened. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the guilty parties. During these rapid events, the 250 were still in the Court.

Picture the scene. Moses and the people could see both the Tabernacle and the tents of Kohath and Reuben, for those tents were on the same south side, Kohath being nearer the Tabernacle. As the Israelites watched, the earth opened up, and then, lo and behold, fire came out of the cloud (as with Nadab and Abihu) and consumed the 250 princes in the Court. Thus judgment came on the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram and on the 250 princes at the same time.

What about Korah? Did he die at the same time? Numbers 26:10,11 states, "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." The expression "what time" means Korah died at the same time the 250 princes were devoured by the fire from heaven that issued forth from the cloud in the Court. What a dramatic conclusion!

Just as Korah's fate is stated in a chapter other than the main account in Numbers 16, so the

main account in the Book of Exodus about the Egyptian soldiers' drowning in the Red Sea and Pharaoh's chariots' being lost does not mention whether or not Pharaoh died at that time. However, Psalm 135:8,9 tells that Pharaoh himself perished in the Red Sea.

Also, because Numbers 16 does not say Korah came out of his tent, we would assume he stayed inside, but why? Because he was cowering in fear. The power of the miraculous voice coming from Moses, plus the message, terrified Korah. Moses had pleaded with God: "Do not kill all of the others because of the one individual [Korah]." The conclusion was obvious: "Go ahead and kill the one individual because he is the ringleader."

Q: Why didn't Korah's children die (Num. 26:11)?

A: When Korah's tent was swallowed up, he was inside but not his children. In other words, the narrative is telling us that they were not in sympathy with their father's rebellion. Sometimes the sins of the parents are visited on the children, but in this case, it would seem that Korah's children actually voiced their opposition and probably tried to dissuade their father from rebelling. Hence the Lord spared their lives. Additional proof that Korah's sons survived is the fact that their lineage is given in 1 Chronicles. "The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son, Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uziah his son, and Shaul his son" (1 Chron. 6:22-24).

Comment: Psalm 106:16-18 mentions, "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked."

Reply: Yes, a fire "burned up the wicked" 250 princes. Initially the screams could be heard of those who were swallowed up when the earth opened. The other Israelites fled in panic.

Sometimes a wicked parent can have a godly child, and sometimes a godly parent can have a wicked child. There are times when God visited the sins of the father on the children, and there are times when He did not. God has His reasons, and if we cannot fathom those reasons, we are not to question Him and should not be troubled. Faith is trust in God where we cannot trace Him. Faith is usually not rewarded *during* an experience but *later* when we can see the Lord's hand in a matter.

Num. 16:36 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 16:37 Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed.

Num. 16:38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.

Num. 16:39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar:

Num. 16:40 To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

The round censers were beaten into flat plates and hung on the sides of the Brazen Altar like leaves. Thus we have another detail about the appearance of the Brazen Altar in addition to the

grating, dimensions, etc.

Comment: Being “brasen,” the censers were made of the same material, or metal, as the altar itself. Therefore, the flattened censers were not unsightly when hung on the altar.

Q: Was Moses kinder to Aaron and Miriam than to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? All of them murmured against Moses’ authority, but Miriam merely had leprosy for a week and then was healed, whereas Korah and associates died.

A: In some cases, the Lord listened to Moses’ reasoning. Moses was very unusual in many ways and equal to Paul in logic, thinking, and brainpower. He was a special, handpicked individual. Since Nadab and Abihu had already died because of offering “strange fire” before the Lord, Moses no doubt reasoned that if Aaron were also destroyed, the priesthood would be changed. Only two sons remained (Eleazar and Ithamar), and they had certain responsibilities and duties in connection with transporting and erecting the Tabernacle. Not until many years later were Aaron and Miriam taken off the scene through natural death.

Of the 40 years in the wilderness, many details are given about the beginning and the ending years, but very little is known about the time in between. Numbers 33 lists the 42 places where the Israelites encamped, but for about 25 sites, we know nothing except the name.

Comment: For Korah to be able to incite the congregation, as well as Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 princes, there had to be much conversation and a lot of pent-up feelings for a long time. However, with Aaron and Miriam, the complaint was a family matter. They did not try to rally support for their complaint.

Reply: Yes, and the Lord did the judging of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 princes. The fact that none were excused is proof they deserved punishment.

Underlying these incidents, we can see how little the Israelites understood their experiences in the wilderness—and how pathetically little they understood Moses, even though they had plenty of opportunity to see his unusual character and qualities. Jesus’ experience was similar, for the scribes and Pharisees continually found fault with him. No other person who has ever trod this earth was like him, and yet he had enemies. This shows that acts of kindness and genuine character can be misinterpreted by onlookers because of a wrong heart condition. Evident facts can be completely misconstrued.

Num. 16:41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

How incredible that *on the very next day* after Korah, Dathan, and Abiram died the “new” death of the earth’s opening up and swallowing them, the Israelites were murmuring! Additionally unusual was the fact that *just the day before*, fire had come out of the cloud and consumed the 250 confederates of Korah who were in the Court. Moses had exited the Court to direct the punishment at the hand of the Lord toward Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Thus there were two very startling occurrences. Now what was the nature of the Israelites’ latest complaint against Moses and Aaron? “Ye have killed the people of the LORD.”

The idiom “familiarity breeds contempt” applies to even the miraculous appearances of God. In spite of at least ten distinct, different miracles—all performed in the relatively short period of time of about two years—the people lacked faith and forgot. In the Kingdom Age, the same thing will happen. Proof is Revelation 20:7–9, which tells that at the *end* of the Kingdom, when the earth is *filled* with the knowledge of the Lord, a host whose number is as the sand of the sea

will go up to the camp of the saints and be consumed for disobedience. All of the Ancient Worthies will be on hand (Moses, Daniel, David, etc.), yet the incorrigible will go up to Jerusalem. The events down here on earth are lessons for future unborn generations on other planets. In fact, earth's history will be so informative and so demonstrative in the details of what God has done since the creation of Adam that any beings on other planets who sin will be fully culpable and have no excuse whatever. In addition, audiovisuals will show earth's *true history*, not fiction, including the creation and fall of Adam, the multiplication of the human race, the coming of Jesus, and the development of the Church. The perfect beings on other planets will be fully liable for the least infraction, but they will also be fully capable of perfectly obeying God's Law.

Therefore, with the Israelites, familiarity with Moses, Aaron, and family did breed contempt. As a Levite of the Kohathites, Korah was "family." If Jesus himself came to earth today and spoke but did not identify himself, would he be accepted? Generally speaking, people are so prejudiced in their thinking and so confident in their own judgment that they cannot discern between right and wrong. Emotion governs their concept of right and wrong, and they do not have the proper standard. Thus it will be necessary not only for enlightenment and education in the Kingdom but also for power and the enforcement of justice. After Moses died and as time passed, the Israelites became more and more lax about the Law, and no longer was there an immediacy of punishment. By the time the Old Testament closed, Malachi lamented that the wicked got wealthy and the righteous suffered.

Num. 16:42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

Back to the account. Two startling things had happened, and yet the next day the Israelites murmured against Moses and Aaron. Of course their murmuring was actually against the Lord, for *He* had caused the earth to open and *He* had caused fire to come out of the cloud.

When the people brought their complaint, Moses and Aaron were situated close to the Tabernacle on the east, or entrance side. It is hard to believe that they had the audacity to say, "Ye have killed the people of the LORD." As the Israelites were speaking, they noticed movement beginning to take place in the cloud—some type of agitation—and they knew the Lord would have something to say. As "they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, ... the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared."

The pillar cloud was normally connected to the Most Holy, for that is where the Shekinah light came down and attached itself. The Shekinah light was shrouded in darkness until it penetrated the Most Holy, and there it shone forth as a supernatural light. At times, however, the pillar moved forward to the door of the Tabernacle. In this incident, it would seem that the pillar of the cloud enlarged itself to embrace both the Holy and the Most Holy, coming up to the door of the Tabernacle. This movement, or change, signified that God was going to do something.

Num. 16:43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

As special stewards, Moses and Aaron dutifully moved forward in the Court to go closer to the door of the Tabernacle.

Comment: Based on past experience, we would think that the moment movement was seen in the cloud, the people would run away. Moreover, we would think the Israelites would get the connection that when they murmured, some died.

Reply: Yes, their lack of faith and their forgetting are mentioned by the Apostle Paul.

Num. 16:44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 16:45 Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

Notice that God spoke only to Moses in this case. Sometimes He addressed both Aaron and Moses, but each time His words were preceded by whom He was addressing. An outstanding example is when God called Samuel several times (1 Sam. 3:3–10).

Comment: Even though God spoke only to Moses, both Aaron and Moses heard the words and both fell on their faces.

Reply: Out of deference, as soon as the Lord began to speak, they got down on their knees and bowed their faces to the ground. They assumed a posture of utmost respect.

And what was the message? “Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.” “In a moment” did not mean instantly but a *total* consuming of all the people, as opposed to piecemeal. The thought is somewhat like an atom bomb where everything disintegrates.

There is a value in backing off the verse-by-verse detail to grasp the lessons of the large picture. In going verse by verse, we focus in a narrow area as with a magnifying glass. Both methods of study are needed to get a fuller understanding of the Lord’s Word, so sometimes we discuss the overall lessons.

In studying Scripture, we should heed the marks of punctuation, for they are valuable aids. If we pause with each comma, semicolon, colon, etc., the meaning of the verses will become more apparent. Unfortunately, today’s English has a paucity of such punctuation.

Num. 16:46 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

Num. 16:47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

Aaron took his censer and used tongs to fill it with coals from the Brazen Altar. Then he put incense on the coals. Imagine Aaron’s scrambling around to do this in haste! He probably had to run under the side flaps of the Tabernacle to get incense and his censer, run to the Brazen Altar to get coals, and then run “into the midst of the congregation.”

Q: Where did the coals come from? Was a sacrifice in progress?

A: Certain Levites were responsible for keeping coals burning continually. Neither the fire on the Brazen Altar nor the candlelight in the Holy was allowed to go out. One by one, the wicks could be trimmed and the oil replenished for each lamp, but the other six were still burning. The light had to continue, for the Tabernacle was never to be dark. The Holy had *supplied light*, the Most Holy had *supernatural light*, and the Court had *natural sunlight*. Even in transit, the fire had to keep burning, so coals were carried in fire pans.

The smoke, or fragrance, from the combination of coals from the Brazen Altar and the incense “made an atonement for the people.” In other words, the combination had an atoning or appeasing effect.

Num. 16:48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

Num. 16:49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

Num. 16:50 And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Aaron went out hastily with the incense, and “the plague was stayed.”

Comment: If Aaron “stood between the dead and the living,” it would seem that the plague went in a wave.

Reply: That is exactly what happened. When Aaron ran out to assess where the damage was occurring, he could see a lot of corpses on one side, so he ran over there and stood with his censer.

For 14,700 people to die, plus the 250 princes of the assembly and perhaps another 50 people in connection with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the loss of people was significant.

Comment: In this case, Moses did not plead for the people and ask the Lord to reconsider but just gave instructions to Aaron.

Reply: Moses probably reacted differently this time because he was so shocked at the lack of understanding on the part of the people. For them to murmur the very next day was appalling.

Moses’ statements were usually a verbatim repeat of what God had previously said to him. However, the character of Moses stands out in the several instances where he made a suggestion and God said “Amen,” as it were, by repeating what Moses had said should be done. Moses’ heart condition was so much in empathy with the character of God that he did not want God’s character to be defamed in any way in the minds of the people.

The situation with Korah’s rebellion was a little different in that when Moses said the earth should open up, he was really putting his own position on the line. By his saying, “If I am right, let this be done,” the implication was that if God did not cause the earth to open and swallow Korah, Dathan, etc., Moses would be out of office. Moses also used his own life as a bargaining chip when he said to God, “Blot me out.”

Comment: In Numbers 16:22, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?” In that instance, the Lord dealt with the one party, Korah. But what could Moses say when the entire congregation murmured?

Reply: He was dumbfounded.

Q: What kind of plague could kill so many people so quickly?

A: The bubonic plague, especially in India, killed people very suddenly. As people were walking down the street, they just fell over dead. They dropped like flies.

Comment: When the Lord struck someone with leprosy, the disease was immediately an advanced case.

Reply: Yes, nothing is impossible with the Lord.

Num. 17:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 17:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.

Num. 17:3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.

Num. 17:4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.

Num. 17:5 And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

The Lord's last statement is interesting: "whereby they murmur against you [Moses]." In principle, the people were murmuring against God, but Moses was God's friend.

The purpose of laying up the rods to see which one would "blossom" was to still the murmuring. This time the whole congregation murmured, and not an individual person or tribe. There were 12 rods, one for a prince of each of the 12 tribes, plus Aaron's rod for a total of 13. There were 13 tribes because Joseph was doubly represented by his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The 13th rod is very significant, as was the 13th person at the table at the institution of the Memorial. The number 13 has both a lucky and an unlucky symbolism. It is unlucky in that something of dire consequence usually happens, but in Jesus' case, as a result of his being put to death, he became the Savior.

"Write thou every man's name upon his rod." Somehow a name was inscribed on each rod, and all 13 were laid up "in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony." A rod was a symbol of authority.

Q: Were these rods made of dead wood?

A: Yes, hard, dead wood.

Num. 17:6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

Aaron's rod was with the other 12 rods, being the 13th. The 12 princes whose rods were brought are probably those listed in Numbers 1:4–16, for they would be the fitting spokesmen. Of course each tribe hoped that its own prince would be selected by a budding rod.

Num. 17:7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

Num. 17:8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

Num. 17:9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

Moses probably removed the rods one by one, leaving Aaron's rod that budded until the last. As he removed each rod, he would have read the name on it. Even though done low-key, this method was the best for drama, emotion, and impression. All of these events have been recorded, and thus preserved, for everlasting posterity and all future life throughout the universe.

Num. 17:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.

Num. 17:11 And Moses did so: as the LORD commanded him, so did he.

Num. 17:12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.

Num. 17:13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

The people finally got the point, and yet their repentance was not quite complete. It was prudence to accept the Lord's selection of Aaron. Today some take God's principles in the Bible and discuss them as humans, that is, with *human* reasoning. In the Kingdom, those individuals will have to eat humble pie. Generally speaking, people are extremely self-centered. Only within certain limits are we to be self-centered; for instance, we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

Num. 18:1 And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

Num. 18:2 And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness.

Num. 18:3 And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.

Some principles are laid down here. Since Aaron's rod budded, Levi was the honored tribe, and the other tribes were forced to realize that their contention for leadership did not have a proper foundation. With this selection, however—with the tribe of Levi being so honored—there was an inherent danger that those in the tribe would fail to see Moses and Aaron were the leaders. The Kohathites could reason, "We are of the tribe of Levi." And the Gershonites could think, "Our rod budded, and Levi was *our* great father."

"Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary."

The meaning of the phrase “the iniquity of the sanctuary” needs to be examined. The sanctuary and its furniture and vessels in the Court, the Holy, and the Most Holy were all holy and had a sanctifying effect. In other words, the sanctuary was meant for the cleansing of those who were tainted with iniquity; it was set up for the purging of sin.

Comment: Exodus 28:38 reads, “And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.” The margin has, “Be responsible for every neglect or offense respecting the holy things.”

Reply: As the term implies, the purpose of the Aaronic priesthood was to be a priest, and a priest is a spiritual doctor for moral diseases.

Within the tribe of Levi, the distinction to be made was between the duties of Aaron and his sons and the duties of the rest of the Levites. Stated another way, the responsibilities of the priesthood were contrasted with the responsibilities of the other Levites, who were not priests: the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites.

Aaron and his sons “shall bear the iniquity of your [their] priesthood.” Because the Hebrew grammar is a little different from our thinking, translation into English is sometimes difficult. As a result, we occasionally get odd expressions that do not mean what they seem to be saying. Under the Law, provision was made for sin in various categories: if the high priest sinned, if the prince sinned, if the congregation sinned, if the individual sinned. The point is that the office of the priesthood was a cleansing agent, but the expression, when translated into English, does not properly convey that thought. Translators admit that some of the words in certain foreign languages have much more meaning than the English equivalent. Therefore, something is lost in the translation.

For any neglect in the instruction and warning of the other Levites that resulted in carelessness, the penalty on the priesthood was death. Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were priests, are a blatant example. They did scandalous things, even committing sex under the side flaps of the Tabernacle. They also took the choice part of the meat for themselves. In time, the Israelites got so fed up with Eli’s failure to act that they went to him and told him what his sons were doing. Eli should have immediately disbarred his sons from the priesthood, but when it comes to taking a step of character, we sometimes reason falsely and so did Eli. He reasoned, “If I disbar them, who will perform the priestly functions? How will the Lord’s house be served?” Because of his neglect in regard to his sons’ conduct, Eli received the death penalty.

Samuel’s children also went astray, but we assume he did all he could to correct the matter because he was not charged with neglect. In fact, he was such an unusual individual that he is singled out as being one of the “very elect” of all the prophets. “Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth” (Jer. 15:1).

Q: Could we antitypically correlate the example of Eli to the principle of the responsibility of teachers in the Church in the Gospel Age?

A: Yes. James 3:1 cautions, “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness.” Eli’s falling backward and dying pictures Second Death (1 Sam. 4:18). Many would feel that such an interpretation is too severe because earlier Eli said, “It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good” (1 Sam. 3:18). They reason that Eli had a nice manner, but nevertheless, he was responsible. Not only did the Lord cause him to fall backward, break his neck, and die, but also his two sons were slain.

Num. 18:4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.

“They [the Levites] shall be joined unto thee [the priesthood, i.e., Aaron and his sons].” The Levites had to “keep the charge of the tabernacle ... for all the service of the tabernacle.” In other words, the Levites had various duties and chores to perform to assist the priesthood. They were given to Aaron and the priesthood in order to relieve them of the cumbersome, time-consuming, laborious aspects of the sacrifices to be offered. Then the priesthood was instrumental in the *offering* of the sacrifices.

Num. 18:5 And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

“Ye” refers to Aaron. As high priest, Aaron kept the “charge of the sanctuary, and ... the altar.” The priesthood was responsible for the offerings for the particularly holy service.

Num. 18:6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

The Levites were given as a gift to the priesthood to assist them in their duties. (See Leviticus 8 regarding the consecration of the priesthood.)

Num. 18:7 Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest’s office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest’s office unto you as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

Thus far in Numbers 18, we have read of two gifts that were given to the priesthood: (1) the Levites and (2) the highest privilege of service.

Num. 18:8 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever.

Num. 18:9 This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons.

“This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire.” What is meant by the term “reserved from the fire”?

Comment: Portions of the offering were given to the priesthood, and the remainder was burned.

Reply: Yes. A *burnt* offering had to be *totally* consumed on the altar—it was entirely given to the Lord—but in regard to the other offerings, and depending on what service, what day, etc., a portion was given to the priesthood, and a portion was burned. In the antitype, the meal offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering are sacrifices subsequent to the Day of Atonement, and they are the people’s offerings. Incidentally, the phrase “of theirs” means “of the people,” in contradistinction to personal offerings the priests sometimes made.

Num. 18:10 In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

Num. 18:11 And this is thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

Num. 18:12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.

Verses 10–12 are a brief synopsis of the procedure that was followed. The details are given elsewhere in the Pentateuch, the principle being “here a little, there a little” (Isa. 28:10).

“In the most holy place shalt thou eat it.” The eating took place under the side flaps of the Tabernacle, which were also used for changing garments and storing food. The side flaps were formed by two curtains (or coverings) being pulled out at an angle: the rams’ skins dyed red and the seals’ skins.

“Every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.” This verse applies both literally and spiritually. The food at the Lord’s table is meant for the Lord’s people, and they should be in the right spiritual frame of mind and reverence in the partaking.

Of the people’s offerings on these special occasions, both the priesthood and the Levites benefited depending on the circumstance. At first glance, verse 12 might seem to mean that the priesthood got everything, but that was not the case. When an offering was made, the *best* oil, wine, etc., was to be given.

Comment: The Israelites violated the Law by offering sick and lame animals (Mal. 1:7,8).

Reply: When Moses was alive, the Israelites were generally careful about their offerings, for if serious infractions occurred, the death penalty was invoked. After Moses’ death, conditions began to degenerate until they got to the point where, under the judges, every man did what was right in his own sight. In Samuel’s day, there was a great departure, and gross violations took place under Eli. Next came the period of the kings and the erection of Solomon’s Temple. The Temple, too, was defiled as, for example, with sepulchers in the side courts and horses and stables. The Lord may have winked the eye for a time, but He has set a standard and people are judged by that standard.

After Moses departed the scene, compliance depended on how circumspect each individual was. Disobedience and deterioration also occurred in the Gospel Age. Here is the principle. Jesus taught at the First Advent and then returned to heaven. The apostles wrote epistles and then died. What happened subsequently? Papacy developed as an institution and copied certain Old Testament practices such as the priests’ getting the best oil and the best wine. Moreover, the hierarchy set prices on sins, baptisms, burials, etc., making life very difficult for the people, the vast majority of whom were poor at that time. In the feudal ages, only the nobility had land, castles, and wealth. The common people barely subsisted, for the bulk of produce and temporal goods was taken by the landowners. Thus the improper incorporation of Old Testament laws and ceremonies by the nominal Church was a yoke, a crushing burden, on the people. Satan has copied, or counterfeited, the institutions the Lord arranged. He completely disoriented some laws and ceremonies and applied them incorrectly; others he exaggerated.

Spiritually speaking, when Jesus was here at the First Advent and afterwards while the apostles were alive, things were kept pure. But as time went on, the Christian priesthood degenerated

into Papacy.

Num. 18:13 And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it.

Num. 18:14 Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

Num. 18:15 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

The firstborn of an *unclean* beast had to be redeemed because it could not be offered on the altar. Therefore, the compensatory value of the animal was brought in and given to the priesthood as their portion.

Q: In regard to “every thing that openeth the matrix,” didn’t the animal have to be a male? If a female was born first, was it ignored so that the first male born *subsequently* could be given to the Lord?

A: Yes, generally speaking, and certainly in connection with the Passover. A value was placed on men, women, young men, and children. The first-ripe fruit of the land was given to the priesthood. The firstborn males of humans and unclean animals had to be redeemed.

“Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.” Everything that was dedicated or given in worship went to the priesthood.

Num. 18:16 And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

The recognition of identity and viability, instead of starting from birth, began at age one month. Since Jesus tasted death for every man born a sentient being, all will have an opportunity either in this age or the next with regard to salvation. However, here in the type, viability was recognized from age one month, as far as having a price to pay, because if any infant died at less than one month of age or if the infant was stillborn, an emotional trauma occurred. Isaiah 65:20 uses the expression “infant of days”: “There shall be no more thence an *infant of days*, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” To have an infant, especially a male with great hopes for him, and then see the infant die was emotional enough. To have to pay a redemption price under that circumstance would be too much of a trauma. Therefore, the Lord started the redemption at one month for humanitarian reasons, i.e., out of mercy. Similar concern was shown for the animals under the Law. For example, a kid could not be boiled in its mother’s milk (Deut. 14:21).

A month-old infant was valued at five shekels. With one shekel being equal to 20 gerahs, the value was 100 gerahs (5 x 20 = 100). The number 100 is a symbol of perfection.

Num. 18:17 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The firstborn male of a cow, sheep, or goat was not to be redeemed because all three animals were clean and could thus be offered on the altar.

Num. 18:18 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine.

Num. 18:19 All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

The wave breast and the right shoulder were given to Aaron and his family. The daughters were mentioned to let them know they could eat of the sacrifices. Although not stated here, men who were disqualified from serving in the priesthood in public service because of a visible imperfection such as a superfluity could also eat of the sacrifices.

The “covenant of salt for ever” means that salt had to be added to every offering. Salt provides flavor; food without salt is flat. Leviticus 2:13 gives more detail about the covenant of salt: “And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: *with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.*”

Q: Does the covenant of salt also have the connotation of being a preservative? 2 Chronicles 13:5 reads, “Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?”

A: In that citation, the “covenant of salt” is used in a figurative sense, but it is true that just as salt is a preservative, so a *lasting* covenant is figuratively a covenant of salt.

Num. 18:20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

God Himself was the inheritance of the priesthood, particularly of Aaron and his sons. Notice that the word “am” is supplied. Even when a supplied word makes sense, it is sometimes of value to consider the text without it. “*I thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.*” The thought is more emphatic without “am.” Because the Hebrew language has few words, the Israelites often used their hands to aid expression. For example, to show sorrow, they beat their breasts, put ashes on their heads, and/or tore their clothing. Even the Lord used emphasis when He said, “*I by myself am swearing*”; that is, “I am using my own name. I am not only saying it, but I am demonstrating it.” “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee” (Heb. 6:13,14). God sometimes comes down to the level of our humanity and speaks in terms of endearment or power.

Num. 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Now the subject of tithes is introduced with regard to the Levites (the Gershonites, Merarites, and Kohathites). Their inheritance was the tithe, not the first-ripe fruit, the firstborn animals, etc. The tenth part was a bigger portion than what Aaron and his family received because there were many more Levites.

Num. 18:22 Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

Earlier Korah and company thought they had more right to “come nigh the tabernacle” because they were Kohathites, but even they died.

Num. 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance.

Num. 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

Num. 18:25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

To properly understand this subject, we must not transgress into the Temple pictures. With the Temples of both Solomon and Ezekiel, a change was introduced.

The Levites themselves had to give tithes, but because they did not have land for an inheritance, they could not give of what they produced. Therefore, they gave a tithe (a tenth) of the tithes they received. Thus the people gave a tenth to the Levites, and the Levites gave a tenth of this tenth to the Lord.

While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they could not give tithes the same way they did later when they entered the land. In the wilderness, however, they had flocks and herds, so they did get milk and cheese. In addition, they could pick dates and figs.

Comment: In the final analysis, 1 percent of the tithe went to the Lord by giving it to the priesthood, and 9 percent went to the Levites.

Num. 18:27 And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

Num. 18:28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD’S heave offering to Aaron the priest.

Num. 18:29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.

Elsewhere the people were instructed that their animal offerings had to be clean, without blemish, and healthy. Moreover, they were to give the Levites a sample of the best of both their produce and their flocks. In turn, the Levites were to give the best to the priesthood.

Here God was telling the Levites, “Since you do not have any inheritance in the land, you do not grow crops. Therefore, pretend that the tithes you receive as a gift are grown or produced of your own effort. Out of the tithe, you are to give a tenth as if it were from your own land and your own threshing floor.” In other words, in principle, and even though they were limited, the Levites were to do the same thing as the general populace. By giving something themselves, the Levites got more into the spirit of the giving of tithes.

Comment: It is interesting that the Levites were to give the *best* of the tithe to the priesthood. Therefore, the *best 1 percent of everything* went to the priesthood, to the Lord.

Q: Was the 1 percent given to the Lord or to the priesthood?

A: What was given to the priesthood was considered as being given to the Lord. Aaron is a picture of Christ, and Aaron and the priesthood were the official representatives or ambassadors of God.

Num. 18:30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress.

Num. 18:31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Num. 18:32 And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

To express these verses another way, the tenth of the tenth (1 percent) was to be considered as if it were a sin offering. The tithes that the Levites gave to the priesthood (or to the Lord) were a pacifier, a recognition, a memorial, an expression of appreciation of how the Lord made the crops grow. In principle, therefore, they were like a sin offering. Considered holy, the offering was a devoted thing, even though blood was not sprinkled on the altar.

“Neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.” The Lord made sure that the *picture* was correct. Later the offerings were polluted, for this is Satan’s world, but while the type was underneath God’s special custody, it was perfect—whether it was the building of the Tabernacle, the institution of the services, or the Law itself as explained in the Pentateuch. From then on, up until Jesus’ day, the type was violated through disobedience. Fortunately, God made an arrangement for those who were in the right heart condition whereby they could be justified by faith during the Jewish Age, for corruption and bondage inhibited the faithful from doing certain things. Abraham, Moses, and others were justified by faith—the faith of friendship and fellowship with God. In contrast, the faith of the Gospel Age is to sonship, life, and fellowship. However, both were a justification of faith.

Comment: The offerings of the Levites show beautifully the finished picture of the subservience of the Great Company to the Little Flock.

Reply: Yes, this chapter shows figuratively what the relationship will be in the Kingdom Age between the Great Company and the Little Flock. The rapport will be similar to that between Elijah and Elisha. Jesus said that Elijah had already come. “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them” (Matt. 17:10–12). Jesus was referring to John the Baptist plus the Elijah class of the Gospel Age, but in this context, he also said that the Elijah yet to come would do the real converting in the Kingdom Age. By extension, if there is an Elijah class in the Gospel Age and an Elijah class in the Kingdom Age, there would also be an Elisha class in both ages. The Great Company will be identified with the Elijah class of the Kingdom Age.

Num. 19:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Num. 19:2 This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke:

The principal of this particular account is the red heifer, a cow, a *female*. What the ancients of Israel did not know is that the various animals offered on the Brazen Altar in the Court of the Tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings represented the death of an individual or a class of individuals. The Israelites simply knew that the Lord had given instructions as to what to do and how to do it.

The fact that the heifer was a female animal was unusual and so was the color red. As with other things God instituted, Satan tried to copy the red heifer ordinance. The counterfeit was the subsequent Apis bull in Egypt. To be selected, the bull had to have a diamond shape on its forehead and certain peculiar markings. With the bull, Satan distorted the red heifer and used a different context. Instead of the animal's being related to purification of sin in some fashion, Satan used an opposite thought, for the bull represented sexuality.

The major sin offering of the Israelites was the *male* bullock, which represented the man Christ Jesus. The red heifer could not represent Jesus in any sense because it was a *female* animal. Another reason is that "red" signifies sin, as shown in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: *though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*"

The red heifer was "without spot" in that it was solid red, as opposed to being speckled. "Wherein is no blemish" means the red heifer was healthy and had all of its parts externally.

An additional characteristic of the red heifer is that it never had a yoke. Perhaps this subject would not be understood today if the Pastor had not devoted an eight-page chapter to it in *Tabernacle Shadows* and given definitions. The explanation in *Tabernacle Shadows* for the red heifer's never having a yoke is that it was not yoked under the Law. That is true, but why? The explanation is not given, and certain problems arise in trying to analyze the subject. The problems can be answered, however, and will be treated later.

Comment: The red heifer's never having a yoke means it never did any work.

Reply: Yes, from a practical standpoint, the red heifer was never hindered by being yoked to a plow or a wagon. From the symbolic standpoint, it was never under the Law.

Num. 19:3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face:

The red heifer was given to Eleazar, the priest, who took the animal outside the camp. There it was slain before his face. Not only did Eleazar witness the slaying, but he studied it. In *Tabernacle Shadows*, he is said to represent the Apostle Paul, who gave a brief interpretation of the red heifer in Hebrews 9:13, "... the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh." Thus Paul gave the key as to what the red heifer represents.

Num. 19:4 And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times:

When the red heifer was slain, the priest dipped his finger in the blood and sprinkled it seven

times “before [*toward*] the tabernacle.” (The Revised Standard and several other versions more accurately use the word “*toward*.”) What would the sprinkling seven times signify? The usual answer is complete satisfaction, and with seven being a sacred number, the sprinkling was for purification. However, there is further signification, for the sprinkling seven times shows there were seven stages of development of the Red Heifer class. On the Day of Atonement, a Gospel Age picture, the blood of both the bullock and the goat was sprinkled seven times on the Mercy Seat. Not only were there seven periods of development in the Gospel Age, based on the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, but the Jewish Age also had seven periods of development. In addition, the Kingdom Age will have seven periods of time.

Thus, in the final fulfillment, the sprinkling of the blood seven times and its application on the Ark of the Covenant justify the Church throughout the seven stages of its development and also the world in the seven stages of development in the Kingdom Age. However, the red heifer was an exception, and its antitype is not yet fulfilled. The red heifer was not slain in the Court, and its blood was neither brought into the Most Holy nor even put on the Brazen Altar. Therefore, it has nothing to do with the normal sacrifices of Israel in the type and is a completely different picture. In summary, the seven stages in the separate pictures show completeness: first, complete justification of the Church, and afterward the application of Jesus’ merit on behalf of mankind.

Q: Does the sprinkling “*toward*” the Tabernacle represent looking forward?

A: Yes, the Red Heifer class, who were developed prior to the real antitypical sacrifices, looked forward to Christ.

What class is represented by the red heifer? It pictures the Ancient Worthies, those whom God dealt with prior to Christ. God gave them a hope of life in the future, that is, beyond death. The Ancient Worthies were willing to die for the hope of receiving life beyond the grave, called in Hebrews 11:35 “a better resurrection.”

Num. 19:5 And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn:

Not only did Eleazar, the priest, dip his finger in the blood of the slain red heifer and sprinkle the blood seven times, but he stayed and witnessed the burning. And what was burned? The heifer’s skin, flesh, blood, and dung. The point is that everything pertaining to the red heifer was burned except the tiny quantity of blood that was sprinkled seven times.

Num. 19:6 And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

During the burning process (that is, while the red heifer was actually being burned), three ingredients were added, or cast into the midst of the fire: cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet. In other words, these three materials were associated with the death of the Red Heifer class. “Cedar wood” is a symbol of everlasting life, and everlasting life is the promise held out to the Ancient Worthies. A particular kind of cedar wood is *arbor vitae*, which is Latin for “tree of life.”

The next ingredient was hyssop. Psalm 51:7 reads, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Described constructively, the “purging” is *discipline*. Incidentally, on the night of the Passover, hyssop was used to splash blood on the side posts and upper lintels of the Israelites’ dwellings (Exod. 12:22). When Jesus was on the Cross, a sponge dipped in strong vinegar was stuck at the end of a rod of hyssop and sadistically offered to him (Matt. 27:48; John 19:29,30). Originally, when Jesus was being nailed to the

Cross, he refused a mixture of this type, not wanting to deaden or mitigate the suffering. His desire was to do the Father's will completely, but no doubt the thought later came to mind that he had not yet fulfilled the Scripture about tasting death. His discipline carried him that far in doing the Father's will. Therefore, when the sponge was lifted to his lips, Jesus just tasted of the vinegar. Of course he was famished for water, for he had been on the Cross for a considerable length of time at this point. To offer him vinegar under those circumstances was like rubbing salt in the wound. To give vinegar to a man dying of thirst in the desert, as it were, was very cruel, but that was part of his discipline because he will be the most honored individual in the universe under God. Worthy the Lamb! When Jesus rendered such perfect obedience and submission, it showed that intrinsically the Father could see what a wonderful Son He had, and when He honors Jesus, the mouths of all other beings, human and angelic, will be stopped. No longer was Jesus just the favorite of the Heavenly Father. When he endured all the sufferings and indignities on the Cross, he showed his complete submission to the Father.

The third ingredient cast into the fire was scarlet. Scarlet is a different color from the tawny red of the heifer. Since both colors cannot represent sin, for that would be an unnecessary duplication, what did the scarlet symbolize? Like the scarlet thread in the Rahab account, the scarlet in the red heifer picture represents the *theme of redemption*. As we say with regard to the theme of restitution, "the times of restitution of all things, which *God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:21), so the theme of a Redeemer and the necessity for him to suffer and die in connection with redemption are taught in Scripture. However, that theme was not understood until Jesus explained it to the two on the way to Emmaus after his resurrection. He reasoned with them, "Aren't you familiar with the Scriptures that teach the Messiah you are looking for must die before he blesses the world?" As they walked along, Jesus explained that the different pictures taught the need for a Redeemer to be slain. No doubt he discussed the slaying of the animals in the type, starting with Abel.

And so the scarlet represents the theme of redemption. Of course the Ancient Worthies did not understand all of the pictures, and not even Moses understood all of the sacrifices. It was enough that he was instructed by God to perform the ceremonies.

In summary, the three ingredients that were cast into the midst of the burning red heifer picture the experiences and hopes of the Ancient Worthies, who were willing to die—and did die—for their beliefs and for the promise of a better resurrection.

Comment: In antitype, the ashes of the red heifer will be applied in the Kingdom. At that time, the cedar will still be a hope, but the scarlet will be a finished picture.

Reply: The ashes of the red heifer symbolize purification for sin in the Kingdom Age, but back in Old Testament days, the ceremony was typically performed.

Num. 19:7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even.

The priest, Eleazar, washed his clothes and his flesh with water outside the camp, for he was unclean. But why was Eleazar unclean? He was unclean because he had touched the blood from the dead heifer. But why did his uncleanness last only "until the even," when anyone who normally touched a dead body was unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11)? How are these two time requirements harmonized? Touching just the blood was not the same as touching a dead body. Moreover, the touching of the blood preceded the burning of the animal and was a lot different from touching the ashes after the animal and the three ingredients were completely consumed by fire. The ashes were not unclean in themselves, but the party who handled the ashes was unclean. In other words, he was contaminated, but once the ashes were transported

to a place designated as clean, also without the camp, they were considered holy and clean.

When Jesus and the Church are burned “without the camp,” as pictured, respectively, by the bullock and the goat in Leviticus 16, the world considers the burning to be a stench, but from God’s standpoint, the place of the burning is very sacred, for it pictures, or represents, the place where The Christ *prove* their faithfulness unto death. The smell of hair burning is not pleasant. The sin offering of the bullock and the goat in Leviticus 16 was the same as this sacrifice of the red heifer with just one exception: *all of the blood*, not just a sample, was drained from the bullock and the goat, caught in a vessel, and then used for various purposes.

Remaining outside the camp, the priest washed his clothes and his flesh and was considered unclean until the evening. Then, at sunset, he could return to the camp. Of course the priests’ homes, the homes of Aaron and his two sons, were in the camp on the east side of the Tabernacle.

Num. 19:8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

Num. 19:9 And a man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin.

Num. 19:10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

The man who transported the ashes to the place previously designated “clean” had to be clean to start with. The principle is, “Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD” (Isa. 52:11). But after the ashes were transported, he had to wash just like Eleazar.

The ashes were stored in the clean place for the purpose of “purification for sin” (usually pertaining to death). A little portion of the ashes was added like a medicinal ingredient to a vessel of clean water, and the water was called “a water of separation.” This type will be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age.

These are God’s instructions. Although the people understood little, they obediently followed the instructions lest they die (Num. 19:20). Suppose, for instance, that someone accidentally touched a dead man and thus became unclean. That party had to voluntarily go through a cleansing ritual. Whether the party was unclean for just one day or for seven days depended upon the circumstances. If only the particular party knew he had touched a dead person, it was upon his conscience to comply with the instructions. In the early days when the Tabernacle arrangement was instituted, death was the penalty for disobedience, but after Moses died, punishment for sin was no longer immediate and the people got careless. Sin prospered, and the wicked had wealth, power, and prestige while the righteous received poverty and persecution. God was individually testing and searching the hearts of the people.

After Moses died and God did not inflict immediate judgment for disobedience, there were perhaps three attitudes of heart when the Israelites performed the sacrifices, as follows:

1. To some, the sacrifices were distasteful, but they obeyed not because of fear of death but because of their fellow Israelites. In other words, they wanted to be Israelites in good standing. They did not want to jeopardize their reputation or business by refusing to obey. A similar principle with so-called Christians would be to attend church on just Christmas

and Easter. With the Jew, the principle would be to observe the Day of Atonement and Passover but not attend the synagogue the rest of the year.

2. Another class of Israelites performed the sacrifices out of duty love. Most Christians do not get much beyond that point, whereas the Little Flock goes all the way. God determines the heart attitude.
3. A third class trusted that God had a reason for instituting the sacrifices, even though they did not understand the reason. Because of their faith, they obediently performed the sacrifices wholeheartedly. And so today, when situations occur that we do not understand, we must trust Him.

Now we will discuss again the fact that the red heifer never had a yoke (verse 2). Of course Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the original 12 sons of Jacob never had a “yoke” because they lived before the Law was given. But numerically speaking, the majority of the Ancient Worthies lived after the Law was instituted and were, therefore, under the Law. For example, they were obligated as Jews to attend the three major feasts. In other words, they observed the ordinances of the Lord. The Ancient Worthies who were under the Law did not obey out of a sense of duty but because they trusted that God had a reason for the sacrifices.

A question now becomes apparent: How could the majority of the Ancient Worthies be under the Law yet not be under a yoke? We must consider the subject of justification by faith. There are *three justifications by faith*, not two. (Note: Tentative justification as one is approaching God—progression toward recognition by God—is a moot point here, for being justified by faith is an instantaneous act as far as God is concerned.)

1. A fractured pyramid on the Chart of the Ages shows *typical justification*, i.e., justification by the type. One who conscientiously and obediently offered a healthy, unblemished animal for a sin offering was typically cleansed from sin. This was exercising faith along natural lines.
2. The *justification by faith of the Old Testament* is illustrated by Abraham, who was not under the Law. Righteousness was imputed to him when he left Ur of the Chaldees and went by faith to an unknown land. This faith justification of the Old Testament is a justification to fellowship, to friendship, as a servant of God.
3. In contrast, the *justification by faith of the Gospel Age* is justification to sonship, whereby we can call God “Abba,” “Father.” (The term “Father” was foreign to the faithful of Old Testament times.)

Many of the Red Heifer class lived in a period where they obeyed the ceremonial precepts of the Law, so we return to the original question: How do we harmonize not being under the yoke of the Law and yet being required to obey the Law? First, heart attitude is a big factor. A second factor is demonstrated by a higher law of physics. When an airplane leaves the ground and goes into the air, centrifugal force supersedes gravity. When that happens, is gravity disannulled? No. Gravity is always operative. The law of gravity is not violated in the least—it is simply superseded by a higher law. As long as the jet thrust is going, the passengers are safe. However, if the engines stop, then gravity takes over, and the plane crashes. Similarly, the Ancient Worthies observed typical justification, but their *faith* justification superseded the observance of the Jewish types.

Q: Would the position of the Christian in the Gospel Age be somewhat the same? We are no longer under the Law, yet we live by the *principles* of God’s Law.

A: Yes, God still wants us to be holy—to not steal, commit adultery, murder, etc. We are to obey the principles of the Ten Commandments but not the ceremonial features.

Comment: Jesus was required to keep the letter of the Law, even though he was under the Sarah, or Grace, Covenant.

Reply: Yes, because he was a Jew, he was required to keep the Law, and he had to die to free the others from the Law. The veil was not broken until he died. Although required to keep the Law, Jesus delighted to do so. And certainly he was justified by faith in his Father. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many” (Isa. 53:11).

Thus we find that the Ancient Worthies did not feel the restraint of a yoke at all. They lived on a higher plane of thought. It is like true Christians in this age. Many are just nominal Christians, but for those who are living according to the Holy Spirit and the privileges of the Spirit, being a Christian is a joyous experience.

Num. 19:11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

Verse 11 concerns touching the dead body of a *man*, not a beast. The earlier part of the chapter pertains to a red heifer, a beast. Now a new picture starts. One who touched the dead body of a beast was unclean for *one day* only, whereas touching the dead body of a man brought uncleanness for *seven days* (Lev. 11:39). The difference in length of uncleanness shows, from the Lord’s standpoint, how much more serious it was in the type to touch the carcass of a man.

Num. 19:12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

First, we must understand the wording of the text, and the translators made a mistake. The fault lies not with their understanding of the Hebrew language but with their understanding of the context. Even Jewish translators of the highest authority and the best Hebrew scholars, who surprisingly are usually Christians, have been in error. As stated in the King James, the purification was to take place on the third day. On the third day, the person who was unclean because of touching the body of a dead man was to purify himself with the water of separation, which included ashes of the red heifer, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. However, as translated, this verse is almost impossible to understand spiritually, that is, in the antitype.

Verse 19 is probably what helped the Revised Standard translators to render a proper translation. “And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even” (Num. 19:19 KJV). In the King James Version, verse 19 contradicts verse 12, for verse 12 mentions sprinkling with the water of separation on only the third day and the person is then clean on the seventh day. In verse 19, the sprinkling takes place on both the third day and the seventh day. Verse 19 is correct, and it makes sense spiritually. This subject is very complex and apparently has not been explained previously.

Verse 12 reads as follows in the Revised Standard Version: “He shall cleanse himself with the water *on the third day and on the seventh day*, and so be clean; but if he does not cleanse himself *on the third day and on the seventh day*, he will not become clean.” This translation is correct, showing the need for cleansing with the water of separation on *both* the third and the seventh day. The problem in translation is similar to that in Luke 23:43, “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The placement of the comma makes a big difference, namely, “Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in

paradise.” Jesus could not have been in Paradise that day with the thief because of being dead for parts of three days and nights. According to the Hebrew context for verse 12, the comma needs to be placed *after* the words “and on the seventh day.”

The unclean person had to be purged with the water of separation on both the third and the seventh day, but not until the seventh day was he clean. Whatever the meaning, the ritual on both days was very important. The setting of this chapter is the Kingdom Age. Only in the type did it pertain to the Jewish Age, for that is when the ritual was performed.

Let us consider Isaiah 65:20, “There shall be no more thence [in the Kingdom] an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” What “child” shall die at age 100? An “infant of days.” In other words, when an infant dies in the present age and then comes forth in the Kingdom, he will live at least 100 years. Stated another way, the one who was previously an “infant of days” will not die before age 100 in the Kingdom. If the individual then dies at age 100, it will mean he failed the 100-year test. All who come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom Age and are obedient will be given a 100-year opportunity to make outward progress in complying with the terms of the new arrangement.

“The sinner being an hundred years old” is the “old man” who died previously, having lived a reprobate life. Many who have done so are sorry and have expressed the wish that they could relive their life and thus do things differently. The Kingdom will provide this opportunity. Both the “infant of days” and the “old man” will live 100 years in the Kingdom. Thus in the Kingdom Age, mankind will be given a full and fair opportunity to make progress, and much understanding will help them to comply with divine standards and to overcome their ingrained bad habits. “In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be” (Eccl. 11:3). When one is resuscitated from the grave, his character will be the same as when he died; that is, a person will come forth from the tomb with the same character.

Isaiah 65:20 is stated in the negative because in that context, both the infant of days and the old man die the Second Death at age 100, not having made sufficient progress after such a reasonable length of time. Those infants and old men who obey will live more than 100 years; they will live at least to the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom Age. The point is that all except those who refuse to obey will live at least 100 years in the Kingdom. Acts 3:23 states the exception: “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” In other words, if one comes forth from the tomb and is so hardened in sin that he refuses to bend the knee, he will be cut off right away. “They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him [the righteous]; and his enemies shall lick the dust” (Psa. 72:9). Probably only a very distinct minority will be summarily cut off for refusing to at least initially hear the voice of Jesus.

The numbers 3 and 7 are important in this setting. Let us consider some Scriptures pertaining to these numbers:

1 Kings 17:8–23 about the widow of Zarepheth applies, but we will read only verses 21 and 22: “And he [Elijah] stretched himself upon the child *three* times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.” *After* Elijah had stretched himself upon the child three times, the child revived.

2 Kings 4:8–35 tells of an incident with Elisha. We will read just verses 34 and 35: “And he [Elisha] went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of

the child waxed warm. Then he [Elisha] returned [downstairs], and walked in the house to and fro; and went [back] up[stairs to his room], and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed *seven* times, and the child opened his eyes.” As an adult, Elisha could not stretch himself upon the child and simultaneously make his mouth, eyes, and hands all match those of the child. Therefore, he *separately* stooped and put his mouth on the mouth of the child, then laid his eyes on the eyes of the child, and finally put his limbs on the limbs of the child. And Elisha repeated the procedure after going downstairs; that is, he performed these actions twice. In other words, Elisha did these things *progressively and gradually*. At the end of this procedure, the child sneezed *seven times* and opened his eyes.

Thus far we have the number 3 and the number 7 in regard to a child’s reviving. Another significant incident in Elisha’s life is in 2 Kings 5:1–14. Verse 10 reads, “Elisha sent a messenger unto him [Naaman the leper, the captain of the host of the king of Syria], saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.” After coming to Israel hoping to be cured, Naaman was finally steered to the prophet’s house. He was standing in front of the house but at a little distance. What did Elisha do? He remained indoors and sent a messenger out to Naaman with the instruction to go and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Being a man of great importance, Naaman was insulted that Elisha had not come out in person but merely sent his servant. In fact, Naaman was so incensed that he was ready to go back home, feeling the journey had been a waste of time. However, there was a lesson here. (Earlier Naaman had gone to the king of Israel, but the king thought Naaman was trying to start an argument with him and steered Naaman to Elisha.)

Verses 11–13 continue: “But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?” When the incensed Naaman was ready to return to Syria, his own servants said, “But you have come a long distance, and washing seven times in the Jordan is such an easy thing to do. Why not try it?” Naaman had said that the two rivers in Syria were clean compared with the muddy Jordan. But the servants persuaded him to try washing in Jordan. “Then went he [Naaman] down, and dipped himself *seven* times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (verse 14).

When we tie together these accounts of Elijah and Elisha, our understanding deepens. (The principle is the same with prophecy. To have a proper understanding, we must try to harmonize *all* prophecy.) First, we will go to another subject.

There are seven periods of time in each of the three ages (the Jewish Age, the Gospel Age, and the Kingdom Age). The easiest one to see is the Gospel Age because the Book of Revelation shows there are seven stages of the Church. Another proof is the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood in Leviticus 8:33. When the priests were being prepared for service, they had to remain in the Court for seven days. The seven periods of the Jewish Age are treated in the book *The Keys of Revelation*, pages 116–118.

Now we will consider the Gospel Age from another perspective. The Apostle Paul said, “Therefore let us keep the [Passover] feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth [with the spirit of truth]” (1 Cor. 5:8). The feast was *seven* days long, and it followed the Passover. Paul likened the seven days of this Feast of Passover, or Unleavened Bread, to the Gospel Age.

The first half of the Jewish year (the first seven months) had three major component parts, or feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The seven months were a picture of God's methods of dealing in the past, present, and future. All Jewish males were required to attend the three major feasts. The Passover feast lasted seven days. The Day of Pentecost was reached by a multiple of seven (7 weeks of 7 days, or 7×7 , equals 49 days), which pointed out the 50th day, the Day of Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles, the Kingdom Age picture, took place on the 15th day of the seventh month, which followed the Day of Atonement (the Gospel Age) on the 10th day. In summary, (1) the Passover honored Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world; (2) Pentecost marked the beginning of the Gospel Age; and (3) the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted for seven days, was a manifestation of the Kingdom work.

Thus far we have just been laying the groundwork for solving the puzzle of the third and the seventh days of Numbers 19:12. In the type, the sprinkling of the water of separation on these two days took place the *same week*, but what about the antitype? The setting of the red heifer chapter is the Kingdom Age and the work of the Ancient Worthies, but it does not make sense to say there are seven periods of time in the Kingdom Age and the antitypical sprinkling will not take place until the third period. Yes, the seventh day, the end, is important in the Kingdom Age, but what about the third day? We should keep in mind that these time periods pertain to the cleansing of an unclean person and that the person is unclean for seven days. What is interesting, too, is that in talking about this unclean person, the word *adam* is used in one place in the Hebrew, referring to humanity. As a result of Adam's sin, his entire progeny were born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psa. 51:5). Therefore, Jesus died for the sin of Father Adam, a perfect man for a perfect man. Because Jesus paid the Ransom price, all of Adam's children can be reconciled.

The beginning of the solution of the third and seventh days is that the human race remains unclean for seven days (seven 1,000-year days). The sprinkling on the seventh day indicates that at the end of the 7,000 years, the obedient of mankind will be brought up to the standard of perfection. Daniel 4:16,23,25 reads, "Let his [King Nebuchadnezzar's] heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.... the king saw a ... holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; ... and let his [Nebuchadnezzar's] portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him; ... they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

With his universal dominion, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was the king of all the earth. But he was to be humiliated until "seven times pass[ed] over him." This "seven" is the seven 1,000 years of the Seventh Creative Day. Almost invariably the "seven" is applied to the stone that smites the image at the end of the 2,520 (7×360) years, or 1914, but this interpretation does not fit the picture because mankind is still insane and will be until the end of the Kingdom. When the "seven times" passed over the king, his sense was restored, and he published praise to God throughout the Babylonian kingdom, thanking Him for the return of his sanity. "At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.... At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me.... Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4:34,36,37). Since 1914, the human race has been getting worse, not better, but the end of the 7,000-year day is another matter. Even in the

middle of the Kingdom, sanity will not have returned to the human race, for many will still be in their graves with fallen characters. In this type, King Nebuchadnezzar pictures Adam. Adam was king over all the earth until he sinned, bringing a curse on the human race for 7,000 years.

Even though when the Kingdom starts, there will be a *carte blanche* forgiveness for the world as a whole (not as individuals) because of the application of the blood, the death condition will still exist in the people. It is like prisoners at recess who are allowed to leave their cells and go into the courtyard. Although they do not have their freedom, there is quite a difference from being locked up in their cells. And so, when the human race is awakened from the sleep of death, they will have the same characters they died with. The purpose of the Kingdom Age is to change as many characters as are willing so that they get life. Mankind will be instructed in righteousness, and as they obey, they will get healthier and healthier and become more and more perfect. Only the Ancient Worthies will be raised perfect (“the spirits of just men made perfect”—Heb. 12:23). Mankind in general will come forth from the tomb with a sufficient measure of health to be able to understand the instruction of the Kingdom.

Back to the sprinkling that takes place on the third and seventh days. The antitypical sprinkling on the seventh day occurs at the *end* of the Kingdom Age, but the sprinkling on the *third* day marks the *beginning* of the Kingdom Age. John 2:19–21 refers to this (third) day: “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body.” Although Jesus was raised the third day according to his predictions, he was referring to the body members of The Christ. The Church will be the “temple” of the living God.

How do we harmonize this difficult subject? Once it is explained, even a 14-year-old should be able to understand.

Now the next point. The Christian era began 4,128 or 4,126 years after Adam depending on whether the reckoning starts with his creation or his fall. We will use 4,126, the fall of Adam, although the picture does not change one iota if the other reckoning is used. When Jesus died at age 33 1/2, it was still 4,000+ years after the fall of Adam.

The year 0 to the year 999 is the first thousand-year day.

The year 1,000 to 1,999 is the second thousand-year day.

The year 2,000 to 2,999 is the third thousand-year day.

The year 3,000 to 3,999 is the fourth thousand-year day.

The year 4,000 to 4,999 is the fifth thousand-year day.

The principle is that on the fifth day, Jesus said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days [on the third day] I will raise it up.” In 1878, he raised the sleeping saints to earth’s atmosphere, and that is where they remain to this day, awaiting the completion of the Church. The last members will be caught up to meet Jesus in this circumambient air surrounding earth with the rest of the 144,000. If we *begin* the counting with the fifth day, when Jesus made the statement, it becomes the *first* day, and the Church will be complete on the *third* day. Stated another way:

The fifth thousand-year day is the first day (year 4,000 to 4,999).

The sixth thousand-year day is the second day (year 5,000 to 5,999).

The seventh thousand-year day is the third day (year 6,000 to 6,999).

The year 6,999 marks the end of the Kingdom Age. The resurrection of the sleeping saints, as well as the entire Church class, must precede the resurrection of the Ancient Worthies, for God “provided some better thing for us, that they [the Ancient Worthies] without us should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:40). Thus, if the counting of the third day is started with the fifth day of a seven-day week, the reckoning goes 5, 6, 7, and “seven” is the third day. All of the counting, therefore, takes place the *same* week.

The “third day,” then, refers to the sprinkling of the water of separation at the *beginning* of the Kingdom, when mankind comes forth from the tomb. The “seventh day” sprinkling will take place at the *end* of the Kingdom Age, at the end of the Millennium.

Now we must explain about the time period. The seven periods of the Kingdom Age have not yet started, but the Millennium has. Technically, therefore, we are in the seventh day, the Day of Christ, the Sabbath Day, but the Kingdom Age, in which Christ reigns over mankind, has not yet begun. When the Kingdom does start, it will begin with the living generation. When that generation is rehabilitated, the awakening from the tomb will begin, the principle being “the last will be first, and the first will be last.” All of the people (except the very few who refuse to hear Jesus’ instruction) will each be given a 100-year trial, including each of the living generation when the Kingdom is set up. Just like the ones in the grave, those of the living generation will each have a fixed character that will need 100 years of rehabilitation to become true children of God under Messiah. Of course there will be some overlapping as the generations come forth, each having a trial of 100 years. If we take 1,000 years and subtract the 120 years that have already expired in the Millennium, only 880 years remain. If we multiply 120 (a generation) by 7, we come up with the figure 840, which is very close to 880. Thus we can see that the seven periods of time in the Kingdom Age are linked to the different categories, or generations, being raised from the tomb. The 100-year trial is very important because it assures us that this length of time must transpire for all before the end of the Kingdom. Then, when Satan is loosed out of his prison in the Little Season, mankind will be given a strict trial to test whether or not each individual gets life.

In order for the last individuals who come forth from the tomb, including Adam, to get “sprinkled” with the water of separation for cleansing and to each have a 100-year trial means that their resuscitation from death will have to take place at least 100 years before the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom. Thus Numbers 19:12, with the third and seventh days, is covering the time period from the beginning of the Kingdom (yet future) up to almost the end of the Kingdom.

There is another clue. In regard to the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:30–46, verse 34 reads, “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Verses 35 and 36 show why the “sheep” inherit the kingdom: “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” In other words, those with the right heart attitude in the Kingdom Age, the sheep who are on the right hand of the Savior, will develop a character of love and sympathy for others and pray for them. The Pastor suggested that perhaps forebears will come forth as people pray earnestly for them. And then the 100-year trial will take place, a trial that is mathematical and definite.

Thus the third day represents the beginning of the Kingdom Age, and the seventh day pictures the end of the Kingdom when Jesus will say to the saved world of mankind, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” The parable shows that at the end of the Kingdom, the sheep on Jesus’ right hand will be saved, and the goats on his left hand will go into everlasting destruction. As the goats are removed from the scene, the sheep will realize they are saved and accounted worthy to enter the age beyond the Kingdom, the “world without end” (Eph. 3:21). “Jesus ... said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain *that* world [age], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke 20:34–36). When people come

forth from the tomb, not only will they not be “worthy,” but they will be unjustified reprobates and sinners.

All of the foregoing explanation was given to fathom the sprinkling on the third and seventh days. When the world of mankind first come forth from the grave, they will have to bend the knee, acknowledge Jesus, and confess that he is Lord. That act will constitute repentance, which is the sprinkling of the water of separation. The Law, the rod of iron, will be laid down. The people will be told, “You were dead, but now you are alive, and these are the terms for your continuing to live.” They will have to humble themselves and accept the sprinkling. The same is true regarding the end of the Kingdom Age, for when Satan is loosed out of his prison in earth’s atmosphere, the testing will manifest those who obeyed outwardly during the Kingdom but were secretly waiting for the “new moon”—the New (Law) Covenant—and the “sabbath” to be over (Amos 8:5,6). When Satan and those comprising Gog go up to Jerusalem to encompass the camp of the saints, the incorrigible will be exposed and their number will be as the sand of the sea (Rev. 20:7–9). Those whose hearts were truly and properly sprinkled will survive this test—they will not follow the Adversary. By inference, those who are saved will also be as the sand of the sea, the ratio of saved to unsaved being approximately the same.

At the end of the Kingdom, mankind will be given a crucial test regarding their inward conduct. Just as the holy angels did not sin in Noah’s day when their fellow angels materialized and took wives of the daughters of men, so mankind will be tested at the end of the Millennium. In both situations, the fact that Satan *prospers* for a time and goes *unpunished* constitutes a crucial test. At the time of the Flood, violence and lust prevailed in the earth, and the thoughts of men’s minds were continually wicked, but just as the Flood ended that arrangement, so symbolic fire will destroy the incorrigibly wicked at the end of the Kingdom.

Q: Does the “dead body” of verse 11 represent Adam? If so, the entire human race has touched the dead body.

A: Yes.

Q: Is the sprinkling symbolic?

A: The sprinkling of the unclean represents a person’s acceptance. As the Apostle Peter said with regard to the Christian, “We have had our hearts sprinkled with the blood of the Passover Lamb,” and so it will be with the world: acceptance, bowing the knee, and humiliation (1 Pet. 1:2). Everyone, including the great ones of earth, must be humbled. All will be treated the same way—fair but the same. Those who prove “worthy” to enter the age beyond the Kingdom will all be kings and live forever like the holy angels. Having passed a crucial test, they will never sin in the endless future.

Num. 19:13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

Num. 19:14 This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

Num. 19:15 And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean.

Num. 19:16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

One who entered the tent of a deceased person was unclean for seven days. This information supplements verse 11, which said that an individual was unclean for seven days if he touched the carcass of a dead person. To enter a tent meant going into a confined atmosphere where defiled air was breathed. It is the same principle when nonsmokers enter a smoke-filled room and inhale contaminated air. Moreover, an uncovered vessel and its contents were regarded as unclean, for contamination entered the open vessel.

The dead person who infected the entire human race with sin is Adam. Therefore, all who come forth from the tomb in the Kingdom, plus the living generation, will be under the sentence of death. The exception would be those who are considered new creatures during the Gospel Age. Verses 14–16 describe several circumstances that rendered a person unclean for seven days: entering the tent of a dead person or touching one who was slain in the open field, the bone of a dead person, or even a grave. Spiritually, the lesson is the contaminating influence of sin—sin is *exceedingly deceitful and contagious*. The type magnifies the necessity for separateness, but to be clean by the seventh day, an individual first had to be sprinkled with the water of separation on the third day. The sprinkling on the third day did not make one clean, but it started the individual on the road to recovery from uncleanness (sin). Such a one was in the way.

In regard to the final test for the world of mankind, if one acquiesces to the sprinkling of the water of separation on the third day and is subsequently humble and obedient, he will successfully pass the severe test in the Little Season at the end of the Kingdom Age. In other words, sprinkling on both days (the third and the seventh) is essential to get life.

This chapter (Numbers 19) describes four situations where a “clean” person became “unclean” for one day:

1. Eleazar the priest took the red heifer without the camp, and after it was killed, he sprinkled some of its blood toward the Tabernacle seven times (verses 3–7).
2. The one who burned the red heifer became unclean (verses 5 and 8).
3. The clean man who gathered up the ashes of the red heifer and took them to an appointed place without the camp became unclean (verses 9 and 10).
4. The clean person who sprinkled the unclean became unclean himself (verses 18 and 19).

Who are the “clean” people in antitype? They would have to be some who are not considered members of the dying human race in the normal sense. For instance, Acts 24:15 tells us, “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” The “just[ified]” are the Ancient Worthies and their companions or associates, the comparable “Great Company” class prior to the Gospel Age. Regarding the Ancient Worthies in the Kingdom, their bodies will be clean, but their characters will need some development. Therefore, even though the Ancient Worthies are to be raised perfect, they will be under the New Covenant during the Kingdom. Samson is the usual example given to show the need for the Ancient Worthies to have finished characters.

The point is that in the Kingdom, the Ancient Worthies and their “Great Company” associates could become *momentarily* contaminated, as shown by the uncleanness lasting only “until even[ing].” It seems reasonable that there will be 144,000 Ancient Worthies, as suggested by the Pastor. If that number is considered from the standpoint of a *world* Kingdom embracing China, Russia, Africa, South America, etc., then 144,000 individuals are, relatively speaking, not a large number. Psalm 45:16 tells us the Ancient Worthies shall be made “princes in all the earth.” In other words, The Christ will place them throughout the earth. The Law will go forth from Zion, but since the Word of the Lord will go out from Jerusalem through the Ancient Worthies, mankind will view them as administrators or agents of salvation (Isa. 2:3). However, these faithful ones of old will need helpers and assistants, and that is where a “Great

Company” servant class developed prior to the Gospel Age will fit in. Therefore, in the four situations enumerated above, where a clean person momentarily became unclean, or soiled, the reference is either to an Ancient Worthy himself or to a helper, for both categories will come forth from the grave “just,” or “clean.” We can also see that a process is involved. When the Ancient Worthies or their helpers become temporarily unclean, they will, according to the type, dutifully wash and then again have access to the Tabernacle arrangement and their tents.

Q: Will the Holy Remnant be considered clean?

A: Probably not, for they are simply part of the living generation. Although this is conjecture, it seems their testing will not be the same as that of the Ancient Worthies and the Church. The Holy Remnant will have a different type of worthiness. On the other hand, we cannot be dogmatic, so the Holy Remnant may be considered “clean,” for they are called “holy” (Isa. 4:3) and the Kingdom will start in Israel with a purged, repentant class. In other words, since the Holy Remnant will be in an advanced heart condition, we cannot positively state that they will not be included under the “clean” person symbolism of this chapter in Numbers, but certainly they will have to be under the New Covenant even more so than the Ancient Worthies.

In the Book of Revelation, the Kingdom Age is likened to a tent, for God will then “tabernacle” with mankind. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the *tabernacle* of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3). Thus, depending on what features of the Tabernacle arrangement are being discussed, the picture can refer to either the Gospel Age or the Kingdom Age.

Num. 19:17 And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel:

Num. 19:18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

Num. 19:19 And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

These lessons on holiness are very interesting. For example, for the three major yearly feasts (Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles), when the people gathered in Jerusalem in great numbers, they had to have places or a means for disposing of their bowel movements. The Law contained such a provision, for all of the Israelites were required to carry a paddle so that if they were in an inconvenient place, they could dispose of their problem in the ground by digging a hole and covering it. The reason given is that the ground was to be holy when the Lord God went through the camp. Although stated figuratively, the picture is powerful. In other words, right down to individual cleanliness and sanitation, the laws and regulations of the Kingdom will be very circumspect. By extension, we know there will be no littering problem in the Kingdom.

In summation, the Kingdom Age is pictured as a clean camp and a clean people endeavoring to walk the straight and narrow way. Like Christians in the Gospel Age, those who are considered clean in the Kingdom Age will merely wash at the end of the day by going to the Lord in prayer and asking forgiveness for any transgressions committed. Thus, because of problems that exist in both ages, there is a need for daily cleansing. Conditions will be reversed, however, for in the Gospel Age evil prevails, even though there are some good

people, and in the Kingdom Age, righteousness will predominate, yet we cannot say that no incidents of iniquity or misconduct will occur as exceptions.

Verse 17 says that “running water” (“living water” in the King James margin) was to be used in the water of separation, and of course running water, being the opposite of still or stagnant water, is purer. In fact, water in reservoirs is often aerated to aid in the purification process. Running water means that the unclean person being sprinkled will receive up-to-date water, as it were—water appropriate to his sickness or uncleanness.

Num. 19:20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean.

Num. 19:21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

Num. 19:22 And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even.

Two types of cleansing are shown. The cleansing of the world of mankind will not be fully effected until the conclusion of the Kingdom Age, but those who were previously considered “clean”—the Ancient Worthies, for example—can become temporarily unclean. Going daily to the throne of grace for cleansing will be necessary.

Num. 20:1 Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

There is a big jump in time from the events of earlier chapters through Chapter 19 and this chapter—in fact, more than 37 years. Now we are near the end of the 40 years in the wilderness. The focus of attention in the Book of Numbers is on the beginning and the end of the Israelites’ wilderness wanderings.

Miriam, Moses’ older sister, died at this time, and Aaron would die very shortly. In addition, Moses himself died before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. At the time of Miriam’s death, the Israelites were abiding in Kadesh. Beyond the defile entering Petra, there is a hill on which a monastery marks the traditional place where she died. When standing on that hill and looking across the broad wadi that leads up to the bottom end of the Dead Sea, one can see Mount Hor on the other side. It was on Mount Hor that Aaron died and was buried. The point is that the places where Miriam and Aaron died are near each other.

Miriam was a little girl when Moses was three months old in connection with the ark of bulrushes. Therefore, she was about seven years older than Moses, the youngest of the three. Moses died at age 120, and Aaron lived to be 123 (Deut. 34:7; Num. 33:39).

Num. 20:2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

Num. 20:3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

How startling that, after all of their previous experiences, the Israelites murmured again! The

congregation “gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron” to complain that “there was no water.” They “chode with Moses ... saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!”

Num. 20:4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

Num. 20:5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink.

Num. 20:6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

After almost 40 years in the wilderness, the people were weary. At the time they left Egypt, they were to go directly into the Promised Land, but when ten of the spies returned with an unfavorable report and the people believed it, God said that for each day the spies had searched out the land, the Israelites would spend a year in the wilderness. Since two years had already expired, the wanderings were to continue for 38 more years. Now the people were again chiding Moses for their not getting into the land of milk and honey. However, because of what had happened, the Israelites actually entered the land *exactly on time*. It was their wrong heart attitude that caused their patience to wear thin. The same wrong attitude will occur with some at the end of the Kingdom. Those in the wrong heart condition will overestimate the time factor and be in a disgruntled attitude. They will reason and murmur, “We have been under the Kingdom rule for such a long time. The reign was to last for only the thousand years, and we were promised kingship.”

When Moses and Aaron brought the matter to the Lord, “the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.” Of course the congregation could see the glory to a certain extent.

Comment: When we think of the Israelite wanderings in the wilderness as picturing the Christian experience during the Gospel Age, this murmuring against Moses and Aaron was really a murmuring against “dignities,” to use the language of Jude 8 and 2 Peter 2:10. Just as the Israelites murmured in the beginning and at the end of their wilderness wanderings, so Jude and Peter warn about an ungodly element who “speak evil of dignities” in the early Church and now again at the end of the Gospel Age.

Reply: The Apostle Paul not only spoke of the Tabernacle as being a type but said the things that happened to the Israelites are a lesson to us (1 Cor. 10:11).

Num. 20:7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 20:8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

Num. 20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

Num. 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

Num. 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

What did God command Moses to do? This time Moses was told just to *speak* to the rock, not to smite it, whereas previously, toward the beginning of the 40 years, he had properly smitten the rock with the result that water came forth (Exod. 17:5,6). Apparently, Moses assumed that the smiting was a necessary complement in connection with obeying the Lord's voice. Also, he was now getting fed up and running out of patience with the attitude of the people. Up to this point, he had been very patient and meek—in fact, remarkably so. However, the Lord told him clearly in this instance to simply “speak ... unto the rock.”

The disobedience of Moses consisted of his smiting the rock twice and also his addressing the congregation: “Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?” In other words, he accredited the fetching of water to *himself*. In this particular picture, he represented a Second Death class, even though overall he “verily was faithful in all his house” (Heb. 3:5). (At other times, Moses variously represented God, Jesus, the Church, or The Christ.) Moses' smiting the rock twice is referred to in the Hebrews 6:4,6 description of the Second Death class: “For it is impossible ... If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing *they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*” And there is a connection with Jude 12; namely, “These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: ... trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, *twice dead, plucked up by the roots.*” We should keep in mind that this incident with Moses occurred shortly before the Israelites entered the Promised Land.

“The water came out *abundantly*”—so much so that all of “the congregation drank, and their beasts also.” The people were granted the favor of much water.

Num. 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Num. 20:13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

God spoke to both Moses and Aaron: “Because ye believed me not, ... therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” Since neither Moses nor Aaron could enter the Promised Land, Aaron must have manifested sympathy with Moses. Although Moses did the smiting, both of them must have been boiling mad. The penalty indicates willful sin, which required expiation. Not being able to enter the Promised Land would have been a severe penalty for Moses because in faith, he had looked forward to that day.

Kadesh is near Petra. Today in the Petra area, tourists can see the Meribah spring that resulted from Moses' smiting the rock.

Q: Is Kadesh different from Kadesh-barnea?

A: Yes, but Kadesh-barnea is a bigger area.

Num. 20:14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us:

Num. 20:15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

Num. 20:16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

Num. 20:17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom, which adjoined Kadesh, an outpost of Edom, as it were. Moses was seeking permission for the Israelites to have clear passage to the Promised Land from the upper end of the Red Sea, that is, to Jericho and what is modern-day Jordan. If permission was granted, Moses promised that the Israelites would respect the rights of the people of Edom—their wells, fields, etc. They would “not turn to the right hand nor to the left” but would go through the land posthaste.

At that time, “Kadesh [was] a city in the uttermost of thy [Edom's] border.” Later on, Petra became famous as the capital of the Nabateans.

Num. 20:18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

Num. 20:19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet.

Num. 20:20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

On one of the trips, we took the King's Highway. From Madeba and Nebo at the northern end of the Dead Sea, we traveled on this mountain road all the way down to Petra. That is the route Moses wanted to take because it was natural, quicker, and not on the low, hot desert floor where the need for water was severe. Because of Edom's refusal, Moses had to skirt that nation and go on the lower valley road, which we took on another trip.

Num. 20:21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

Num. 20:22 And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor.

Num. 20:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

Num. 20:24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.

Aaron was informed that he would die shortly.

Num. 20:25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

Num. 20:26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there.

Num. 20:27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

God told Moses to take Aaron and Eleazar up into Mount Hor. (Mount Hor is reasonably high, and the word “Hor” can mean “high place” depending upon the vowel.) There Eleazar, Aaron’s oldest son, was clothed with the garments of the high priest. Of Aaron’s three other sons, Nadab and Abihu had died earlier for offering strange fire, and Ithamar was alive but is not mentioned here.

Several Scriptures refer to Aaron’s death. Numbers 33:36–39 reads, “And they removed from Ezion-geber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh. And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month. And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.” Miriam, the older sister of Moses, died in Kadesh before the Israelites went to Mount Hor (Num. 20:1). Shortly thereafter Aaron died. The reason for his death is that he supported Moses when, instead of just speaking to the rock, the latter smote the rock twice and water gushed out in such great volume that it supplied all of the flocks as well as the people of Israel. Then Moses said, “Must we fetch you water out of this rock?” whereas it was *God’s* power that had produced the water. Although Moses was expressing frustration because of so many similar trials, both he and Aaron were told they could not enter the Promised Land.

Normally we think of Moses’ being forbidden to enter the Promised Land when he was 120 years old and his death at this age as picturing the death of the feet members. Aaron was 123 at the time he died. The Aaronic priesthood was the sacrificing priesthood in contrast to the Melchisedec priesthood. In addition, Moses, as the mediator of the old Law Covenant, pictured The Christ as the mediator of the New Covenant. The date of Aaron’s death was the first day of the fifth month of the 40th year of the wilderness wanderings. Therefore, the fact that four months of the 40th year had already expired means that Numbers 20 took place near the end of the 40 years in the wilderness. Only eight months remained until the Israelites entered Canaan.

Comment: The time frame is interesting because it means that all the rest of Numbers and the Book of Deuteronomy transpired in the remaining eight months of the 40th year.

Reply: Yes, and Leviticus, which is filled with information, covered a very short period of time at the beginning of the 40 years. Then the earlier part of the Book of Numbers went into detail about the beginning years of the wilderness wanderings, and now we are concentrating on the end of the 40 years. Leaving Egypt, arriving at Mount Sinai, and constructing the Tabernacle are treated in reasonable detail. And from the leaving of Mount Sinai to the border of the land of Canaan when the 12 spies were sent out and shortly thereafter, the Israelites’ experiences are related. Then follows a gap of more than 30 years with no explanation. Now we have reached the latter part of the 40 years in the wilderness, which are explained in great detail.

Ezion-geber (Num. 33:36) is down near Eilat. From there, the Israelites went up to the Wilderness of Zin and to Kadesh, which is quite a distance. In tracing the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, scholars invariably overlook the fact that there were *two* circular journeys to Eilat. This realization is necessary in order to harmonize the account.

Information about Aaron continues. Deuteronomy 10:6 states, “And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest’s office in his stead.” Because Moses reminisced several times in the Book of Deuteronomy, the events in that book are not sequential. His purpose was to impress certain lessons, not to give a chronological listing of events. He listed events in sequence for a while and then went back and reviewed other events, listed in sequence again and reviewed, etc.

Deuteronomy 32:50 reads, “And die in the mount whither thou [Moses] goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people.”

Q: Are Mount Nebo and Mount Hor near each other?

A: No, Mount Hor is a considerable distance south of the bottom end of the Dead Sea, whereas Nebo is up almost to the tip of the Dead Sea. Thus they are widely separated by the length of the Dead Sea and beyond.

Q: Are Nebo and Pisgah the same?

A: Yes, just as Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb are the same. Mount Sinai pertains to the mountain chain; Horeb, to a particular peak in that chain. The Mount Sinai chain, which is about two miles in circumference, contains three prominent peaks in the front, and each has a name. In the back is a fourth peak, Mount Musa, which cannot be seen from the plain in front.

Num. 20:28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

Num. 20:29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.

Comment: When Aaron went up into Mount Hor, he was breathing one moment and died the next. What a peaceful way to die!

Reply: Yes, the account does not say that either Aaron or Moses agonized in death. This is truly a case of “expiring”—that is, breathing the last breath.

Comment: The Lord had just said that Aaron could not enter the Promised Land because of his attitude in connection with the waters of Meribah. Although he disobeyed in that instance, he was faithful overall, being called a “saint” in Psalm 106:16. Therefore, we would hope that he was given some comfort and assurance of his faithfulness prior to his death.

Reply: When the Lord reasoned with Moses about not entering the Promised Land, the restriction must have almost broken Moses’ heart (Deut. 32:48–52). He was allowed to see but not to enter the land.

When clothed by Moses with the garments of glory and beauty, Eleazar supplanted Aaron as high priest. Subsequently Eleazar had to go through the ceremony pertaining to the consecration of the priesthood. The account does not state all of these details, for it is assumed that we already know them, as given in Exodus 29.

Num. 21:1 And when king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, heard tell that

Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners.

Num. 21:2 And Israel vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities.

Num. 21:3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

For verse 1, the Revised Standard has, “When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the Negeb, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive.” Arad is down in the more or less habitable portion of southern Israel (that is, not in the desert). The land between Beer-sheba and Eilat is almost all barren desert with little verdure. The king did not wait until the Israelites came to Arad but went farther south to confront them. Therefore, the battle took place near the boundary line where the 12 spies were originally sent forth.

God hearkened to the Israelites’ vow to destroy the king of Arad and the satellite cities of the Canaanites in that portion of the land. Of course the term “Canaanites” embraced more than just Arad, for they were in other places of Israel as well. The Lord instructed the Israelites to destroy seven major enemies when they entered the land. “When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou” (Deut. 7:1). In antitype, the seven represent different types of sin that must be overcome by the new creature. Considered in the broad sense, the word “Canaanite” is synonymous with the thought of an enemy of the Lord, but in the land of Canaan, there were six other tribes as well.

When the Israelites were told to enter the land, they wanted to search it out first. When Moses brought the seemingly reasonable matter to the Lord, permission was given, and 12 spies were sent out, one spy from each tribe. Upon the return of the 12 spies, ten of them—all except Joshua and Caleb—gave an unfavorable report. Because the people listened to the unfavorable counsel, they were fearful of the Amorites, who were described as people of great stature. As a result, the Israelites *did not enter* the land, yet shortly thereafter they disobeyed again by saying, “*We will enter* the land and fight.” In the ensuing battle, many Israelite lives were lost because this time the Lord had not told them to go into the land. Moses and some others remained where they were, refusing to be a party to the disobedience. The foibles and inconsistencies of fallen, depraved human nature can be seen in these incidents. The old heart, the reasoning of the old man, is desperately wicked and exceedingly deceitful (Jer. 17:9).

This time the Israelites properly first sought permission from the Lord. God “hearkened to the voice of Israel,” and they were successful in the battle with the Canaanites in that locale. The name Hormah means “utter destruction.”

Num. 21:4 And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way.

Num. 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

Num. 21:6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

The Israelites compassed the land of Edom, which is down in the desert floor. The floor of the Arabah is a dry, deep, wide valley that extends from the south end of the Dead Sea all the way down to the Gulf of Eilat. A similar valley on the north end of the Dead Sea is related to Ezekiel's Temple.

“They journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea.” The Israelites had been up near Kadesh-barnea. Now they journeyed down by way of the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom. In the dry wadi, they had neither bread nor water. When they murmured, they were bitten by “fiery serpents.” What are these “serpents”?

Comment: The *Berean Manual* suggests they were cobras.

Comment: The fact that the Israelites “loatheth this light bread” (the manna) shows their hearts were hardened.

Reply: Having the right heart condition makes the difference. “The LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 13:3). Superficially there was a reason for the Israelites to complain, but who was leading them? The Lord. Therefore, although the murmuring was ostensibly against Moses, it was really a reflection on God.

On this long journey, the 2 million Israelites traveled about 20 miles each day. That means they walked about ten hours per day.

As for the “fiery serpents,” we notice, first, that the vipers, or snakes, were plural. Different reasons are given as to why they were “fiery.” One reason is the color, and another is the effect of the strong venomous bite, which caused the victims to experience internal fire and die. Vipers in the deserts of the world are known to cause such reactions. Some of the smallest snakes, such as the cobra of India, are the deadliest.

Num. 21:7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

Num. 21:8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

Num. 21:9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

God told Moses to make a copper serpent transfixed to a pole, the copper picturing perfect humanity. The serpent had to be reasonably large—larger than life-size—in order for the nation to view it. To hold the copper serpent, the pole required a crosspiece. Otherwise, the serpent would circle the pole all the way up, giving the appearance of a barber pole. With the crosspiece at the upper end of the pole and the serpent wrapped around the crosspiece, the result resembled the symbol for *medicine*, Aesculapius. How interesting, for if those who were bitten looked upon the serpent on the pole, they were *cured!*

It is a known fact in chemistry that poison is fought with poison. Sometimes medicinal cures even have a skull and crossbones on the outside. The “X” crossbones is a symbol of Christ, and the skull indicates death. Of course the average person does not understand the symbolism, but it has been overruled, just as many places and events have been overruled to teach spiritual

lessons. Thus it took death to cure death. The fiery serpents were a curse to whomever they bit, but looking at the brazen serpent, pictured as a curse, had a negating or blocking effect that disannulled the death penalty. In the antitype, the serpent on the cross is Jesus, who said, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14). The serpent on the pole is probably more representative of Jesus’ death than of his resurrection, for it pictures his crucifixion and his being made a curse upon a tree. God pronounced a malediction on Adam for his sin, and it takes a curse to nullify a curse. A tree brought the curse upon Father Adam, and subsequently the dying race was started in his loins. And so Jesus, in effect, with an unborn race in his loins, countermanded or offset the penalty of Adam and his yet unborn children.

At least the people recognized that they had sinned. Of their own accord, they went to Moses and said, “We have sinned.” Then they asked Moses to pray for them.

Num. 21:10 And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in Oboth.

Num. 21:11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising.

Moab, the next country, bordered Edom on the north side and was adjacent to the east (or right) side of the Dead Sea. The defiles that marked the boundary of Moab were two wadis, Arnon in the north and Zared in the south. The bottom defile also marked the northern boundary of Edom. Now the Israelites were journeying toward Jericho, their ultimate purpose being to enter the Promised Land by crossing the river Jordan at the north end of the Dead Sea. After they camped in Oboth and left, they went to Ije-abarim, which is in the wilderness and “opposite Moab, toward the sunrise [the east]” (RSV).

Moses had wanted to travel on the King’s Highway, which was up on the mountain range. That road was the quickest and most efficient way to get up to Jericho, but the Lord’s providence led them way down on the plain through very barren territory. From there, they went north and skirted the northern part of Edom as well as the east border of Moab.

Num. 21:12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared.

Num. 21:13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

Num. 21:14 Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon,

The “book of the wars of the LORD” is one of the lost books that probably one day will be found like the scrolls in the caves of Qumran. “What he [the LORD] did in the Red sea” refers to when He led the Israelites through the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus.

Zared is the southern boundary and Arnon the northern boundary of Moab. Of the two wadis, Arnon is more distinct as a stream because it flows with regularity.

A little below the Dead Sea on the right side was Edom. To the north was Moab at the bottom end of the Dead Sea and on the right side. Still farther north were the Amorites. Edom was Esau, the brother of Jacob. Lot’s two sons were Moab and Ammon, and Ammon was slightly north of the Dead Sea and a little more inland on the east, or right. From south to north, the order of these lands was Edom, Moab, the Amorites, and Ammon.

Num. 21:15 And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.

Num. 21:16 And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

Num. 21:17 Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:

Num. 21:18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves. And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah:

The song starts with “Spring up” and ends with “their staves.” Verse 19 should begin with “And from the wilderness.”

For the well to have been dug with staves, the water could not have been too deep below ground level. Thus, whenever the rain came, it sank into an invisible cistern, as it were, that was below the surface of the sand. Under the counsel and instruction of the Lord at the hand of Moses, the princes were able to pierce this source of water with their staves. Probably the “princes” and “nobles” were the same individuals, being a couplet in the song.

Num. 21:19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

Num. 21:20 And from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon.

Num. 21:21 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,

Num. 21:22 Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's high way, until we be past thy borders.

With Edom, when Moses proposed to travel up the King's Highway, he promised to purchase water. Edom refused but did sell the Israelites water when they went down into the valley and around Edom. The Edomites felt they could not trust the Israelites.

Q: Were the Israelites near the Promised Land at this time?

A: They were getting closer. The Amorites extended up to the Valley of Jericho at the north end of the Dead Sea. Their territory was subsequently given to the 2 1/2 tribes east of Jordan.

Num. 21:23 And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness: and he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

Num. 21:24 And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword, and possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon was strong.

Num. 21:25 And Israel took all these cities: and Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof.

The Amorite territory not only bordered the north end of the Dead Sea but went farther north

a fairly considerable distance to another river, Jabbok. The Jabbok is mentioned in the news today with regard to Syria, Jordan, and Israel. Israel is concerned lest the Jabbok be diverted to diminish the flow of water going into the Jordan River.

Comment: The Israelites were shown no kindness by any of these peoples. This treatment fits the antitype, for we have no peace in the present life from the enemies that keep assailing us.

Reply: Yes, and of course Edom is a picture of Christendom.

Num. 21:26 For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

Num. 21:27 Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say, Come into Heshbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared:

Num. 21:28 For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the lords of the high places of Arnon.

The land occupied by the Amorites was originally given to the Moabites. The Amorites took away the northern half of the land of Moab—a tremendous portion of land.

Num. 21:29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemosh: he hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

Num. 21:30 We have shot at them; Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waste even unto Nophah, which reacheth unto Medeba.

“Medeba” is now called Madeba. The proverb in verses 27–30 was famous and meaningful to the people of that day. The Amorites gloated over their victory, and the Moabites smarted under the defeat.

Num. 21:31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

Num. 21:32 And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there.

Num. 21:33 And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan went out against them, he, and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

Bashan was still farther north, just below the Sea of Galilee. Going south to north, the order now was Edom, Moab, land of the Amorites, and Bashan (later called the land of Gilead).

Num. 21:34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

Num. 21:35 So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land.

The account has been saying that in this journey, the Israelites fought some battles. In winning the battles, they now occupied entirely the land of the Amorites and the land of the Bashanites.

Q: Were only Edom, Moab, and Ammon still intact?

A: Yes, Edom was not destroyed and the southern half of Moab, which was not taken by the Amorites, was preserved. The northern half of Moab, which had been conquered by the Amorites, now fell into the hands of the Israelites. In addition, the Israelites also took the land of Bashan (or Gilead).

Q: How far north did Ammon go?

A: Ammon extended up to the Sea of Galilee but was farther inland. Today Ammon is an artificial type of property something like Armenia, a landlocked territory.

Num. 22:1 **And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho.**

Although more activity must still take place, the time setting of this chapter is the last year of the 40 years' journey in the wilderness. What has confused almost all geographers in mapping out the four or five peoples mentioned in the account in Numbers is the statement that "the children of Israel ... pitched in the plains of Moab." The problem is that what is called "the plains of Moab" was not in the possession of the Moabites at this time but was formerly their territory. The Amorites pushed the Moabites out of their former inheritance so that only the southern half of what used to be Moab was retained.

It is helpful to remember the names of the four different rivers or wadis that formed natural east-west boundaries of these various kingdoms. For instance, the river that marked the northern border of Edom was the wadi Zered, and the Edomites occupied a portion of territory that reached all the way down to the Gulf of Eilat. Since that territory extended for so many miles, most maps cannot cover it in its entirety without the type getting very small.

The four wadis are as follows. Zered divided the northern border of Edom from the southern border of Moab. The river or wadi Arnon was the northern border of the Moabites at this time, but previously Moab occupied territory all the way up to the north end of the Dead Sea and the plains of Moab, which were near or across from Jericho. In other words, the name "plains of Moab" is an older name that was retained when these records were codified. First, the Amorites conquered territory from the Moabites; then the Israelites dispossessed the Amorites.

Q: What is the meaning of the words "on this side Jordan by Jericho"?

A: The problem is the word "by," which is supplied. The Israelites, being on the east side of the Jordan River, had not yet crossed over into the Promised Land. The Israelites pitched *near* Jericho but *across* the Jordan on the east.

Num. 22:2 **And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.**

Moses had skirted Edom and did not molest Moab because the Moabites were the children of Lot. Ammon, too, was not to be interfered with for the same reason. However, the Amorites, who occupied the land of Moab, were displaced by Israel.

Num. 22:3 **And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.**

The Moabites were distressed because they had seen the Israelites defeat the Amorites and thought they would be next.

Num. 22:4 And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time.

Q: Midian was far to the south, below Edom, so how could the king of Moab speak “unto the elders of Midian” up in his territory?

A: The Midianites were nomads who roamed various territories. They were mainly down in Sinai, but they traveled or roamed elsewhere, even up into Gilead. Likewise, the Amorites and the Amalekites were nomadic peoples. We read about the Amalekites when Moses fought them with raised hands way down by Rephidim (Exod. 17:8), but they were in many places. Bedouin wandered about from place to place, taking advantage of the lay of the land so that they did not have to till and cultivate the soil. On the other hand, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites were not nomads.

Num. 22:5 He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me:

The king of Moab sent messengers to Balaam, whose lineage is given as “the son of Beor.” Pethor was probably a city, but we do not know with certainty where it was.

Comment: The clause “behold, they cover the face of the earth” is not literal. There were *many* Israelites, but they certainly did not “cover the face of the earth.” Similarly the Flood of Noah’s day did not literally cover the entire earth but was limited to the habitable part of the earth at that time.

Reply: Yes, depending on the context, some of the terms that sound universal or all-embracing need to be modified, and even modified greatly. Of course the king of Moab exaggerated the situation because he wanted Balaam to come quickly and allay his fears.

Q: The *Berean Manual* suggests that the “river of the land of the children of his people” was the Euphrates, but it cannot be pinned down, can it?

A: No, although the river could be a very minor tributary of the Euphrates.

Num. 22:6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed.

Num. 22:7 And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak.

Comment: Balaam must have had quite a reputation to be sent for under this circumstance.

Num. 22:8 And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

Num. 22:9 And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?

Num. 22:10 And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying,

Num. 22:11 Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.

Rahab and others knew how God had helped the Israelites in the Red Sea crossing and the Wilderness of Sinai, so it would be surprising if Balaam did not know who they were.

Comment: The fact God addressed Balaam indicates he was in favor with God at one time.

Reply: Yes, Genesis 31:53 speaks of the “God of Abraham” and the “God of Nahor.” God dealt with both Nahor and Abraham but in a special way with Abraham.

Comment: Then “the river of the land of the children of his [Balaam’s] people” would be up near the territory of the Euphrates.

Reply: Yes, but there are several tributaries, all of which are generally east to west until we get up into Turkey.

Num. 22:12 And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.

Num. 22:13 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuseth to give me leave to go with you.

Num. 22:14 And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us.

Certain principles begin to come to the surface with regard to Balaam’s character and testings. God told Balaam *with definiteness* that he was *not to go with the princes of Moab*. Moreover, “Thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.” At this point, Balaam responded favorably and with positiveness: “Return to your land, for God refuses to let me go with you” (paraphrase).

However, we begin to see the technique that Satan uses to erode the character of some who were very strong-willed and properly exercised at one time in their life. He has a method for breaking people down.

Notice that when the princes of Moab returned to King Balak, they omitted some important information. They merely said, “Balaam refuseth to come with us,” and did not mention that Jehovah *forbid* Balaam to go. Now if we were King Balak and heard only that Balaam refused to come, we would probably try again to persuade him.

Num. 22:15 And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.

Num. 22:16 And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me:

Num. 22:17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people.

Satan knew the thinking of Balak, and he knew that Balaam loved a reward. While Balaam was very definite about not going the first time, Satan knew a weakness existed and, therefore, played both ends toward the middle. King Balak reasoned, “Since Balaam refuses to come, I will just up the ante and increase the reward.” Balak offered great reward, saying, “Let *nothing*

... hinder you from coming unto me, for I will promote you unto *very great honour*, and ... do whatsoever you say.”

Num. 22:18 And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more.

Num. 22:19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the LORD will say unto me more.

Num. 22:20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.

Balaam did two things that were wrong. His words sounded very commendable on the surface: “Though Balak offers me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot do more or less than God says.” However, God had told Balaam the first time, “You shall *not go*. You cannot curse the Israelites because they are a blessed people.” Balaam should not have parleyed with the situation but should have nipped it in the bud. Because he did not do so, his words about a house full of silver and gold were really meaningless. What he was really saying was, “Stay overnight, for I have to think this over.” The first time Balaam sent the messengers back posthaste, but now he was saying, “Tarry overnight, for perhaps God has changed His mind.”

The second thing Balaam did wrong was to not listen carefully enough to what God had said to him. It is like the earlier lesson where God told Moses, “*Speak unto the rock,*” but Moses *smote* the rock. No doubt Moses felt righteous indignation, but he paid the penalty for disobedience by not being allowed to go into the Promised Land. Notice that the instruction to Balaam was, “*If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them.*”

Num. 22:21 And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab.

“Balaam rose up in the morning”—the very thing he should *not have done*. Why not? Because he did not wait to be called. God had said, “*If the men come to call thee, [then] rise up,*” but Balaam rose up before they called him, saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. Of course they were delighted to see him coming.

Num. 22:22 And God’s anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him.

No wonder God’s anger was kindled because, to repeat, Balaam erred in two ways. (1) He should have drawn the lesson from the first experience. (2) He should have listened more attentively to what God had said to him. Many Bible scholars miss these points and thus cannot understand why God was angry.

Comment: It is apparent that Balaam really wanted to go with the princes of Moab despite his earlier professions.

Reply: Yes, and that attitude becomes more obvious when we read in Jude 11 that Balaam loved the “reward” and in 2 Peter 2:15 that he “loved the wages of unrighteousness.” The Adversary knew Balaam’s weakness, and he also knew that the omitted information would cause Balak to up the ante to make the prophet’s journey more worthwhile. And Balaam did

think quite highly of the second offer.

While Balaam “was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him,” the “angel of the LORD stood in the way for an adversary against him [Balaam].”

Num. 22:23 And the ass saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.

At first, only the ass “saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, ... his sword drawn in his hand.” With neither Balaam nor the two servants seeing the angel, all they knew was that for some reason, the animal balked and bolted out of the path into a field. Other examples of the selective opening of some eyes and/or ears and the closing of others are the dove that lighted on Jesus’ shoulder at the time of his baptism and only Paul’s seeing and hearing the risen Lord on the way to Damascus.

In anger and frustration over the animal’s seeming stubbornness in heeding his direction, “Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way.” Balaam was eager now to get to King Balak, so the situation was all the more infuriating.

Comment: The angel would have been fairly large to block the way entirely.

Num. 22:24 But the angel of the LORD stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side.

Num. 22:25 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

Num. 22:26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

Num. 22:27 And when the ass saw the angel of the LORD, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam’s anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

Three times the angel blocked the way of the ass. First, the animal turned aside out of the way into a field. Next she crushed Balaam’s foot against the wall in the vineyards. Finally the path became so narrow and constricted that the ass could not swerve to one side and simply collapsed under Balaam. By this time, Balaam was furious.

Num. 22:28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

Num. 22:29 And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

Num. 22:30 And the ass said unto Balaam, Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee? And he said, Nay.

This portion of the account is comical and almost unbelievable, but it truly happened. The dialogue shows that anger can cause one to lose his reason temporarily. *Balaam did not even question that the ass was talking to him!* Instead he just argued back and forth. The ass even counted the number of times she had been punished: “What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?” After Balaam replied, the ass continued: “Have I ever been

unfaithful to you in the past?" Balaam had to admit, "No."

Num. 22:31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

Num. 22:32 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me:

Num. 22:33 And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive.

Of course Balaam submitted when his eyes were opened to see the angel who was standing in the way with a drawn sword. He showed the spirit of reverence by bowing his head and falling flat on his face.

Num. 22:34 And Balaam said unto the angel of the LORD, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.

Balaam admitted his error, but after all that had happened, he said weakly, "Now therefore, *if it displease thee*, I will get me back again." There is no question that Balaam's actions displeased the Lord, for the angel said, "If the animal had not turned from me these three times, I would have killed you." In other words, "You should be thankful for what the ass did, for I would have spared the animal but not you."

Under normal circumstances, Balaam would have turned around and gone back home without asking about displeasing the Lord, for of course God was displeased. However, this incident was highlighted for historical purposes, some of which will be seen in subsequent chapters.

Num. 22:35 And the angel of the LORD said unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

Num. 22:36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast.

King Balak went out to meet Balaam.

Num. 22:37 And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? wherefore camest thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

Num. 22:38 And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

Num. 22:39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth.

Num. 22:40 And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him.

King Balak offered oxen and sheep in sacrifice to the God of his people. Probably the animals were ostensibly offered to the same God, but instead of His being called the God of Abraham,

He would be considered the God of Nahor. Thus Balak was trying to put a religious slant on his intentions.

Num. 22:41 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.

The next day King Balak escorted Balaam to the “high places ... that thence he might see the utmost part of the people.” In other words, Balak took Balaam to a place where the full extent of the Israelites could be seen in the plain below. But why did Balak do this? He may have felt that if Balaam issued the curse, it would befall only those people who were within range of his sight. Therefore, to make sure Balaam’s curse would have the greatest effect, Balak took him to a place where all of the people could be seen. Stated another way, by Balaam’s surmounting the situation and going high enough, presumably his authority would be all-embracing in its damaging effects.

Q: Deuteronomy 12:2 reads, “Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.” How can we be sure that Balak’s sacrifices in “the high places of Baal” were really to Jehovah?

A: “Baal” means “Lord.” Many places in the Old Testament, especially in regard to altars, were given a name that included “Baal.” Most of the altars were on hills, and where possible, they were under a large oak tree.

Num. 23:1 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

Num. 23:2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram.

Num. 23:3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatsoever he showeth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

After the offering of seven oxen and seven rams on seven altars, Balaam separated himself, going to a high place. The practice of offering a bullock and a ram had existed for some time. The sacrifice started as just a ram, then became a bullock and a ram. Under Moses’ jurisdiction, much detailed information was furnished as to what animals to offer and under what circumstance.

Num. 23:4 And God met Balaam: and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.

Num. 23:5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak.

Num. 23:6 And he returned unto him, and, lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

Being a prophet, Balaam acted as an intermediary and a priest and returned to King Balak, the civil authority. He went and stood by the burnt sacrifice (or offering), which was particularly the ram of the seventh altar. Now he would speak the words God put in his mouth.

Num. 23:7 And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel.

Aram was in Mesopotamia, a very large area between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. In fact, "Mesopotamia" means "land between the two rivers." Thus Balaam came from the general area of Abraham, but the exact location cannot be pinpointed.

Num. 23:8 How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied?

Num. 23:9 For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Part of the prophecy was that Israel would be a peculiar people; that is, they would retain their identity and not become assimilated into the cultures and religions of other nations wherein they would be scattered in the future. If anything, their national characteristics and integrity have eroded more in the last 50 years than in the previous thousands of years.

Num. 23:10 Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

Num. 23:11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether.

Num. 23:12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

The prophecy continued, saying that Israel would be favored to become like the "dust of Jacob." Then Balaam added the thought "I wish that my own personal destiny were like that of the Israelites, whom I am supposed to curse." In other words, "May my end be blessed like Israel's end." (Of course Balaam's end will be otherwise.)

Comment: Even the fourth part of Israel was too numerous to count. In their encampment around the Tabernacle, the nation was divided into four parts, and each part was immense.

Comment: Instead of "the fourth part," a Revised Standard footnote suggests "the dust clouds." "Who can count the dust of Jacob, or number the dust clouds of Israel?"

Reply: Genesis 22:17 says that the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea. Both texts indicate a great number through hyperbole.

Num. 23:13 And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence.

Num. 23:14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

Num. 23:15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the LORD yonder.

Balak was trying to think of some ingenious way to manipulate Balaam into pronouncing a

curse against Israel that would be favorable to himself. He reasoned that taking Balaam to the previous vantage point where all the Israelites could be seen was perhaps too condemnatory, that maybe God did not answer the prayer because they would all be destroyed. Now Balak indicated that he would be satisfied if just a significant portion of the Israelites were decimated. Therefore, Balak took Balaam to another location from which not quite as many of the Israelite host could be seen.

Num. 23:16 And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

Num. 23:17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

Num. 23:18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor:

Num. 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Balak was being rebuked (1) for reasoning that God could be persuaded through human strategy and (2) for not realizing that the Israelites could not be cursed no matter what strategy was used.

Num. 23:20 Behold, I have received commandment to bless: and he hath blessed: and I cannot reverse it.

Num. 23:21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the LORD his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.

Num. 23:22 God brought them out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn.

“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.” How could such a statement be made when the Israelites had murmured repeatedly about wanting to return to Egypt? The statement is true if we consider that the faultfinders kept perishing in a weeding-out process, and that another weeding out would yet take place, so that only the younger generation would enter the land (Joshua and Caleb being the exceptions). God, through Balaam, was speaking of the Israelites then living; He would not curse them because He had purposed to bring them into the Land of Promise. Furthermore, no one from the outside should interfere in the Lord’s business.

The “LORD ... is with him [Jacob], and the shout of a king [the Messiah] is among them [the Israelites].” Earth’s future King would come from the progeny of this people. Therefore, to destroy them would defeat God’s very purpose of raising up Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

Comment: The translators did not realize this was a prophecy of Jesus, for they did not capitalize the word “king.”

Reply: The translators did not realize that sometimes God prophesies outside of the normal field, and sometimes He prophesies through a woman instead of a man. The exceptions should be noted, and Balaam is a notable exception.

Israel has the “strength of an unicorn.” The “unicorn” is probably the wild ox or the

rhinoceros, the latter being likened to a Sherman tank. A very temperamental animal, a rhino can easily knock over a Jeep™ on a safari.

Num. 23:23 Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!

Comment: Twice now (Num. 22:27 and 23:23) the word “divination” has been used. “The elders of Moab and ... of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand.” They must have expected Balaam to use some kind of divination along with the curse.

Reply: For that reason, some do not want to admit that Balaam was a true prophet of the Lord. They call him a sorcerer.

Num. 23:24 Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain.

Verse 24 will be fulfilled after Jacob’s Trouble. In what way will Israel “eat of the prey”? There are two ways to subdue an enemy: (1) to expunge him through judgment and death or (2) to convert him. Either way the enemy ceases to be an enemy. In Jacob’s Trouble, God will save the tents of Judah first (Zech. 12:7), and Judah is likened to a lion (Gen. 49:9,10). In the Kingdom, the Word of the Lord, the commandment of obedience, will go forth from the city of Jerusalem, and any nations who disobey, such as Egypt, will receive no rain (Zech. 14:17,18). The New Covenant will be made with the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31).

Num. 23:25 And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all.

In other words, in disgust, Balak said to Balaam, “Shut up!” (verse 25). “Do not bless them or curse them. Just forget the matter.”

Num. 23:26 But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that the LORD speaketh, that I must do?

Num. 23:27 And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence.

Num. 23:28 And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeshimon.

Balak took Balaam to another mount or high promontory, from which he wanted Balaam to view the nation of Israel in the valley below and pronounce a curse. Perhaps Balak thought superstitiously that the previous choices of location had a bearing on the failure of Balaam to utter a curse. Whatever the reasoning, Balak made a last desperate attempt.

Num. 23:29 And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams.

Num. 23:30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar.

“Balak did as Balaam had said.” For the third time, Balaam instructed Balak to build seven altars and to prepare seven bullocks and seven rams, and Balak did. Imagine the time and effort required to build seven altars and prepare the animals! The number “seven” usually signifies sacred completeness.

Comment: King Balak had a lot of gall to keep persisting in this matter, for it was apparent what God wanted.

Reply: The Pharaoh of Egypt at the time of the Exodus reacted similarly.

Ultimately both Balak and Balaam were frustrated, but Balaam's career ended in destruction. He is a good illustration of the saying "The love of money is the root of all [that is, *much*] evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

Num. 24:1 And when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

Num. 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

Additional information is supplied that in connection with preparing for the pronouncement of the curse (which proved to be a benediction), Balaam used his own style of incantations, such as the burning of incense. Since the "enchantments" had failed, Balaam now went direct to look down on Israel from Mount Peor (Num. 23:28). As he looked, he was particularly impressed with the orderliness of the encampment. Earlier in the Book of Numbers, we learned that the nation was divided into four quarters. The four divisions of the tribe of Levi were encamped immediately around the Tabernacle. Outside of these four divisions were the remaining 12 tribes, also divided into four groupings of three each. As Balaam looked down on this immense host of people, he was impressed with their order, organization, and control. If even one quarter was so impressive (Num. 23:10), imagine how impressive all four quarters were!

Comment: Please explain the statement that Balaam "went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments."

Reply: The other times Balaam preceded the "curse," which proved to be a blessing, with his own method of getting in the right mood in order to prophesy. Like an enchanter, a wizard, or a necromancer, he preceded his vision with a ritual. This time he realized that resorting to methods he had used successfully back in his mother country of Aram would not be effective with Balak's request. In other words, because his customary method was ineffective in his first two attempts, he now went direct to make the pronouncement as the Spirit would move him.

Num. 24:3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

Num. 24:4 He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

"Falling into a trance, but having his eyes open," Balaam "saw the vision of the Almighty" God. He got into a trance somewhat as Saul did in his pursuit to kill David. Also, earlier Saul had come in contact with the school of the prophets, and next thing, much to their amazement, he was momentarily prophesying like them (1 Sam. 10:1-12; 19:20-24). Just as Balaam was trying to get information for Balak, so perhaps Saul thought he could get information through the school of the prophets as to where David was, but Saul was frustrated in this desire. James 4:7 tells us not to parley with Satan: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." If we try to reason with Satan, we will lose the contest. Instead we are to rebuke him sternly and abruptly.

Num. 24:5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!

Num. 24:6 As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the LORD hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters.

Balaam's pronouncement began with a couplet likening Israel's tents to goodly trees laden with fruit. In other words, in spite of his wrong motive, Balaam was very impressed in beholding the nation from Mount Peor.

Q: Were Balaam's words mechanical and, therefore, from the Lord and not his own?

A: Yes, but he was truly impressed with what he saw. At the same time, he was defeated and frustrated in his attempt to pronounce a curse.

Num. 24:7 He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted.

The ultimate future king of Israel will be "higher than Agag." Agag, the king of Amalek, sometimes pictures Satan. Therefore, this prophecy is saying that Jesus, the Messiah, will be higher than the god of this world, Satan. Jesus will overcome, defeat, and destroy Satan, the antitypical Agag, and his minions.

Incidentally, "Agag" is really Gog, for the vowels are supplied. Thus the king of the Amalekites is a prototype of Gog at the end of both the Gospel Age and the Kingdom Age. The enemies of Israel who die in Jacob's Trouble will be buried in a cemetery called Hamon-gog (see Ezek. 39:11-15). Thus Haman in the Book of Esther, who by birth was an Agagite, is appropriately a picture of Gog.

Num. 24:8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows.

Again the "unicorn" is either a wild ox or a rhinoceros, that is, a wild, untamable animal that is like a battle tank. In bringing Israel out of Egypt, God manifested great power in dividing the Red Sea and doing mighty miracles.

Israel will "eat up the [enemy] nations, ... break their bones, and pierce them through with ... arrows." In other words, any form of resistance to the Kingdom of God during Messiah's reign will be utterly defeated, for every knee must bow. Psalm 45:3-5 shows Jesus' going forth as a mighty conqueror: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."

Num. 24:9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee.

When the Kingdom is established, it will be secure throughout the age, having God's protection. For a short time in the Little Season, Satan will appear to have regained control, but his efforts will be to no avail.

Num. 24:10 And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together: and Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times.

In anger, King Balak “smote his hands together,” abruptly terminating the services of Balaam. When a king or Pharaoh clapped his hands, his attendants hearkened immediately to see what the king’s wishes were. After he issued the order, the ruler clapped his hands the second time to signify that the discussion had ended and that his attendants were to depart.

Num. 24:11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

The king was telling Balaam, “You had better flee before I get really mad.”

Num. 24:12 And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying,

Num. 24:13 If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the LORD saith, that will I speak?

Num. 24:14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.

Num. 24:15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said:

Now, speaking mechanically through the Holy Spirit, Balaam began to talk right into the face of King Balak.

Num. 24:16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open:

Num. 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

The prophecy of verse 17 that a Star would come out of Jacob and a Scepter of authority would arise out of Israel is well known. The Scepter will “smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.” Of course Jesus is the “Star out of Jacob.” No doubt this prophecy, in connection with the prophecy of Daniel 9:24,25, was one reason the three wise men traveled to Israel, saying, “We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matt. 2:2). In other words, they were abiding in the East, and when they saw his star, they traveled to Israel to worship the King of Israel.

Balaam was probably of the lineage of Shem but not of Abraham. Arphaxad was a son of Shem. “Sheth” is Seth, one of the sons of the other lineage that will not be honored. For instance, in the Koran, the bedouin (Muslim) peoples of the Middle East apply Old Testament prophecies to themselves. They look back to Abraham as their father but trace their lineage through Ishmael and the sons of Keturah after Sarah’s death, feeling this line was superior. Also, the Muslim lineage goes back to both Shem and Abraham but not through Isaac. Verse 17 is informing us that the Muslim religion is doomed to defeat.

Num. 24:18 And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

In going to the land of Israel, Moses had to circumvent Edom and Moab because those peoples refused permission for the Israelites to travel through their countries. Elsewhere God said that Edom and Moab would be an everlasting possession for the Edomites and the Moabites, respectively. Now this part of the prophecy reveals that David, the progenitor of the Messiah, would inflict real damage. He conquered Petra (Sela) and Moab for a while. Verse 17 indicates that the northern half of Moab will never be restored to the Moabites, for the “corners of Moab” were smitten, or lopped off, and subsequently given to the tribe of Reuben. Therefore, Israel will ultimately possess Transjordan but not Edom, Ammon (to the east and north), or the southern portion of Moab. Notice that verse 18 does not say Edom will be an *everlasting* possession. Edom was just temporarily defeated.

Num. 24:19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

Num. 24:20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever.

Saul, Israel’s first king, inflicted damage—almost a mortal wound—on the Amalekites. Subsequently David was successful in defeating the remnant of the Amalekites, so that they existed no longer.

“Amalek was the first of the nations,” that is, the first people to become a nation. Amalek covered a tremendous territory. From one standpoint, the Amalekites are considered to be the greatest power in history. Amalek’s “latter end shall be that he perish for ever.” As a nation, the Amalekites ceased to exist in David’s day, but there were individual survivors, Haman being one.

According to prophecy, Egypt will never rise again as a superpower. Prior to the universal empire of Babylon, first Egypt and then Assyria were superpowers.

Num. 24:21 And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

Num. 24:22 Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

In prophesying about the Kenites, Balaam said, “Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.” He was referring to Petra, where the Kenites occupied high, inaccessible caves that prevented them from being ferreted out. Any army who had intentions of routing the Kenites from their caves had to go up single file and thus was thwarted. To defeat the Kenites required an immense host with plenty of supplies that could sustain a siege. Finally King Nebuchadnezzar was able to ferret out the Kenites. Later the Kenites returned from their Babylonian captivity to again inhabit Petra. Still later the Roman army under Trajan defeated them.

Today no one lives in Petra, and it has been desolate for about 200 years. However, when the resurrection takes place, the Kenites will be raised in their homeland. Edom, too, will come back into existence but as a subdued nation underneath the authority of Messiah. The same land will be repopled by the Edomites, who are in the tomb. In other words, Edom and part of Moab have been preserved for their inheritance in the Kingdom Age.

Num. 24:23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!

Num. 24:24 And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.

Depending on context, Chittim can refer to Cyprus, Spain, or England. The Hebrews descended from Eber, who was of the lineage of Shem (Gen. 10:21,24,25). Those of Eber—that is, in the days when he was a patriarch—lived in a large territory of Saudi Arabia, most of which is desert.

Num. 24:25 And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place: and Balak also went his way.

Balaam returned to his homeland, yet we find out later in Numbers (31:16) that before he left, he gave advice to King Balak along the following lines. “The only way you can curse this people is through seduction. Get them to worship your god, and the best way to do this is to have the daughters of Moab go out and seduce the Israelite men and wean them away from their God to Chemosh, the sun god.”

Revelation 2:14 mentions Balaam: “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.” Balaam is a picture of the ancient pagan priesthood of Rome who, under Constantine, joined the Catholic religion. With the infusion of Oriental religion came the concept of the Trinity, which is an ancient type of worship not found in Judaism. (Egypt, too, had a Trinity.) In antitype, Balaam represents how God’s people were seduced from the one true God, Jehovah, into the worship of the sun. Of course the true Sun is Jesus, the Sun of righteousness who shall arise, Messiah and his coterie (Mal. 4:2). The false sun is Papacy. Stated another way, there is the false nominal ecclesiastical realm, and there are the true stars, sun, and moon. Through the influence of Balaam, the original pure faith became adulterated. Many were seduced by “that woman Jezebel ... to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols” (Rev. 2:20). Despite the cruel persecution under Pagan Rome, Satan could not stamp out the Church in the second (Smyrna) period. When, in fact, opposition strengthened the Christian faith, he pursued the tactic of seduction by joining the Church and becoming its head. He displaced Christ, taking his seat through Papacy.

Num. 25:1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

The vale of Shittim, where the Israelites were encamped, was so named for the acacia trees sprinkled on that part of the plain.

Num. 25:2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

Num. 25:3 And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

Comment: Balaam’s advice to King Balak was taking hold in that “the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.”

Reply: Yes, and it was by the consent of those who fell into the temptation. Here we have an illustration that the Adversary’s best method of attack is through the flesh. The result was not merely the illicit relationship between the sons of Israel and the daughters of Moab but even a

religious recognition of the god of Moab (Chemosh, the sun god).

For the king of Moab to have called for Balaam to come down to curse Israel, there must have been some kind of previous rapport between the two peoples. Balaam came from the large, rather indistinct area to the north called Aram.

Since Balaam was forbidden by God to curse Israel, perhaps he felt that he would not inherit rebuke if he cursed the Israelites *indirectly* by merely making a suggestion. However, in taking the suggestion, the Moabites were following Balaam's advice, and hence he was just as responsible.

Num. 25:4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

Num. 25:5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

Num. 25:6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

What was the purpose of beheading those who fell into this temptation? According to the Law, those who committed fornication were guilty of death. It was a common practice back there to hang heads on the wall of the city or the temple; for example, Saul was victimized in that manner. The heads were hung "against the *sun*" as a rebuke to the sun god Chemosh.

When Moses said, "Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor," he passed the responsibility to the judges, who, in turn, had to make sure that those who were familiar with the guilty ones meted out the punishment to their kin. The same principle was demonstrated when Moses asked early in the wilderness wanderings who was on God's side. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men" (Exod. 32:26-28). The children of Levi slew those of their kindred who defaulted at the time of the worship of the golden calf. The same kind of decision making took place with the Israelites on other occasions as well. Even parents had to participate in the stoning of their own children if the latter were guilty of death. And this is the way it should be from God's standpoint, but today parents are considered noble for defending a child who is guilty of a gross crime instead of turning him or her in to the proper authorities.

"And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses and ... all the congregation." This act was exceedingly brazen and coarse. Instead of carrying on with the Midianitish woman under cover or at a distance, the Israelite brought her right into the camp while the people were weeping in contrition.

Usually the women were the ones who wept at the door of the Tabernacle (and of the Temple later). If a son was disobedient and worthy of death, the mother felt the loss of her child and the trauma. The point is that there were different types of weeping. One type stirred up the Lord's anger, and another type was excusable. Circumstances and heart motives were the

determining factors.

Num. 25:7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

Num. 25:8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

Num. 25:9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

How sad that such a loss of life was necessary so near the end of the 40 years of wilderness wanderings and so near the entrance into the Promised Land! Similarly, it is sad when some who have been long years in the truth default. Certainly Phinehas had the right spirit of righteous indignation when he “thrust both of them through.” The lineage was Levi, Kohath, Amram, Aaron, Eleazar, and Phinehas.

Q: Moses married a Midianitish woman. Would the Israelites have felt they had the liberty to do likewise because of his example?

A: First, Moses married Zipporah before the giving of the Law. Second, she was also an Ethiopian. Third, Moses did not bow to her god(s). Fourth, he was separated from the Israelites in that circumstance and, therefore, could not have married an Israelite.

Comment: Psalm 106:28–31 reads, “They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked him [God] to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them. Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed. And *that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.*”

Reply: What a nice commendation!

In the interaction with the Midianites, conditions were getting worse and worse and were coming to a climax. If Phinehas had not dealt with the situation, it would have involved a larger number of Israelites. Putting the javelin through the two stopped the plague abruptly. With the nation’s witnessing the righteous indignation of Phinehas, his action had a curative effect.

Comment: 1 Corinthians 10:8 states the number of Israelites who died as 23,000 instead of 24,000. “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.”

Reply: What at first appears to be a mistake may not be one. For one thing, verse 9 does not say they all died in “one day.” Twenty-three thousand could have died in one day and a thousand more another day.

Num. 25:10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 25:11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

Num. 25:12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:

Num. 25:13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

Here we are given a hint that the priesthood would come down through Phinehas, that he would succeed Eleazar eventually (after Ithamar).

Num. 25:14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites.

Num. 25:15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian.

Those who were involved, Zimri and Cozbi, were two leading personalities.

Num. 25:16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 25:17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them:

Num. 25:18 For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.

Num. 26:1 And it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying,

Num. 26:2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

This method of numbering was similar to the numbering of the children of Israel at the beginning of the 40 years in the wilderness. In fact, as we will see, when the numbering was summed up (Num. 26:51), the total closely corresponded with those of the older generation who died in the wilderness.

Num. 26:3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

Num. 26:4 Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

Num. 26:5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites:

Num. 26:6 Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.

Num. 26:7 These are the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty.

Num. 26:8 And the sons of Pallu; Eliab.

Num. 26:9 And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against

Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:

Num. 26:10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.

Verse 10 is a proof text that Korah died when the earth opened.

Num. 26:11 Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not.

Num. 26:12 The sons of Simeon after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites:

Num. 26:13 Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.

Num. 26:14 These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

In the breastplate, the order was Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun and then Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. Here the numbering that took place just before the Israelites entered the Promised Land started with Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. Joshua 4:12 gives the order of march as they prepared to enter the Promised Land: "And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel." In that case, Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasseh preceded the rest of the host.

Num. 26:15 The children of Gad after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites: of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites:

Num. 26:16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites:

Num. 26:17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites.

Num. 26:18 These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

Thus far the numbering involved Reuben, Simeon, and Gad and their respective related families. Of the three tribes, Reuben was their chief, or elder.

Num. 26:19 The sons of Judah were Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

Num. 26:20 And the sons of Judah after their families were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.

Num. 26:21 And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.

Num. 26:22 These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

The breastplate groupings were followed but not the sequence of the groupings.

Num. 26:23 Of the sons of Issachar after their families: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of

Pua, the family of the Punites:

Num. 26:24 Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.

Num. 26:25 These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

Num. 26:26 Of the sons of Zebulun after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.

Num. 26:27 These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

Num. 26:28 The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim.

Manasseh was mentioned first because he was the firstborn, but in the breastplate positions of honor, Ephraim excelled over Manasseh.

Num. 26:29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites.

Num. 26:30 These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:

Num. 26:31 And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites:

Num. 26:32 And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.

Num. 26:33 And Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

Num. 26:34 These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred.

Num. 26:35 These are the sons of Ephraim after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.

Num. 26:36 And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.

Num. 26:37 These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph after their families.

Num. 26:38 The sons of Benjamin after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites:

Num. 26:39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

Num. 26:40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites:

and of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

Num. 26:41 These are the sons of Benjamin after their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred.

Num. 26:42 These are the sons of Dan after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan after their families.

Num. 26:43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

Num. 26:44 Of the children of Asher after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Beriites.

Num. 26:45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites.

Num. 26:46 And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah.

Num. 26:47 These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

Num. 26:48 Of the sons of Naphtali after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites:

Num. 26:49 Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites.

Num. 26:50 These are the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred.

Num. 26:51 These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

While the various groupings differed in number, they were around 50,000 each. If the 12 tribes are multiplied by 50,000, the result is 600,000, which is very close to the actual total of 601,730 Israelites 20 years of age and older at the *end* of the 40 years.

Comment: Numbers 1:46 gives the number of Israelites 20 years old and upward at the *beginning* of the 40 years: “Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty [603,550].” In other words, the totals were very close in number with only 1,820 more Israelites in the beginning.

Reply: The difference was very slight. In picturing a type, the earlier account is favored for the symbolism. Judah was the princely tribe, as shown in Genesis 49:10, “The sceptre shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” Therefore, the original numbering, in which Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun were grouped first, had the more significant symbolism. When we read the groupings here, we find that Reuben was listed ahead of Judah, but the cohorts of each were the same. Another difference was that instead of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, which was the sequence in the jewels of the breastplate and the original numbering, here Manasseh, the firstborn, was first.

Num. 26:52 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 26:53 Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names.

Num. 26:54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him.

Num. 26:55 Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.

Num. 26:56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

Num. 26:57 And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites.

Num. 26:58 These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begat Amram.

Num. 26:59 And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

The lineage of Moses was buried until this point. Amram and Jochebed were his parents, and Aaron and Miriam were his brother and sister, respectively. Their names are interesting in connection with chronology. Morton Edgar showed that the Israelites stayed in Egypt for 215 years, not 430 years. The 430 years extended from the time of the Abrahamic Covenant to the Exodus, and only 215 of those years were spent in Egypt.

Num. 26:60 And unto Aaron was born Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Num. 26:61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD.

Num. 26:62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

Num. 26:63 These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.

Num. 26:64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

Num. 26:65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

And of course Eleazar, Ithamar, and Phinehas were left, but for the sake of a picture, we consider the survivors to be just Joshua and Caleb. Generally speaking, the earlier picture is the purer one because corruption and deterioration occur over time. The Tabernacle is an example,

for it became corrupted, and so did Solomon's Temple. Therefore, the start of these pictures or designs is to be considered for accurate types.

Num. 27:1 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

Num. 27:2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

Num. 27:3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Num. 27:4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.

Num. 27:5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

When the father Zelophehad died, five daughters survived him but no sons. Under the Mosaic Law, which was relatively new at this time, having been given approximately 40 years earlier, the inheritance went to the sons with the oldest son getting a double portion. For instance, if there were two sons, the inheritance was divided into thirds. The oldest got two thirds, and second son got one third. But now a problem arose, for Zelophehad had only daughters. The five daughters felt they were entitled to the inheritance.

In pleading their cause, the daughters said that Zelophehad had died of Adamic sin (that is, of a natural death) and not of a plague or punishment because of disobedience to the leadings of Moses. Zelophehad's lineage went all the way back to Joseph, who had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The names of the five daughters are given. In regard to "Noah," the "ah" ending in a Hebrew name is usually feminine, although it can be either masculine or feminine.

It is peculiar that we are given the name of this man, his lineage, and the names of the five daughters. Some have felt that this incident is a type. However, it is hard to nail down the meanings of the names of the five daughters and their father because scholars have such divergent opinions. The difficulty in determining the meanings of the names is notable, for usually there is unanimity of opinion.

Does anyone have an idea as to what this incident would signify in antitype—if indeed it is a type?

Comment: The number "five" brings to mind the five wise virgins, who will get an inheritance.

Reply: Yes, it is true there were five wise and five foolish virgins, and this incident with Zelophehad's daughters took place just before the Israelites finished their wilderness wanderings and crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. The wise virgins took an extra reserve of oil in their lamps, whereas the foolish virgins took no extra oil and their lamps were going out. At the end of the parable, the foolish virgins, recognizing their lack, wanted the wise virgins to share the extra oil. The wise virgins replied, "Not so. We have only enough oil for ourselves." Then the foolish virgins were advised to return to the marketplace of trouble and persecution to get the necessary supply of oil which they were negligent in obtaining earlier.

After getting the oil, the foolish virgins went to the door, wanting to go in to the marriage with Jesus, but the door was barred. Other Scriptures show that they will get a blessing, nevertheless, and that they will attend the marriage supper, the meal *after* the wedding.

The suggestion put forth is that Zelophehad's five daughters could possibly represent the wise virgin class. Although that is not necessarily the proper application, the setting of this incident does seem to suggest a prophetic picture, for it occurred just prior to the Israelites' entering the Promised Land. We are now living in the antitypical end-time period of the Gospel Age, and the Scriptures show that Jesus' reign will soon begin. Whoever the five daughters represent, they would seem to picture something that will take place dispensationally at the end of the age because the type occurred in the end-time period of the Wilderness of Sin(ai). The very detail of the incident, with the extended sequence of inheritance and lineage, seems to indicate that the names of the five daughters are significant. However, at this time, a definitive meaning cannot be assigned to each name. Scholars and concordances are divided with numerous definitions. The problem is to determine which of the two classes (the wise virgins or the foolish ones) is being referred to by the five daughters. Even the name Zelophehad is mysterious. The Hebrew would have to be studied carefully.

Comment: The reasoning of the five daughters was logical and wise.

Reply: They advanced a just cause to Moses.

Num. 27:6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 27:7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

Num. 27:8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

Num. 27:9 And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

Num. 27:10 And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

Num. 27:11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

This unusual circumstance where a father had no male heir was not previously codified in the Law of Moses. God responded through Moses, saying that the five daughters had a good case and that their cause was just. Then a far-reaching line of inheritance was presented for a man who died: son(s), daughter(s), brother(s), uncle(s), and nearest relative (nephew, niece, etc.). Thus the situation was covered if a man had no children at all. The point was that the inheritance was to remain within the tribe.

Comment: This arrangement is illustrated in the New Testament by the principle "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39). As far as possible, the call stays within the family.

Reply: The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, "I see in you both your mother and your grandmother." "Unto you [the consecrated, first], and to your children" is the promise given.

Of course the children may not respond, but at least they are considered first, before the call goes out into the highways and byways.

The Law also contained a provision for a childless woman whose husband died. A brother of the deceased husband could marry her to raise up seed and, hopefully, produce a male heir. But in the ruling here, God provided for a case where a man had neither sons nor daughters.

While these laws were disobeyed after Moses died, God dealt with the obedient of the nation. Nevertheless, even though the majority disobeyed, it is unusual that the Jews have retained their identity—at least until very recently. Many other peoples have been assimilated over the centuries but not the Jew. Hence the Jewish race stands out as being particularly preserved. Some feel the preservation of their identity was pictured by the burning bush that was not consumed.

When we consider the five daughters, one point is that all of their names seem to be misfits. It is like the situation with David when he was anointed to be king but Saul was still alive. For several years, David had to flee for his life as King Saul pursued him. The Scriptures inform us that David's followers at this time were all misfits in one way or another. The lesson is that those who come to the Lord realize their own shortcomings. There are different ways of being a misfit in society: in temperament, in character, by having a blemish that is a weakness, etc. A person can even be an intellectual and yet be a misfit. Jesus said, "Those who think they are whole do not need a physician." Thus he has come to gather his Church of those who recognize they need help along one line or another. Such a realization helps to keep this class humble no matter what talents are possessed. As they try to serve the Lord to the extent of their ability, they are rewarded proportionately even now—and much more exceedingly if faithful unto death. There are different levels of reward, for among those who make their calling and election sure, "one star differeth from another star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41). It will be a great honor for any who make the Little Flock and receive immortality—even if they are of the least spiritual tribe. Imagine having immortality so that we could not die and would be able to give life to others! At any rate, all of the virgins are misfits in the present life—not just the five wise virgins but all of them.

Comment: If the five daughters represent the Great Company, the Lot picture provides a Scriptural precedent for their asking for an inheritance. When Lot was pulled out of Sodom, he asked to go to the little city of Zoar (Gen. 19:17–22).

Reply: Lot is a definite type.

Num. 27:12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel.

Num. 27:13 And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

Num. 27:14 For ye rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes: that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

God told Moses to go up into Mount Abarim, which is a mountain range rather than one particular peak. One clue is the "im" plural ending. The Abarim mountain range runs north and south. The vantage point from which Moses viewed the Promised Land is given two names: Mount Pisgah and Nebo. The same concept is illustrated by Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb versus Ras Susafeh, which is the particular place where Moses stood to read the Law to the

nation of Israel down on the plain.

God was telling Moses that it was time for him to pass off the scene. In a similar manner, Aaron was previously told to go up into Mount Hor where he would die (Num. 33:38,39). There the garments he wore as high priest were transferred to his son Eleazar. Moses could not enter the Promised Land because he had smitten the rock twice and said, “Must we [Aaron and I] bring forth water?” Even though Moses was faithful in all his house, he pictured a Second Death class in this particular incident (Heb. 3:5). Unfortunately, some who accept Jesus as their Savior later change their mind and thus deny the Lord by *willfully* breaking their covenant. For this reason, he advised us to sit down first and count the cost. We will be given the necessary strength, but we are to realize that the contract is binding.

Num. 27:15 And Moses spake unto the LORD, saying,

Num. 27:16 Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

Num. 27:17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

What a wonderful attitude! Moses was a genuine leader and a true shepherd concerned for the welfare of the sheep after he would de cease. Since Moses (and Joshua and Caleb) had the faith to go into the Promised Land 38 years earlier, we can be sure this prohibition against his entering now was a disappointment. Similarly, many Christians have a disappointment at the end of their lives as a polishing-off experience.

Comment: Moses’ concern for others, desiring the Lord to provide a leader and shepherd, reminds us of Jesus’ attitude on the Cross when he committed his mother into John’s care.

In his humility, Moses was composed and expressed a desire for a man to lead the Israelites. He even described the responsibilities: to “go out before them, ... go in before them, ... lead them out, and ... bring them in.” In subsequent verses, God answered his request.

Comment: This is the second time in the Book of Numbers that the expression is used about Jehovah’s being “the God of the spirits [souls] of all flesh.” The Hebrew word *ruach* is usually translated “breath” but can mean “soul.”

Reply: The “spirit” in this sense is the individual as a soul. Every human being who has ever existed on this planet is recorded in God’s book of remembrance. As to what one’s destiny will be, a lot depends on how the person reacts to providence as it occurs. All human beings are recorded in God’s “computer,” so that when they die, they can be resurrected with the same thinking and identity. Jesus tasted death for every man, for every being.

God is a Mastermind in such a comprehensive way that nothing is out of His control. He may permit evil, but He knows when and if it should be terminated and to what extent and how.

Num. 27:18 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

Num. 27:19 And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

Num. 27:20 And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

Num. 27:21 And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation.

God answered Moses' request by designating Joshua to lead the Israelites henceforth. In Joshua, God saw the necessary leadership qualities, for in entering the Promised Land, the Israelites would encounter enemies to conquer.

Comment: It must have warmed Moses' heart very much to hear the Lord select Joshua because they had had such a good relationship during the years in the wilderness.

Earlier God spoke to Moses face to face, but here He spoke to Joshua *through* Moses. In addition, He instructed that Joshua should seek counsel through Eleazar, the high priest, "after the judgment of Urim" when critical moments arose, such as in battle, moral decisions, matters of judgment, and difficult problems. God's thinking would be revealed through "Urim." (Usually the description was "Urim and Thummim," but here it was just "Urim.") The Urim and Thummim were the jewels on the breastplate of the high priest. Generally speaking, Urim represented light or perfections, and Thummim represented darkness or sunset (instead of sunrise). Therefore, the Urim was a "yes" (the positive), and the Thummim was a "no" (the negative). When advice was sought, a Urim answer meant, "Yes, do that." The Thummim, or "no" answer, usually followed disobedience and indicated the need for correction. God was telling Moses that He would be with Joshua in a very positive way. Depending on the occasion, a voice supplemented the Urim answer of the 12 jewels.

God instructed Moses to give the "glad hand" to Joshua publicly, that is, before the whole nation. Moses was to inform the people that he would die and that Joshua would be their new leader. Perhaps Moses put his arm around Joshua's shoulders and hugged him to manifest God's approval. Moses would be saying in effect, "God will deal with Joshua as He dealt with me, so look to Joshua for advice." God told Moses to "put some of thine honour upon him [Joshua]" so that the Israelites would be obedient.

The communication and rapport between God and Moses was tender, even though, because of the age in which Moses lived, he could not be a "son." Had Moses been born after Jesus' death on the Cross, we can be sure he would be part of the Little Flock. Who knows what Moses' position will be after the Kingdom Age?

Num. 27:22 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:

Num. 27:23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

While Moses might have put his arm around Joshua in the sight of the people, he also spoke to Joshua personally, putting both hands on his shoulders as he gave the "charge" of responsibilities.

"Joshua" means Savior, Jehoshua, whom the Jews identify with the Messiah of promise. (The Jews pronounce "J" as a "Y.") In his experiences, Joshua represented, generally, the risen Christ in the Kingdom. In the wilderness wanderings, Moses usually represented Jesus, for Aaron pictured God. Moses was the mediator of the old Law Covenant, and Jesus is to be the

Mediator of the New (Law) Covenant, as indicated by Moses' words, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15). However, at the juncture here in Numbers 28 where Moses and Joshua were mentioned together and Joshua was being instructed by the Urim, he did not picture Jesus, for the Church does not instruct Jesus. (The jewels on the breastplate of judgment represent the 12 spiritual tribes of Israel, that is, the Church.)

In this particular setting, then, Joshua represents the work of the Ancient Worthies, who will receive instruction from the Church (Isa. 2:3). Ezekiel's Temple shows the Kingdom work is twofold: civil and clerical. (Incidentally, we would love to have a model of Ezekiel's Temple, for with a model, we could easily give 50 sermons at the drop of a hat.) The sons of Zadok will comprise the priesthood in the future Third Temple in Jerusalem. However, access to the Temple will be relatively limited because people will have to travel to Jerusalem. Therefore, under the tutelage of the invisible Christ and the Church, the Ancient Worthies, being dispersed, or stationed, as princes throughout the earth, will be the administrators of the New (Law) Covenant. The word, or commandments, received from spiritual Zion will be communicated to the people verbally and/or in writing. Thus Joshua represents the Ancient Worthies here, and Eleazar pictures the Zadok priesthood.

Num. 28:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Before we start this chapter, a few comments are in order. Numbers 28 and 29 are one scenario, and they embrace all services except, uniquely, one that will be named later. It is important to realize what is omitted because these two chapters are an enlargement, a further revelation, of God's purposes and plans through sacrifices as types. As Numbers 28 develops step by step, it gets so complicated that it probably has never been a class study. This chapter involves everything previously learned about the sacrifices in *Tabernacle Shadows* and in the Bible up to this point.

The Bible was written in its own way; for instance, with these services, Leviticus 1 was followed by Leviticus 2, and Chapter 2 was followed by Chapter 3, etc., so that we learned about the sacrifices step by step. Stated another way, the Lord introduced different pictures step by step so that we could assimilate them in that order. (Sequential studying and understanding may not occur initially, however, for sometimes the keys to mysteries are found by first thinking upon the known and then reasoning back to the unknown.)

When the various services and ordinances of Numbers 28 and 29 were performed in Old Testament times, the accounts were simply read and the instructions followed. Hence there was no problem with the performance, but the significance and meaning of this multitude of services were another matter.

As we start to study Chapter 28, we will see a pattern. Not only were these services performed in the past, but they will be representatively performed in the Kingdom as well—and explained to the Jewish people. Of course back in Old Testament times, the Israelites were completely mystified as to the meaning of the services, but God wanted the ceremonial features to be carried out exactly as instructed.

The services of Chapters 28 and 29 will be explained in the Kingdom—and probably with audiovisual aids to facilitate the understanding. For instance, when an animal is offered, a picture will be used to show what the animal represents. Therefore, as the sacrifice is being explained, the antitype will be seen.

The main purpose of these two chapters is for the Kingdom Age. In fact, if these sacrifices were

not at least representatively performed in the Kingdom, the impression would be left in the minds of the people that the sacrifices were redundant, foolish, and extravagant. Therefore, it will be necessary for the people to see the depth of the meaning of the sufferings of The Christ, particularly of Jesus, the Head.

The sequence of offerings as presented in Numbers 28:1–15 is (1) the daily offering, (2) the sabbath (weekly) offering, and (3) the new moon (monthly) offering.

Num. 28:2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.

The altar in the Court is where food was put for God's consumption. Stated another way, food was put on the table (altar) for God to eat, but it was consumed by fire. When the offering is considered as a meal, it should be viewed not just from the natural standpoint but also from the spiritual standpoint.

The sacrifices were (1) a sweet savour (2) made by fire. In the favorable sense, fire in the Old Testament represented God's acceptance. An example occurred in Elijah's life. The prophet said to the captain who was sent with 50 men to apprehend him, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty" (2 Kings 1:10). The fire that subsequently came down from heaven and consumed the 50 showed God's acceptance and recognition of Elijah as a prophet. When an angel appeared and Gideon prepared meat and unleavened cakes for him, the angel touched the food with the rod in his hand. Immediately the meat and the cakes were consumed by fire, again showing God's acceptance (Judg. 6:11–21). Therefore, a burnt offering basically meant *acceptance*. Of course the animal's being first flayed (skinned) and eviscerated resulted in a sweet odor when it was wholly burnt (at first, that is, until it became charred). Usually the burnt offerings stayed on the altar all day, being slowly consumed. Additional offerings consisted of sensitive organs that just evaporated. The carcass that was burnt at the beginning of each day represented God's acceptance of the different procedures that would follow (if done in compliance with the instructions given).

Num. 28:3 And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering.

"Day by day" means daily—hence the two lambs were a daily offering. The daily offering is mentioned in Daniel 12:11, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." The daily offering was the bottom line because it was performed *every day* of the year. Thus this offering was the most prominent offering and yet the simplest—two lambs. And these two lambs were "for a continual burnt offering."

The Israelites understood that the burning pictured God's consumption of the offering because that explanation is clearly given in several places. However, because the particulars, the numerous details, confused the mind, the reactions varied among the Israelites so that either (1) the sacrifices were performed out of duty love or (2) faith reached out and said that God had a good reason for all the details. In the latter case, the sacrifices were acceptable.

Num. 28:4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even;

Num. 28:5 And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth

part of an hin of beaten oil.

Num. 28:6 It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

One lamb was sacrificed in the morning and one in the evening. Each lamb represented Jesus, the *Lamb* of God. In other offerings, a bullock was the prime animal offered, but why not in this case?

Comment: We are to remember Jesus first thing in the morning and the last thing at night.

Reply: That is one reason. We ask for forgiveness of sins and for his blessing and guidance at the beginning of each day, and then at the end of the day, we ask for forgiveness of sins already committed, known and unknown. As a vicarious sacrifice, Jesus was the sacrificial Lamb. In simplicity, the Passover lamb was similar to the daily burnt offering except that for the Passover, one lamb was offered for each household and its blood was sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts. In both cases, a lamb was of primary importance as the offering.

The burnt offering remained on the altar all day. It was a *whole* burnt offering, being entirely on the altar, bones and all, except for the hide and entrails. This offering was a *continual reminder of the primacy of Christ*.

When Numbers 28 is read with all its complexity of detail, a continual burnt offering with one lamb stands out for its simplicity. In an ascending scale of offerings, a ram was more significant than a lamb. And a mature goat ranked higher than a kid of the goats. Similarly, a heifer or a bull was weighted above a calf. The list of offerings in this chapter starts with a simple, basic offering. The “lamb” emphasized the sinlessness of Christ, who was without spot or blemish. Notice that only lambs were described as being “without spot” (verse 3), the purpose being to call particular attention to Jesus’ being like a lamb and a dove: loving, harmless, and meek. Moreover, because he is approachable, sinners are attracted to him.

With a lamb being offered, another point of emphasis was the end of Jesus’ ministry when he was sheared as a lamb. As a lamb before its shearers is dumb, so Jesus went to his death (Isa. 53:7). Moreover, the characteristic of a lamb was displayed by Jesus as a boy at age 12 when he stayed behind in the Temple to direct questions to the “doctors of divinity.” When his parents discovered he was missing three days later, they returned to Jerusalem to find him. Meanwhile, at the Temple, the religious leaders were amazed at Jesus’ *answers*. Not only were his questions in-depth, but when *they* questioned *him*—a young lad of 12 years—he responded with great wisdom. Jesus’ innocency in asking the scribes and Pharisees questions showed that he was meek and teachable. That is why he even rebuked his mother, saying to Mary, “How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49). The Scriptures tell that he grew up as a tender plant, increasing in wisdom and stature before God and man (Luke 2:52). Those who were near Jesus in this young state could see he was very different. They marveled at his disposition, for with his talent, he was meek and yet so mature for his age. In other words, meekness and maturity do not usually mix, especially with intellectuals. Jesus continued to grow and mature, and when he presented himself at Jordan at age 30, he was a man in his primacy.

In regard to how the lamb aspect applied to Jesus, it is true that a lamb was slain before it was put on the altar. The act of slaying the animal—cutting the throat, beheading it, or whatever—pictures consecration, but the consuming by fire was gradual. The tender Lamb grew up, submitting himself in harmony with the instruction of Scripture. Starting at age 30, he obediently performed his ministry, and at the very end, he maintained the attitude of a lamb

dumb before its shearers. This very quality of Jesus as God's beloved Son is particularly the aspect of a lamb that applied with the daily offering.

In connection with the lamb, appurtenances were to be offered. For instance, the lamb was to be accompanied by the tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meal (meal or cereal) offering mingled with the fourth part of a hin of beaten oil. In other words, the daily offering started with the simplest animal, and what accompanied an animal offering was mathematically apportioned to the size of the animal.

The clue to understanding this chapter of Numbers with all of the mathematics is to start with the ABCs, to go step by step. According to the particular animal being offered, the Law prescribed mathematically what would accompany the offering. For example, there were two vessels, one the size of the tenth part of an ephah and the other the size of the fourth part of a hin. The measured quantities of oil and flour were mixed in a bowl to make dough that was put with the lamb. The smaller quantity, the quarter part of a hin of beaten oil, blended with the larger tenth part of an ephah of refined flour, comprised the meal or cereal offering.

The flour, a food picturing one's life, was to be pure and refined (not bleached or lumpy). The refining of the flour, the evening out of the lumps, signifies the perfecting of the character of the individual, the yielding to God's instruction. Through obedience, we are to bring our lives, as much as possible, into harmony with the principles of Scripture. The result is a rounded-out, mature character. Of course Jesus was perfect and without spot. Nevertheless, he needed instruction, and the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus was made perfect as a High Priest through suffering (Heb. 2:10; 5:8). In other words, to be qualified as High Priest, he needed additional experiences to round him out. The flour represents the *performance* of the individual, and the *beaten oil* pictures the necessary *disciplinary crushing experiences*. (Olives are crushed to produce an exuding oil.) In addition to the perfecting of character and the developing of patience and meekness, other benefits come through the ministry of discipline such as enlightenment. When we are disciplined by God and obey, we begin to understand and have an insight into His Word. Olive oil is not only a food but also a fuel for lighting and an unguent. These additional qualities blend well with the flour, for one who has had severe experiences is apt to be soothing, comforting, and sympathetic to others. All of these lessons are taught by the meal offering that accompanied the lamb. (We are trying to show spiritual lessons in connection with the mathematical aspect.)

Num. 28:7 And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD for a drink offering.

A drink offering also accompanied the daily lamb. The cereal offering consisted of flour and oil, and the drink offering consisted of strong wine. Wine is usually a picture of the joys of the truth. In other words, there is an accompanying blessing if one sees that he is suffering for righteousness' sake and/or for the truth's sake. When Paul and Silas were in prison cells with their backs bleeding from being whipped, they sang hymns with joy and praised God for being accounted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. They interpreted their experiences as being directly related to cross bearing and suffering.

The strong wine of the drink offering pictures the suffering aspect, the pouring out of one's life. (Wine represents blood in some respects.) Jesus poured out his life. Of course the climax occurred when his side was pierced on the Cross and blood and water flowed out, but he expended his life *throughout* his ministry. Whenever he healed others, vitality went out of him, and even though his vitality was restored each day, he nevertheless suffered (Mark 5:30).

Notice that the quantities of wine in the drink offering and of oil in the cereal offering were the same: the fourth part of a hin.

Q: Was the drink offering “unto the LORD” poured over the sacrifice on the altar?

A: That would be the thought here, but sometimes the drink offering was poured at the side of the altar or treated in another way. When all pictures are combined, the drink offering was rubbed on the altar, sprinkled on the altar, or poured on the horns of the altar, and sometimes the remainder was poured at the bottom of the altar. However, the account in Numbers 28 does not go into that detail lest the power of the picture be lost. The point being emphasized was that the drink offering was poured out “in the holy place,” i.e., in the Court.

Num. 28:8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning, and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

The evening daily offering of the lamb was a duplication of the morning daily offering. Whatever was done to the lamb in the morning was repeated in the evening, the close of the ceremonial day, with regard to the cereal and drink offerings, using the same proportions.

Num. 28:9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof:

Num. 28:10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Notice the brevity of explanation for the sabbath offering. At this stage, the Lord assumes that one is familiar, spiritually speaking, with the earlier ordinances of Exodus and Leviticus. Now will come additional information.

How were the two lambs handled? The account is saying that on the sabbath day, one lamb was offered in the morning and one in the evening—just like the daily offering. On six days of the week, a lamb was offered in the morning and another one in the evening, but on the seventh (or sabbath) day, two lambs were offered in the morning and two in the evening, one lamb for the daily offering and one for the sabbath offering. Moreover, the same proportions of flour and oil that were used for the daily offering comprised the meal offering on the sabbath, and the same quantity of wine constituted the drink offering.

	<u>Lamb(s)</u>	<u>Flour</u>	<u>Oil</u>	<u>Wine</u>
Daily offering:	1 in morning	1/10 ephah	1/4 hin	1/4 hin
	1 in evening	1/10 ephah	1/4 hin	1/4 hin
Sabbath offering:	1 in morning	1/10 ephah	1/4 hin	1/4 hin
	1 in evening	1/10 ephah	1/4 hin	1/4 hin
Hence a <i>total</i> of two offerings on the sabbath:	2 in morning	2/10 ephah	1/2 hin	1/2 hin
	2 in evening	2/10 ephah	1/2 hin	1/2 hin

Num. 28:11 And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot;

Num. 28:12 And three tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram;

Num. 28:13 And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

Num. 28:14 And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year.

The offering “in the beginnings of your months” was more complex. (The daily offering was done every day of the year; the sabbath offering was performed approximately 52 times a year; and the monthly offering, based on the lunar year, occurred 12 or 13 times, that is, at the beginning of each new month.) Now we are getting into the dispensational aspect of the sacrifices. The seven months of the ecclesiastical calendar represented an entire year. Stated another way, the ceremonial year, or religious calendar, consisted of seven months. One “deal” was a scoop, or measure, of 1/10 ephah. It was easier to say 3 deals, or scoops, of flour than 3/10 of an ephah.

Burnt Offering at the Beginning of Each Month

	<u>Cereal Offering</u>		<u>Drink Offering</u>
	<u>Flour</u>	<u>Oil</u>	<u>Wine</u>
Two bullocks	3/10 ephah (3 deals) x 2	1/2 hin x 2	1/2 hin x 2
One ram	2/10 ephah (2 deals)	1/3 hin	1/3 hin
Seven lambs	1/10 ephah (1 deal) x 7	1/4 hin x 7	1/4 hin x 7

As can be seen, the quantities of flour, oil, and wine were proportionate to the size of the animal being offered. The offering at the beginning of each month was performed just once; that is, it was not offered morning and evening.

What did the two bullocks represent? The first bullock was Jesus, and the second bullock was The Christ, as further pictured by the ram (Jesus) and the seven lambs (the Church). (The ram’s representing Jesus is based on the lamb caught in the thicket and substituted for Isaac.) In other words, this offering was more complex because the Church was being introduced into the arrangement. What an ingenious way to show that the Church is part of the burnt offering! In the simple burnt offering of Leviticus 1–7, the animal was cut in pieces and the pieces were laid to the head to picture The Christ. The head was the emphasis, for the pieces were laid to the head; that is, the body members were laid to their Head, Jesus.

Thus the monthly offering was a dispensational picture. The ecclesiastical year’s consisting of seven months and the seven lambs offered at the beginning of each month picture the seven stages of the Gospel Age. (Even though the monthly offering was performed 12 or 13 times a year, only the first seven months comprised the ecclesiastical year. In other words, the religious year was a picture within a picture.)

We will explain the offerings again. The first bullock pictured Jesus. The second bullock was a composite picture of the entire Gospel Age, with the ram and the seven lambs explaining what that second bullock represented. Stated another way, the ram and the seven lambs were added to tell us what the second bullock signified.

Num. 28:15 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the LORD shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

Verses 1–14 were related to *burnt* offerings and what accompanied them. Now comes a radical change to a *sin* offering, which was a monthly offering of “one kid of the goats”; that is, at the

beginning of each month, a young goat was offered as a sin offering. The goat represented the Church—the Church’s share in the sin offering. Again the ecclesiastical year consisted of seven months, so the seven goats offered, one each month, showed the seven periods of the Church and the Church’s share in the sin offering down through the Gospel Age.

It is assumed that the nation realized two things: The Passover lamb at the time of the Exodus provided the sin offering (1) for the firstborn of the nation of Israel (in antitype, for our sins) and (2) for the rest of the nation (in antitype, for the world’s sins) when they crossed the Red Sea. Thus there are two antitypical “Passovers”: one for the church of the firstborn (Little Flock and Great Company) and the other for the obedient of the world of mankind. Because the sin offering aspect was so indelibly pictured in the nation in the account of the Passover in earlier books of the Bible, the type was not repeated or explained again in Numbers. It is to be understood that the primary sacrifice was of Christ. The primacy lesson is taught in Exodus and in Leviticus 8, 9, and 16.

The most notable picture of the sin offering of Jesus was the deliverance of the whole nation at the time of the original Passover. The seven-month ecclesiastical year followed the basic original deliverance—and so Jesus’ 3 1/2-year ministry constituted the basis of the deliverance of the Church. Jesus died, was raised, and ascended on high prior to Pentecost. The seven periods of the Church began with Pentecost and continue to the end of the Gospel Age. As each individual hungers and thirsts for understanding, God gives enough clues to hint at these things and allows us a little exercise—as long as we do not flaunt this understanding before others to show how much we know or do not know. Therefore, the type of instruction that is presented in Numbers 28 should not be a public exercise.

Num. 28:16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the LORD.

We continue to discuss the animal sacrifices that were instituted under the Mosaic Law, but before treating the Passover, we will have a short review. In this chapter, the Lord is describing the different sacrifices that were to be made by or on behalf of the *nation*, not by an individual. The animals for these offerings were taken out of the stock that was available under the Levitical arrangement. Originally animals were given to the Levites so that even though they had no inheritance in the land, they had their own flock. As time went by, that flock multiplied. National offerings were taken from this livestock that the priesthood possessed.

Numbers 28 began with the two daily lambs, the morning offering at 9 a.m. and the evening offering at 3 p.m. The two lambs were to be offered every day of the year, without exception. This daily or continual burnt offering represented Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was “slain from the foundation [or beginning] of the world” (Rev. 13:8). In antitype, Jesus is to be remembered at both the beginning and the end of the day.

The next offering was the sabbath day offering, which occurred approximately 52 times a year. Next came the offering at the beginning of each month based on the lunar calendar. Thus, so far, there were the daily, sabbath, and first-day-of-month offerings. Now we are ready to discuss the Passover on the 14th day of the first month.

These sacrifices, in their multiplicity of detail, will be very significant in the Kingdom Age because at that time they will be dramatized for all to understand. Normally speaking, this type of study is not meant for Christians, and probably there has never been a verse-by-verse Bible study of Numbers 28 and 29. In the Wilderness of Sinai and for a short while after the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the arrangement of these two chapters was *faithfully* performed according to Moses’ instructions. And for 1,500 years, the Israelites performed these sacrifices more or less faithfully, but they did not understand what they were doing. Neither do most

Christians understand. The sacrifices under the old Law Covenant were typical, for the animals represented individuals who have sacrificed for God all down the Gospel Age, starting with Jesus as the predominant leader and including the body members.

When the Kingdom arrangement starts and the literal Temple is built in Jerusalem—and following the inaugural services—offerings will again be instituted. However, at that time, it will be shown and explained what God had in mind with the sacrifices. The Jews particularly will be dumbfounded. To present all of this detail and not have it understood would be a waste of economy. As said in Isaiah 55:11, God’s Word will not return unto Him void. Back there under the Mosaic Law, His Word was void, generally speaking, as far as understanding the sacrifices was concerned. Therefore, the explanation will come in the Kingdom Age with audiovisual presentations at the Third Temple, which will be beamed worldwide via satellite.

In the Kingdom, the primary purpose of revealing the meaning of Old Testament sacrifices will be to enlighten Israel. The capital of the world will be Jerusalem. Although the Gentiles will get the gist of the sacrifices, the explanation in the Kingdom is especially for the Jew. Of course everything in the Bible is profitable for study, but Numbers 28 and 29 are not particularly designed for edifying the gospel Church. Nevertheless, they are part of the Lord’s Word.

Verse 16 pertains to the Passover season. Between the two evenings on the 14th day of the first month—that is, at 3 p.m., the midpoint between noon and 6 p.m., the time of the evening sacrifice—Jesus died on the Cross. The morning and the evening sacrifices were thus fulfilled by Jesus’ being taken to be crucified at 9 a.m. and his dying at 3 p.m.

Num. 28:17 And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

On the next day, the 15th day of the first month, the seven-day Feast of Passover began. In other words, the feast was separate from, and followed, the slaying of the Passover lamb. The Lamb was slain on Friday. Then the same day, but after 6 p.m., which according to Hebrew reckoning was the start of the *next day*, the Feast of Passover commenced. In 1 Corinthians 5:7,8, the Apostle Paul used the Passover and the subsequent feast to draw a spiritual lesson. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Even though Numbers 28:16,17 applies primarily to the next age, here is a beneficial and pragmatic application to the Christian Church.

Paul said, “Therefore let us keep the [seven-day] feast ... with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” “Christ our passover [Lamb]” was sacrificed for us during his 3 1/2-year ministry culminating at Calvary when he died at 3 p.m. on the Cross. Then, beginning with Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came on the Church, the antitypical Feast of Unleavened Bread started. What a beautiful picture! The “unleavened bread” is pure doctrine, the Word of God. The “bread,” the doctrine, the pure food, is what we *mentally feed on* in regard to God’s plans and purposes and what Jesus has done and is doing for the Church.

For all seven days of the feast, unleavened bread was eaten. The seven days represented the seven stages of the Church, as explained in the New Testament by a process of reasoning. The Apostle Paul told early Christians that just as the Passover lamb slain in the type was followed by a seven-day feast, so Christ was slain at the end of his ministry and the antitypical Feast of Unleavened Bread followed. “Therefore *let us keep the feast.*” The Book of Revelation, a message of mystery and symbols, was given to God’s servants for their instruction (Rev. 1:1). Moreover, the message was recorded for the Seven Churches, which are actually the *one*

Church but in seven time slots down through the Gospel Age (Rev. 1:20). Pursuing this reasoning, we see that the seventh day of the feast pictured the end time, just as the seventh day is the end of the week.

Num. 28:18 In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein:

The first day of the seven-day feast was a “holy convocation.” In the antitype with the early Church, the holy convocation occurred at Pentecost, which was in the first “day,” or stage, of the gospel Church. What happened at Pentecost? The apostles Peter and John began to speak in the various tongues of the thousands of pilgrims who had come to Jerusalem for the feast. In other words, there was a holy convocation at the beginning of the Gospel Age. On that occasion, and as a result of Peter’s *powerful* sermon, 3,000 Jews accepted Christ. Shortly afterwards 5,000 others accepted Christ as Messiah. One reason the apostles were delirious with joy was that they *knew* Jesus had risen from the dead. Peter’s words were, “Thanks be unto God for begetting us again with a *living* hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3 paraphrase). When the apostles saw Jesus die on the Cross and his body was laid in the tomb, they were downhearted, for his ministry seemed to have ended and his enemies appeared to be triumphant. However, when Jesus was raised and the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the apostles’ hopes were revived exceedingly, and the Lord showed his power. Revelation 1:20 pictures Jesus in the role of having the seven stars in his right hand of *power*. Accordingly, at Pentecost and afterwards in the early Church, it was almost as if Peter and John could read the people’s thoughts. An example is Ananias and Sapphira. When they were struck dead, “great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things” (Acts 5:11). The early Church realized they could not be hypocrites.

Num. 28:19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish:

Earlier in this chapter, we went into the details as to what the “two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year” represented. If we can remember the simplicity of the daily and seventh-day sabbath offerings and then the more complex offering on the first day of the month, where the kind of arrangement in verse 19 was introduced, the explanation and interpretation are the same with the same lesson.

Of the two young bullocks, one represented the perfect man Christ Jesus. The other bullock pictured The Christ, the ram being Jesus the Head and the seven lambs the Church, the body, during the seven stages of the Gospel Age. In other words, we can gain spiritual lessons from the study of Numbers 28 and 29, even though the lessons are meant for the next age. The world must know why God permitted evil for so long, why the Second Advent was seemingly delayed. The 144,000 members of the Church needed to be selected. It is possible for each one who is called and accepts Christ as Redeemer to become a member of the Little Flock, the reward being glory, honor, and immortality. In His mercy, God has provided for a Great Company for those who are overcomers but do not make the top grade. If planet Earth is so small that the entire globe is likened to dust on the scale of a balance, then the people on that globe are like the Lilliputians in *Gulliver’s Travels*—*tiny* beings. God thinks highly of all such teeny beings who respond to His call and are faithful. The angels look down from heaven and see human beings, a new creation in the universe, reading God’s Word and sacrificing accordingly. God is so appreciative of that sacrificing that He promises, “If you are faithful *unto death*, I will give you the *crown of life*” (Rev. 2:10). God trusts such individuals, for He knows that in their heart, they are trying to please Him to their utmost capability. Immortality is life within oneself. In contrast, mortal life is a supplied life; for example, food must be ingested

even by the angels. God was so appreciative of the angels who were faithful in Noah's day that He gave them everlasting life but not immortality. Everlasting life is a perfect but *received* life that must be sustained with sleep, rest, and eating. And so the Great Company will receive a spirit nature and be like the angels, whereas immortality is reserved for the Church.

Again we will consider the animals. The ram represented Christ, an individual. The lambs, a little more tender animal, pictured the Church. Therefore, when Jesus was pictured with his Church, the distinction was that he is the Head, the most prominent part of the body.

Num. 28:20 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram;

Num. 28:21 A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

The "meat offering" was a meal or cereal offering—in fact, a particular cereal, a *pure flour* offering. The flour was mixed with oil into a dough. In addition, a container of wine was poured on the sacrifice, representing the pouring out of one's life for the Lord. Wine is also a symbol of joy.

Q: Was the drink offering definitely included, even though it is not mentioned here?

A: Yes, it was included with all meal offerings. As we go along, we are supposed to remember the Law. The Lord may state something several times, but after that, we are supposed to remember. Salt, which is mentioned only a couple of times, had to accompany *every* sacrifice.

We will not again go into the mathematical measures, which varied depending on the size of the animal (a lamb $1/10$, a ram $2/10$, a bullock $3/10$). The quantities indicated how the Lord views an individual who is trying to serve Him. A man is judged according to what he hath, i.e., according to his or her ability or capability. The Pastor said a man was judged according to what he hath *used*. Both thoughts are helpful. For instance, how much would a baby be expected to know? And we all started as babies when we accepted Christ, even if we were 60 or 70 years old. However, we are expected to grow. If a regular baby shows no development or progress and the stature remains the same, it is a dwarf and, therefore, not normal. With the Christian, a reasonable time is allowed for growth. Therefore, the antitypical offerings are proportionate to the capability of the person involved.

Num. 28:22 And one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you.

The goat represented the Church's share in the sin offering, but why wasn't Christ emphasized here? Why was the goat inserted? The Jewish rabbis know that there is some kind of suffering role of a multiple class. While some of them think of the Messiah, the more liberal-minded rabbis think the nation is the Messiah. And that is the majority opinion of Israel.

When the Kingdom starts, when the Third Temple is built in Jerusalem, when the Word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem and sacrifices are broadcast from there and explained, certainly the Jews who have been educated in these complex things for all of their past history will then understand what the sacrifices represented. The goat shows that they were not in any sense a part of the sin offering or the called of God with the Messiah. Thus a goat as the sin offering was brought to the fore so that Israel would understand this lesson. The Holy Remnant will begin to grasp this concept, but they must first know that Jesus is their Messiah. The lesson is not directed to the Gentiles but to the Jews. All Gentiles have to know is that a class has been called out during the Gospel Age to follow Jesus. At the First Advent, Jesus pointed out that the

scribes and Pharisees were very particular with regard to every last detail of the ceremonial performance but then they violated much in their own personal lives.

Since Gentiles have not had the background of the Tabernacle and its sacrifices, they will view the instruction like a documentary or a travelogue. In other words, they will consider the explanation interesting and educational, but the Jew will be startled, especially those who lived back there.

How will God deal with the Gentiles? The Scriptures show that those who persecuted the Church down through the age will have to go before the individual(s) involved, kneel, confess, and ask for forgiveness. Of course the Church will be invisible, but that does not mean they cannot communicate with mankind. Didn't God and Jesus communicate with the prophets of the Old Testament in various ways by sending an angel, giving a vision, or having them hear a voice? Regarding those who did the persecuting, we are told that no sin against the Holy Spirit can be forgiven except through stripes (Matt. 12:31). Adamic weaknesses can be freely forgiven if acknowledged and repentance is asked for, but willful, deliberate sin must receive stripes and retribution.

Num. 28:23 Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering.

In other words, the burnt offering of the two lambs was carried out every day of the year.

Num. 28:24 After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.

“After this manner ye shall offer daily” means the sacrifices were repeated. “The meat of the sacrifice made by fire” was a burnt offering.

The simplistic approach is best even in regard to very complex subjects. Once the fundamentals are learned, the Lord reveals further details to each of His children.

Num. 28:25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

The priesthood was the exception. They did servile work on the seventh day because they had to offer animals, but for the public, the “holy convocation” was like a grand holiday. The antitypical seventh-day holy convocation will be the gathering of the saints and the Great Company at the marriage supper.

God used an unusual providence in connection with the pious, or “devout,” Jews who were congregated at Pentecost (Acts 2:5). It was providential that all of these particular Jews heard Peter and John on the right day in the right place. Peter and John spoke outdoors as ordinary individuals, yet all 3,000 heard them clearly. How was this accomplished? God's Holy Spirit moved them so that their voices became megaphonic.

Q: Since the apostles spoke megaphonically in tongues at the beginning of the Gospel Age, could that same thought be applied to the message of the feet members at the end of the age when they give their final, fatal witness?

A: The account in Isaiah 40:9 refers to a future message to be given by the Great Company: “Get thee up into the high mountain; ... lift up thy voice *with strength*; ... [and proclaim] *Behold*

your God!” To get up there and lift up their voice means that somehow, providentially, they will give an effective message. The feet members will have the knowledge, but that knowledge will be passed on to the Great Company, who will be on the scene at the very end, just before the selection of the Holy Remnant.

Comment: But even before that, the feet members will give a witness.

Reply: Yes, and they will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to give a powerful message of denunciation against mystic Babylon.

Num. 28:26 Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work:

Num. 28:27 But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year;

Num. 28:28 And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram,

Num. 28:29 A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;

Num. 28:30 And one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.

Num. 28:31 Ye shall offer them beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink offerings.

The last four verses do not need an explanation, for they are a word-for-word declaration of earlier verses.

“In the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto the LORD, after your weeks be out, ye shall have an holy convocation.” What day was this? Pentecost. The clue is the clause “after your weeks be out.” Seven times seven weeks (7 x 7) equals 49, and the next day, the 50th day, was Pentecost. The lesson is the same. On Pentecost, “ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.”

Notice that we are going through the calendar in a very orderly fashion: daily, sabbath, first day of the month, 14th day of the first month, and the 50th day, or Pentecost.

Comment: It is interesting that just as the Israelites’ experiences were recorded for the beginning and the ending of the 40 years in the wilderness, so even these special feast days occurred in the first two months and then not again until the seventh month.

Reply: Yes, and the males had to go to Jerusalem three times a year. With the services, which were like holidays, there were attendant joys of fellowship with relatives and friends—much like our attendance at conventions.

Subtle reasonings bring us to certain conclusions. The thought is that many strands make a rope that can tow a large vessel. When we go back to verse 16, we are told that the 14th day of the first month was Passover. And on the 15th day, the Feast of Passover began. However, the detail in this account of the Passover is different from that in the Exodus account. In Exodus, the Israelites did not offer these animals because they were fleeing Egypt. Now we are getting the more complete Passover observance as it will occur in the Kingdom Age. In the present age,

we, as Christians, study about the deliverance of the nation of Israel from bondage and compare it to our deliverance from bondage to Satan. The Scriptures tell a lot about the night of the Passover, but this account in Numbers applies to the next age. The world of mankind will be informed in great depth and with accuracy, whereas we study now under imperfect conditions to the best of our ability.

Comment: The sheaf offering is not mentioned.

Reply: No, because the account is just identifying the time slot when additional offerings are to be made.

The New Testament takes the simple picture of the Passover, and we should do likewise. The simple picture in the type is that on the night of the Passover, a lamb was slain and its blood was put on the doorposts, representing our heart. The blood of the Lamb Christ Jesus is sprinkled on our hearts, the seat of affection. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22). The mind is the seat of intellect, and the will is the control, the motives. We are told to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength because we each have four distinctive parts.

The very fact that Numbers 28 did not go into the sheaf offering, the blood on the doorposts, etc., is because those features are for us, not for the world. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7), and that Passover was the first one. All subsequent Passovers lose their importance from the standpoint of the type.

Num. 29:1 And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

Num. 29:2 And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

Num. 29:3 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram,

Num. 29:4 And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

Num. 29:5 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you:

Num. 29:6 Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

We have been going through the religious calendar: daily sacrifice, sabbath, first of month, first fruits, etc. Now we are down to the first day of the seventh month and the sacrifices that were to be offered.

In addition to this ceremony at the beginning of the seventh month, the daily burnt offering and the regular first-of-the-month offering had to be made. Thus for the seventh month, the Israelites had *two* first-day-of-the-month offerings. Two young bullocks were offered for the regular offering and only one young bullock for the seventh month.

Next we see what helps to establish an earlier application in Numbers 28. The seventh month first-of-the-month offering was much simpler: "one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs

of the first year without blemish.” The *two* young bullocks of the regular first-of-the-month offering represented Jesus and The Christ (Num. 28:11). The *one* bullock here in Numbers 29 pictured The Christ, which comprised one ram (Jesus) and seven lambs (the Church).

Comment: This ceremony was the Feast of Trumpets.

Reply: Yes, the seventh month was handled differently than the other months. For the first six months, a trumpet was blown on the first day with *one* long blast. For the seventh month, the trumpet was blown *seven* times. Usually a “feast” includes seven days; here the trumpet was blown seven times.

From a practical standpoint, the ecclesiastical year consisted of only seven months. During the last five months (or six if the month of Adar was included), both the early and the latter rains fell. The heavy rains occurred after the Feast of Harvest, and following the rains, the soil was plowed. The following spring was the time of the early rain, which normally preceded the Passover. With winter coming in between and thus not being part of the ecclesiastical year, the Israelites did not have to travel to the Temple in inclement weather at that time of year. After the seventh month, the Bible mentions no special feast for the rest of the year.

It is true that Jesus observed the Feast of Dedication at the Temple, but he was observing the Jewish traditions. The Jews also observed the Festival of Lights, which was based on the Book of Esther. However, to all practical effects, the religious calendar instituted by Moses consisted of only seven months. Both the tilling of the soil and the seed sowing took place during the first five (or six) months, and the men had to be home to devote long hours to these tasks, working sunrise to sunset.

If the first day of the month for the first seven months represented the different stages of the Church throughout the Gospel Age, the words “ye shall have an holy convocation” are significant. Also, when we read about the various days, the instruction “ye shall do no servile work” is repeated. In other words, a religious holiday was a “sabbath,” even if it did not fall on the seventh day of the week. However, the instruction about a “holy convocation” in regard to the special sacrifices is the point to be discussed now. The daily and the sabbath sacrifices were simple sacrifices, but for the first of the month and other special days, there was a “holy convocation.” The holy convocation was particularly important with regard to the first day of the seventh month, which corresponds to 1878, the year the Harvest message began.

From Jesus’ standpoint, 1874 is more important than 1878, but although 1874 is the year he returned, his presence was not recognized or appreciated until a few years later. The year 1874 did not affect the Church as a whole except in the training of the seventh messenger. For those critical early years, the Pastor was a young man with Christians of other evangelical Protestant faiths. When we know the history of some of the men in attendance, it is rather startling that he got his training there and was even elected elder.

In antitype, the “holy convocation” is in earth’s atmosphere, for in 1878, the sleeping saints were raised. All the saints who were asleep in the grave were given a spirit resurrection to earth’s atmosphere where Jesus was present. The Scriptures definitely show that the resurrection of the sleeping saints precedes that of the saints who remain behind. Later the feet members will be caught up as a body in an invisible spirit rapture to meet the Lord in the air. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with

the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15–17).

Numbers 29:2–4 describes the animals (one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs) to be offered on the first day of the seventh month and their corresponding meal offerings, which were proportionate to the size and value of the animal. We do not have to keep laboring over the interpretation of the quantities of flour and oil, for we learned the principle in earlier verses that they were proportional to one’s capabilities, as pictured by the animals.

Verse 5 reads, “And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you.” Even though this was a sin offering, Jesus would not be pictured by a goat. As a sin offering, the animal was not cut with the pieces laid to the head, which was the method for a burnt offering. Therefore, when the kid of the goats was offered, some of its vital organs (the caul above the liver, the fat, and the kidneys) were burned on the altar. In addition, the hide was removed and burned without the camp. All of these details were not mentioned because we are supposed to know them by now as being the law of a sin offering.

Q: Since the blood of this goat for a sin offering was not brought into the Most Holy, was the animal to be eaten by the priests?

A: The distinction is whether the kid of the goats was an offering *of* the people or *for* the people. A goat that was offered to make an atonement for the sins of the people was not to be eaten by the priest or anyone else. However, with a sin offering, the blood was not always taken into the Most Holy. It was taken into the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement, which was the tenth day of the seventh month.

Several times we have made the observation that when a burnt offering preceded a sin offering, it was a different setting and the burnt offering made atonement. We will try to illustrate what we are saying. Leviticus 1:4 states, “And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.” Notice that in Leviticus 1, the burnt offerings came first. Leviticus 2 describes the cereal offering, which accompanied a burnt offering. The sin offering was not described until after the peace offering. In other words, the peace offering was mentioned third, and the peace offering did not always accompany a burnt offering. For instance, in Numbers 29:1–6, there was no peace offering—just a burnt offering and a sin offering. Thus the sequence was different from the sequence of Leviticus 8, 9, and 16. It is providential that the Pastor wrote on those three chapters, for they pertain to the Church now in a more realistic sense—almost like the present tense, as it were. The other chapters, which were recorded in a historic sense as things of the past, were performed for the future appreciation of the world of mankind. The world will be apprised of the deliverance of the firstborn, the slaying of the lamb, the crossing of the Red Sea, the different feasts such as Pentecost, etc. They will know about the offerings and events not in a participatory sense but in a historic sense.

In the Kingdom Age, the Law will be reinstated with slight but very important differences. For purposes of illustration, let us say that 90 percent of the New Covenant will be like the old Law Covenant, and only 10 percent will be different in that it will have Jesus as the Mediator. With Jesus as the Mediator in the next age, more success can be expected. The old Law Covenant failed for several reasons, one being that it could not be enforced for any length of time. Moses did the best he could, but after his death, the nation wandered from the Law and began to do things that seemed right in their *own* eyes. “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17:6). In the Kingdom Age, Jesus will make sure that the Law is performed according to the book but also *according to ability*. A little baby will be expected to do something but not to perform like a teenager or an adult. A baby desires milk, and that is what will be supplied until there is growth to an age of

responsibility. Only when Satan is loosed in the Little Season will there be a vacuum of enforced authority. Because it will appear that the reign is over, the Little Season will become a real testing period.

Q: Does the expression in verse 5 “to make an atonement for you” mean “to make an atonement for the Israelites”?

A: Yes. Jesus did not have to die for *his own* salvation; he needed no atonement. However, the bullock justified the goat, and the goat was for the people. Accordingly, the Apostle Paul said, “Or else why are we, the Church, baptized for the dead of mankind?” Paul was trying to show that the Church, in connection with their consecration, die on behalf of the world, not for their own sins. “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:29).

Num. 29:7 And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein:

Num. 29:8 But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the LORD for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish:

Num. 29:9 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram,

Num. 29:10 A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

Num. 29:11 One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings.

Verses 7–11 describe the offerings on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month. These offerings were the same as those on the first day of the seventh month. Verse 11 adds the detail “beside the sin offering of atonement.” Thus the sin offering of Leviticus 16 (a bullock and the Lord’s goat) was repeated on the Day of Atonement.

Of the several offerings that occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month, the first was the morning lamb of the daily burnt offering. Next came the sin offering of Leviticus 16. Then came the offerings of Numbers 29:7–11. Finally the evening lamb of the daily burnt offering was sacrificed. The two lambs of the daily burnt offering pictured that at both the beginning and the end of the day, the mind has to go to Jesus. It is like saying Jesus is the Author and the Finisher of the race—even in the Kingdom Age.

Even though the goat was given great prominence as the only sin offering (verse 11), Leviticus 16 shows the priority. First, Leviticus 16:6 tells about the bullock of the sin offering: “And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.” However, notice that in Leviticus 16:15, the Lord’s goat was “for the people.” “Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.” We are discussing the phrase “for the people.” This feature occurs antitypically at the end of the Gospel Age. Jesus was previously sacrificed, and he was emblemized, for instance, by the two lambs of the daily burnt offering (one at each end of the day), by the bullock’s being mentioned first in the burnt offering, and by the ram.

When it comes to the goat as a sin offering, we have our own way of interpreting the

redeeming work of the bullock and the goat, but for convenience' sake, we will adopt Bro. Frey's type of reasoning. He said that the blood of the Head, Jesus, the bullock, flows through the body like a transfusion. When the body is offered as a sin offering, it is made acceptable because of the blood in that animal. A transfusion, as it were, gives the body real value as a sin offering for the people. Thus the bullock sin offering was for Aaron the priest, a fallible man representing Christ, and for his house of sons, and the goat sin offering was for the people. Earlier we had said that one reason for using the goat as a sin offering is that Israel will see these sacrifices in the Kingdom Age. Jews will comprise the Zadok priesthood. Since salvation is of the Jew, both for the Church now and for the world in the Kingdom, natural Israel must come to an understanding of the sacrifices that they have performed blindly.

Those in Israel who believe Messiah is an individual are a minority. Generally speaking, the Jews, including most of the religious leaders, think of the composite body of the nation of Israel as their Messiah. We, too, see a composite body, a multitudinous seed, but identified with a different class of people.

Num. 29:12 And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days:

Num. 29:13 And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish:

Num. 29:14 And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams,

Num. 29:15 And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs:

Num. 29:16 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual [daily] burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

With all of the detailed information, the implicit inference is that if the daily offering happened to fall on a sabbath day, the sabbath offering had to be included. The issue is complex enough without adding this detail, but should the first day of the feast also be a sabbath, then a sabbath offering was made in addition to the daily offering. Sometimes a religious holiday, which was a sabbath in itself, happened to fall on a weekly sabbath. In that case, the day was a religious sabbath as well as a weekly sabbath. This factor is a critical point of history with regard to Jesus' ministry, for it helps us to fix, by astronomy, the definite day of the week when he died.

Verse 12 starts a description of the offerings on the Feast of Harvest (or Tabernacles). At the time the Holy Remnant is delivered, the Ancient Worthies will come forth from the tomb, and the Kingdom will be established. But notice the five-day time gap, or interim period, from the tenth day of the seventh month to the 15th day. At that time, the Feast of Harvest will be a joyous feast in a spiritual or symbolic sense, and the attendance, or crowd, will be very large. The little time gap has to do with the finishing of the atonement, for that is when the blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, but with regard to the sin offerings, the account does not say that the blood of the goat was brought into the Most Holy. Early chapters of Leviticus show several occasions where a sin offering was made and yet the blood was not brought into the Most Holy. Such sin offerings could be eaten by the priest.

The offerings started with 13 bullocks, 2 rams, and 14 lambs. The 13 bullocks were represented in the two rams and the 14 lambs. The earlier offering of one bullock followed by one ram and

seven lambs told us that the bullock represented The Christ. The same principle is buried here in verses 12–16 except that the quantities are doubled. The 13 bullocks pictured Jesus and the apostles. (At the Memorial, Jesus was the 13th individual.) Then on the next (or second) day (verse 17), the number of bullocks decreased by one for a total of 12 bullocks, showing that Jesus died and went off the scene.

Thus the 13 bullocks represented the beginning of the Gospel Age but even before Pentecost. Some Christian writers start the Gospel Age at Jesus' baptism at Jordan. In other pictures, the beginning is given as Pentecost with the recognition of the Church.

Num. 29:17 And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

Num. 29:18 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:19 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering thereof, and their drink offerings.

Num. 29:20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish;

Num. 29:21 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:22 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

Num. 29:23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

Num. 29:24 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:25 And one kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

The number of bullocks diminished by one animal each day: 13, 12, 11, 10, etc.

Num. 29:26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot:

Num. 29:27 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:28 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

Num. 29:29 And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

Num. 29:30 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:31 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

Num. 29:32 And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish:

Num. 29:33 And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:34 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering.

By the seventh day, the number 13 was reduced to 7.

Num. 29:35 On the eighth day ye shall have a solemn assembly: ye shall do no servile work therein:

Num. 29:36 But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish:

Num. 29:37 Their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner:

Num. 29:38 And one goat for a sin offering; beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, and his drink offering.

Num. 29:39 These things ye shall do unto the LORD in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings.

Num. 29:40 And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.

Verse 39 takes cognizance of the fact that there were other types of offerings not mentioned in this chapter. Only burnt and sin offerings were treated earlier in the chapter, but verse 39 is saying that the burnt and sin offerings did not preclude the fact there could be individual vows and freewill offerings of the people. To have included all of these offerings earlier would have confused the picture inordinately.

What about the *eighth* day, which is the critical part of this account? On the eighth day, the offering of bullocks went down to just one: one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs. We must keep the setting of this account in mind, and what is that setting? It is the *end of the Kingdom* but not into the eighth Creative Day, the eighth 1,000-year day. Normally the eighth day is a new beginning, the resurrection day, but here the principle is a little different. The seven stages of the Church began at Pentecost, but the Feast of Harvest offerings started at Jordan. Hence the 3 1/2 years of Jesus' ministry were included in the 13 bullocks of verse 13. Therefore, if we count from Jordan, the eighth day is really the seventh day, the end of the Kingdom Age, and not the day beyond the Millennium. In other words, this picture will terminate when all mankind come into harmony with God at the end of the Kingdom, just after the Little Season. At that time, all incorrigible sinners will have been destroyed, for the Little Season will occur within the Kingdom Age.

Q: If the picture started with Jesus at Jordan or at Pentecost, wouldn't there be two series of seven stages, the first in the Gospel Age and the second in the Kingdom Age?

A: No, because the representation is the *end* of the Kingdom Age when the world of mankind *looks back* at history. The eighth day in this picture cannot take place at the beginning of the Kingdom because at that time, billions of people will still be in the grave. The promise that “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” will not be fulfilled until towards the end of the Kingdom (Hab. 2:14). Throughout the Kingdom, great numbers will come forth from the tomb in successive stages. Every individual has to be educated as to the meaning of Christ and the calling of the Church.

Q: Which day started at Jordan? The 15th?

A: Yes, for at the beginning of the Feast of Harvest, there were 13 bullocks.

Q: Did the second day with the 12 bullocks indicate a starting date of Pentecost?

A: Yes. The picture is confusing, but it shows the education of the world, which will require the entire Kingdom Age. Following seven stages of development, all will know.

The question was asked whether the one bullock, one ram, and seven lambs occur antitypically before or after the Little Season. It could be immediately after, for at that point, all the incorrigible, including Satan himself, will have been destroyed. Jesus must reign until all enemies are put under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. Certainly Satan is an enemy, and he has to die. After their destruction, an “eighth day” will begin—the eighth day after the Kingdom Age.

Not only is a verse-by-verse study of the Book of Numbers very unusual, but it probably has not been studied that way previously by any group. Leviticus 8, 9, and 16 are the important chapters that the Lord expected His people to study. Knowledge is increasing. Certainly, however, Numbers 28 and 29 are not essential to know. *Tabernacle Shadows*—simple as it is with Leviticus 8, 9, and 16—corrects many fallacies such as the reign of Christ. In Leviticus 16, the reign is shown to occur with the change of garments of Aaron, and this will take place *after* the blood of the goat is brought into the Most Holy. The same principle is taught in Leviticus 9. Since Leviticus 9 began *after* the seven days of the consecration of the priesthood, it is a picture of the Kingdom Age.

Num. 30:1 And Moses spake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

Num. 30:2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

Num. 30:3 If a woman also vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

Num. 30:4 And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

Num. 30:5 But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive

her, because her father disallowed her.

This chapter can be easily misunderstood by someone who is not familiar with Scripture, and possibly it has been used for injury to some under certain circumstances.

The chapter starts with “If a man vow a vow unto the LORD” and then “If a woman also vow a vow.” With a man, there is no disallowance. With a woman, a disallowance is predicated on two things: (1) She had to be in her youth and still living in her father’s house, and (2) her father had to disallow “in the day that he heareth [of her vow].” In other words, the woman cannot be married, and she cannot be single and self-supporting outside the house. Moreover, the vow has to be disallowed in the day that the father *first* hears it.

It is important to realize that the account is not talking about a vow of consecration, in which one gives his or her heart to the Lord. Why not? (1) This instruction was given to the Jew as part of the Mosaic Law before Christ. (2) The fact that the woman may have made *several* commitments rules out the possibility that this is referring to the supreme vow. Surely a vow to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength could not be disallowed by a father or a husband, for God gave that commandment. (3) The nation of Israel was already committed to God. When the Israelites left Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, and arrived at Mount Sinai, the invisible Lord appeared to them in mighty thunder, a loud voice, and an earthquake. At the giving of the Law, the people said, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient” (Exod. 24:7).

Several examples of the types of voluntary vows or pledges that would be covered in this context are as follows. One example is the Nazarite vow. Another is a vow of celibacy. Still another is a vow to “afflict the soul” (verse 13). How would one afflict the soul? A person who feels alienated from God because of sin and wants a closer relationship may decide to fast. Thus going without food is one way of “afflict[ing] the soul.” When Daniel wanted to know a prophecy, he fasted for two weeks. And there are other ways to curb one’s appetite including according to the flesh.

The Nazarite vow is described in Numbers 6:3, “He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.” This type of vow could be taken by either a man or a woman (Num. 6:2).

In summary, the vows or pledges described here are *voluntary*, and not a commandment. Another example of such a pledge is Leviticus 7:16, which pertains to peace offerings. “But if the sacrifice of his offering be a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten.” A Jew, man or woman, who wanted to offer something of value took an animal to the Tabernacle or Temple for an offering.

“When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee. That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth” (Deut. 23:21–23). Notice the *voluntary* aspect: a *freewill* offering.

If Ananias and Sapphira had not pledged to give all their goods, their withholding would not have been a sin (Acts 5:1–10).

Monks and nuns make vows to the Roman Catholic Church, not to God. Of course in their minds, the two are synonymous in that they think their vow to the church is to God, but the Scriptures show that our dealings with the Heavenly Father are through Jesus Christ. He is our High Priest for confession, not a man-made priest in a confessional booth. It is true we may admit to our fellow brothers and sisters that we are sorry for something we have done wrong and we may ask for their prayers, but the real forgiveness comes from God. Jesus expressed the principle: "Whatsoever ye shall ask [the Father] in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). Because Martin Luther felt his vow was to the church and not to God, he married subsequently. The motives of nuns to be celibate are good, but they are identified with a religion that recognizes the pope instead of Christ. Jesus said to call no man on earth our spiritual "father," for that title belongs to our Father in heaven (Matt. 23:9). Therefore, such a vow to the Roman Catholic Church or a false religion or a statue, for example, can be rescinded. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Thus the Christian religion is unique. We come to God through Christ and not through other individuals.

If one who is in darkness and ignorance then sees the true God and the true religion according to God's Word and subsequently dedicates his life in consecration, that is a freewill offering on his part, but it is also a commandment (the First Commandment to love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength). Anyone in this world who loves God and is willing to take a stand for that love is doing a commendable thing.

Num. 30:6 And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered aught out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul;

Num. 30:7 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it: then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

Num. 30:8 But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and the LORD shall forgive her.

Num. 30:9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her.

Num. 30:10 And if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound her soul by a bond with an oath;

Num. 30:11 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand.

Now let us consider a vow from the standpoint of how and why a husband or father might disallow it. Under certain circumstances, the husband or father would be justified in so doing, but not in most cases. If the vow was not pleasing to God, if it was one He would be disturbed with, it could be disallowed. However, the party who did the disallowing will pay the penalty for his action some day in the future if the disallowing displeased God (verse 15). In other words, the husband or father will have to pay a penalty of some kind because responsibility was incurred for making the disallowance.

Q: Is the thought that a penalty would be incurred if the vow were disallowed for selfish reasons, for in that case, the husband or father should have let the vow stand?

A: Yes.

Both men and women can make foolish and/or hasty vows. Perhaps the vow is in connection with money or certain goods. In that case, it is not proper for a family to be deprived of a decent and honest living. When we give our heart to the Lord, we are not relieved of all temporal responsibilities as husband or wife. Responsibilities considered decent and honest in the sight of men should be fulfilled, but these are our avocation in life, not our vocation, the latter being to serve God. If a woman makes a hasty or a foolish vow and a father or husband in his wisdom can see that the vow adversely affects him and/or the family, he can disallow the vow. In fact, the vow may affect the responsibilities of the head of the house. In those cases, the husband or father would perhaps be justified in disallowing the voluntary vow. But in disallowing the vow, the husband or father incurs the responsibility of his actions in whatever direction it lies, that is, either for good or for bad. As a result, the daughter or wife may get some common sense in connection with making vows and first consult with him in the future. Of course a lot depends on the character of the husband or father.

In 1 Corinthians 7, the Apostle Paul treated this subject in detail from the Christian standpoint, mentioning, for example, that the husband may be an unbeliever. If a consecrated wife can live amicably with an unbelieving husband and yet serve the Lord, then so be it. The instructions to the Jews under the Law bear on the Christian too as far as *principle* is concerned.

Num. 30:12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her.

Num. 30:13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.

Num. 30:14 But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard them.

The vow has to be disallowed in the same day that the husband or father *hears* of it, not in the day she made it. The disallowing has to be done quickly, nipping the matter in the bud. Otherwise, the vow stands lest a later or prolonged disallowance work irreparable damage.

Num. 30:15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity.

Num. 30:16 These are the statutes, which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house.

In regard to consecration, Psalm 45:10 says, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." Those who consecrate forsake Father Adam's house; they forsake the ways of the world and separate themselves unto the Lord. Through Adam's fall, all of his children have partaken of sin. We are all born in sin and shapen in iniquity, but when we forsake Adam's house to pursue the ways of the Lord, our beauty increases (Psa. 51:5). Ruth the Moabitess left her own people to go with Naomi, becoming a Jew to serve God. Rahab the harlot is another example. Having heard how God had dealt with Israel, such as the miracle of crossing the Red Sea, she risked her life by hiding the two Israelite spies on the roof.

Matthew's lineage of Jesus is traced through Ruth's marriage to Boaz. Matthew included Ruth because he realized he had departed from the way in becoming a publican, a tax collector, for

the Roman government. When he recognized Jesus as the Messiah, he forsook the tax tables. To show God's mercy on the sinner, Matthew traced Jesus' lineage through Ruth, Rahab, and Tamar. Matthew felt, "How wonderful that I, a sinner, can serve God, that my past can be forgiven through Jesus!" Anyone who goes back in his or her own lineage will find skeletons in the closet, but there is one comfort, namely, that we are all children of righteous Noah.

Conditions of immorality and injustice are rampant in society today. However, righteousness cannot be legislated because fallen man does not have the wisdom to put down on paper the proper laws. Another problem today is that bills going through Congress are often the result of compromise. Hence the bill may not be the best but is, at most, the best that can be achieved under the circumstances. The majority rule is not necessarily the best rule, but it is better than an unrighteous dictatorship. Another problem with our legislation is that senators and congressmen often append riders to a relatively good bill so that unrelated additional laws and provisions are passed, of which the people are unaware.

Some people go into solitude voluntarily for a time. Even Jesus withdrew up into a mountain away from the world to commune with his Father in prayer. The atmosphere was conducive to prayer.

Num. 31:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 31:2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

Num. 31:3 And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

Num. 31:4 Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war.

Num. 31:5 So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war.

Num. 31:6 And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war, with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

The Midianites, a heathen nation that worshipped a false god, were a constant thorn in Israel's side. The whole earth is the Lord's—fields, trees, seas, animals, etc.— and God has promised the land of Israel to the Jew. When the Israelites left Egypt under Moses' leadership, they were to go to the Land of Promise, but because of disobedience, they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Now they were almost at the border of the Promised Land.

Here God was saying that Moses would die soon, but he had one more task to do. After warring with the Midianites, Moses would be "gathered unto thy people." He was 120 years old at this time. The Israelites were instructed to take 1,000 men from each tribe for a total of 12,000 to go to war against the Midianites.

Num. 31:7 And they warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males.

Num. 31:8 And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the

son of Beor they slew with the sword.

Num. 31:9 And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

Num. 31:10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire.

Num. 31:11 And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts.

Num. 31:12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho.

The Israelites were in the plains of Moab on the far side of the Dead Sea at the northern end where the Jordan River empties into the Salt Sea. The walls of Jericho fell in this area too. All Midianite males were to be slain. The reason will be given later. In addition, all of the Midianite cities and houses were burned, but the Israelites took a spoil of their flocks and animals and their women and children, bringing their spoil and prey to Moses. As we will see, certain allowances were made for infractions that occurred contrary to the original commandment.

At one time, Moab occupied a large territory north of Edom on the east side of the Dead Sea, but in time, half of the territory was taken from Moab. The current war took place in the portion that was still under Midianite influence.

Num. 31:13 And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

Num. 31:14 And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

Num. 31:15 And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?

Num. 31:16 Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

Num. 31:17 Now therefore kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

Num. 31:18 But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.

Num. 31:19 And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day.

Num. 31:20 And purify all your raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood.

As enemies of Israel, the Midianites had wanted a curse pronounced on the nation, but when Balaam tried to curse Israel, the Holy Spirit overruled so that a blessing came out of his mouth instead. Nevertheless, he gave private counsel to the Midianites that if they really wanted to

curse Israel, they should send out their daughters with timbrels and dances to seduce the men. The strategy was that when the Israelites got enamored of the Midianite women and took them back to the Israelite camp, it would be only a matter of time until sacrifices were made to Baal, the heathen god. A plague of death was to come on those who left the host of Israel to commit fornication with the daughters of the enemy.

The Israelites brought back booty from the war with the Midianites, yet contrary to Moses' commandment, they did not slay the male children. The order for the extermination of many of the Midianites was a picture of the Christian warfare against sin. Paul said the things that happened to the Israelites were prophetic types and shadows of things that would happen during the Christian (or Gospel) Age. There are enemies of God, the chief one being Satan, the unseen god, the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). What happened in the type illustrated how the Christian is to deal with his enemies. For instance, natural-minded individuals may make suggestions that, if followed, would entice the Christian from the narrow way of following Christ. Therefore, the Christian must be as firm as possible in dealing with sin and then call on the Lord for the balance of power and for forgiveness. When Jesus was tempted of the Adversary, Satan even used Scripture to justify the counsel. One temptation was to jump off the pinnacle of the Temple. Satan said Jesus would not die, for angels would bear him up lest he dash his foot against a stone. The Scripture is true, but Satan misapplied it, for that text applies to the spiritual battle of fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. To follow Satan's suggestion would have constituted disobedience to God, for we are not to tempt God. To please God and gain the prize, we must be definite and not equivocate.

By slaying the males, the Israelites made sure no more Midianites would be born in that region. In addition, all Midianite women who were not virgins were to be killed. This action effectively eliminated all of the women who had seduced the Israelites. The Israelites could take the virgin Midianite women as wives if they so chose.

In regard to this slaughter, we should remember that the Midianites will come forth from the tomb in the general resurrection. In addition to dying for Adam, a perfect man for a perfect man, Jesus had a seed in his loins. By forfeiting marriage and the possibility of having children, he offset the children born of Adam, who were condemned in sin. Anyone who accepts Jesus now and makes an unreserved consecration is released from the death penalty. In the next age, all in their graves shall come forth and hear the voice of the Son of man (John 5:28,29). In the Lord's Prayer, we pray for the Kingdom of Christ to come. At that time, all of mankind will have the opportunity to know the truth and get everlasting life.

The third and seventh days have already been explained, so we will not discuss them now.

Things made of wool or goats' hair (cashmere), clothing, and wood had to be purified. It is strange that even the *homes* of lepers were affected. The type of leprosy in certain regions of Ethiopia is a hopeless, incurable disease that results in slow death. This kind of leprosy, which existed in Jesus' day and in Old Testament times, is not the type in Western countries that can be cured with medicine and treatment. Back there leprosy had to be miraculously healed, and a procedure followed, to obtain that benefit. With regard to homes, leprosy crept up the walls and got into furniture. The best modern-day example is how smoke from cigarettes permeates a house, furniture, and clothing. To all but the addicted chain-smoker, the odor is offensive. The lesson is that sin is insidious, and each day we must ask the Lord for help. For those who consecrate, better and higher blessings are given a hundredfold for anything we might give up in the present life. Thus we find that the Israelites' garments had to be ceremonially purified following warfare. In antitype, Christians must forsake their old ways.

Num. 31:21 And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle, This is

the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses;

Num. 31:22 Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

Num. 31:23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water.

Num. 31:24 And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp.

When Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they were to enter a land of milk and honey, that is, a very fruitful land. Quite a bit of evidence shows that this was the condition of Israel in the past. However, when the Roman army came down and destroyed Jerusalem in AD 69–70, it defrocked the land of all trees, and erosion resulted. The terracing of the land can be plainly seen from a helicopter or small plane, indicating that the land was very fruitful at one time.

Of course the Israelites did not enter the Promised Land right away because of lack of faith. For punishment, they had to wander in the Wilderness of Sinai for 38 more years. Now the time setting was near the end of the 38 years. The Israelites would cross the border into the Promised Land shortly. With regard to the booty taken in the battle with the Midianites, the account now talks about the metals, which could be purged by fire. The experiences of the Israelites are lessons and types for Christians, and in this case, the lesson is about lusts of the flesh. Since all are born and shapen in iniquity, Christians have to battle to overcome the Canaanites that dwell in them. The seventh day pertains to the Kingdom Age.

Num. 31:25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 31:26 Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation:

Num. 31:27 And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation:

Num. 31:28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep:

Num. 31:29 Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave offering of the LORD.

Num. 31:30 And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD.

Num. 31:31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Num. 31:32 And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep,

Num. 31:33 And threescore and twelve thousand beeves,

Num. 31:34 And threescore and one thousand asses,

Num. 31:35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.

Num. 31:36 And the half, which was the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep:

Num. 31:37 And the LORD'S tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen.

Num. 31:38 And the beeves were thirty and six thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and twelve.

Num. 31:39 And the asses were thirty thousand and five hundred; of which the LORD'S tribute was threescore and one.

Num. 31:40 And the persons were sixteen thousand; of which the LORD'S tribute was thirty and two persons.

Num. 31:41 And Moses gave the tribute, which was the LORD'S heave offering, unto Eleazar the priest, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Num. 31:42 And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred,

Num. 31:43 (Now the half that pertained unto the congregation was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand and seven thousand and five hundred sheep,

Num. 31:44 And thirty and six thousand beeves,

Num. 31:45 And thirty thousand asses and five hundred,

Num. 31:46 And sixteen thousand persons;)

Num. 31:47 Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, both of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

We will not examine each verse because we feel that the time required and the merit obtained would satisfy only the mathematically inclined person. Verse 32 tells us the size of the booty taken in connection with the Israelite victory over the Midianites in the northern half of the territory of Transjordan. Even to this day, we can see how fruitful the land of Gilead was and is. The southern area of the part described in regard to the victory is also fruitful, but very few dwell there because of what the Lord's prophecy indicated would happen until the Kingdom Age. In the Kingdom, the people will return to the land in which they formerly resided. Whether they will return to the land of their birth or to the land in which they lived longest we cannot say, but it is reasonable to assume they will be brought back to the same area.

Notice that 675,000 sheep were supported on the land—a huge number! Although the land is still fertile today, it is nothing compared to back there. Many consider these numbers to be an exaggeration, just like the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea, but they are accurate. Higher critics try to undercut the power and authority of Scripture. At any rate, the booty was sizable: 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves (beef cattle), 61,000 asses, and 32,000 women or persons. The booty was divided in half. Out of one of the halves, 1 in 500 (a very low percentage) was given

to the priesthood, and 1 out of 50 went to the tribe of Levi as a tax. The booty was more than ample to supply their household needs and goods as an equitable share.

To state the matter again, half of the booty went to the people. One out of 500 went to the priesthood, 1 out of 50 went to the Levites, and the balance was distributed among the rest of the people. Thus about 99 percent of the booty went to the other 12 tribes, a much larger percentage for many more people.

The main lesson here is the fruitfulness of the land. It was a land of milk and honey. Land was promised to Israel on both sides of the river Jordan. What Israel has today is only a small portion of the inheritance, and it is on just this side of the Jordan.

Comment: In regard to the purification by fire and water for metals or just by water for those materials that could not stand the fire, two types of tests are indicated for the Christian. When we fight against the Canaanites and God works in us, there are two separate philosophies.

Reply: Some correction of character must be accompanied by discipline, that is, by *fiery* trial. Other types of sin to be overcome can simply be washed by the individual himself by the water of the Word, repentance, asking for forgiveness, etc. Sins can be forgiven based on the degree of culpability and the nature or enormity of the sin. In other words, one cannot just go out and commit adultery and then say, "I am sorry." Some sins can be washed and others need to be purged by fire.

Thus we see the great quantity of booty that was taken in the war with the Midianites and how it was to be equitably distributed.

Num. 31:48 And the officers which were over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses:

Num. 31:49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.

Num. 31:50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD.

Num. 31:51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels.

Num. 31:52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.

Num. 31:53 (For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)

Num. 31:54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

The number of gold shekels taken as part of the booty was also very large. (Gold shekels were very different from silver shekels.)

Q: Was the oblation voluntary?

A: Apparently, this distribution was required. The leadership assumed the responsibility of seeing that of the booty, a certain selection was made. Notice that of the original gold, silver, brass, tin, lead, and iron, only the gold was taken for the Lord. The host of Israel could keep the rest.

The margin shows that the character of the people was given to ornamentation to some extent. The “chains” were gold ankle chains. In addition, there were bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces (“tablets”) to make an atonement for the nation before the Lord. The gold was brought and then put into the side wings of the Tabernacle of the congregation to be stored for future use and to be a memorial.

Num. 32:1 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

Num. 32:2 The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

Num. 32:3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

Num. 32:4 Even the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

Num. 32:5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.

Num. 32:6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

Num. 32:7 And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

Num. 32:8 Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land.

Num. 32:9 For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

Num. 32:10 And the LORD’S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,

Num. 32:11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:

Num. 32:12 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

Num. 32:13 And the LORD’S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

Num. 32:14 And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

Num. 32:15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

From a prophetic standpoint, it is important to know that the Israelites who requested land east of Jordan (Ramoth-gilead) were the tribes of Reuben and Gad. (Manasseh will come into the picture a little later.) These two tribes were singled out first because of what they picture. In antitype, Reuben and Gad are the primary or first ones to receive a spiritual inheritance. Reuben, the firstborn, represents the Little Flock, and Gad pictures the Great Company. In this division of the tribes, Gad was regarded favorably. (Each listing of the 12 tribes has a different order because each one teaches a different lesson.)

When Reuben and Gad requested an inheritance on the east side of the Jordan, Moses got indignant. "Do you mean to say that you will settle here and the rest of the tribes are supposed to go into the Promised Land and fight the war without you? Do you remember what the Lord did to the ones who spied out the land and brought back an unfavorable report? For 40 years, we have been wandering in the wilderness because of that incident." But Reuben and Gad had an answer that pacified Moses. Not only was Moses indignant, but the Lord too. Maybe Reuben and Gad needed to be prodded, for had Moses not manifested his displeasure, they probably would not have participated in the battle. But Moses' anger served a purpose. They had to join in the battle against the barbarous tribes in the Promised Land who burned their children in the fire. These peoples had to be eradicated from the land lest they contaminate the Israelites who would live among them.

The false religion of these peoples included torture that, in the antitype, is the blasphemous doctrine of hellfire. For one who understands the truth about hell to then go back into the nominal Church where hellfire is preached is an insult to God. The Scriptures teach that the dead know not anything. When a person other than a Christian dies, he is unconscious. Ecclesiastes 9:10 reads, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." The Bible hope is a resurrection (an awakening to life) from the sleep of death, in which there is no consciousness, no knowledge. How can anyone even dream of returning to the nominal Church just for the fellowship of others? Hellfire is a worse doctrine than the Trinity. Nowhere is the word "Trinity" found in the Bible, and it is a confusing and unscriptural doctrine, but hellfire demeans God's character. Hence we see the power of Satan, who has blinded the minds of men lest they see the glorious light of the gospel. His power of darkness is over the whole world, who are children of the devil unless they accept Jesus Christ.

Comment: Genesis 15:16 said that the iniquity of the Amorites had not yet come to the full.

Reply: Yes, and then later their iniquity did come to the full and they (and several others) were to be destroyed out of the land because they worshipped Molech in one form or another and baked cakes to the queen of heaven instead of to God. "Thou shalt utterly destroy ... the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee" (Deut. 20:17). "And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites" (Josh. 3:10). God had told the Israelites to worship *Him alone*, and not the Virgin Mary, the pope, or any other individual. Jesus plainly instructed, "Call no man your father upon the earth" (Matt. 23:9). The word "pope" means "father of fathers," and priests are called "father," which is an absolute contradiction of the Gospels.

Now we will see how Reuben and Gad responded to Moses' and the Lord's anger.

Num. 32:16 And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

Num. 32:17 But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

Num. 32:18 We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

Num. 32:19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

Reuben and Gad said, "We are willing to fight with the rest of the tribes of Israel in the eradication and displacement of these other peoples." These words satisfied Moses. After the Israelites crossed Jordan, the conquering of the land under Joshua took six years, so Reuben and Gad were away from their families for that length of time. All Reuben and Gad requested was a little time to build "fenced cities" to protect their wives and children, and then they would join the other tribes in conquering the land. Their attitude was admirable.

Num. 32:20 And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

Num. 32:21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

Num. 32:22 And the land be subdued before the LORD: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

Num. 32:23 But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

Num. 32:24 Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

Num. 32:25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.

Num. 32:26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

Num. 32:27 But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

Num. 32:28 So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:

Num. 32:29 And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land

shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

Num. 32:30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

Num. 32:31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

Num. 32:32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours.

Num. 32:33 And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about.

Verses 20–33 reiterate what Moses had previously said: “All right. If you carry out this agreement, you can stay on the east side of the Jordan and occupy the land of Gilead, Bashan, etc., that appeals to you.”

Earlier just Reuben and Gad were mentioned, and they represent the two spiritual tribes who receive a spirit nature first. In verse 33, “half the tribe of Manasseh” is mentioned for the first time, picturing the Ancient Worthies, another class to receive spirit nature but later, at the end of the Kingdom. In other words, the order of the listing of the tribes harmonizes with the order of the granting of spirit nature in the antitype.

Comment: The end of verse 23 is an interesting memory text: “Be sure your sin will find you out.” “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Comment: It is also interesting that if Reuben and Gad had disobeyed, Moses did not say that they would get no inheritance but that their inheritance would be west of Jordan. For both the type and the antitype, 12 tribes had to get an inheritance.

Num. 32:34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

Num. 32:35 And Atroth, Shopan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

Num. 32:36 And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities: and folds for sheep.

Num. 32:37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,

Num. 32:38 And Nebo and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

Num. 32:39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it.

Num. 32:40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

Num. 32:41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-jair.

Num. 32:42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

Reuben, picturing the Little Flock, got the best inheritance on the east side of Jordan, including Heshbon and Nebo. With Gad, picturing the Great Company, the reward was prominent but lesser cities. Half the tribe of Manasseh was included in the 9 1/2 tribes west of Jordan. The other half of Manasseh was part of the 2 1/2 tribes east of Jordan. Manasseh pictures the Ancient Worthies, the western half during the Kingdom and the eastern half at the end of the Kingdom when they get a spiritual reward.

Immediately around the Tabernacle were four divisions of Levites, who had no inheritance in the land: Amramites, Merarites, Kohathites, and Gershonites. Here in Numbers 32:34–42, only three tribes are mentioned: Reuben, Gad, and one half of Manasseh, respectively. The fourth class, comparable to the Great Company of this age, will be companions of the Ancient Worthies. These companions, or friends, of the Ancient Worthies will also get a spiritual reward at the end of the Kingdom Age.

Manasseh's one-half inheritance east of Jordan started with Machir. The children of Machir were a particular branch of the tribe of Manasseh who got the chief cities (verses 39 and 40). Next to be mentioned was Jair, another son of Manasseh, who got small towns. Thus a distinction was made among those in the tribe of Manasseh. The third division, Nobah, raises the possibility of a Modern Worthy class, who consecrate between the ages. Nobah's inheritance was the least of the three divisions of Manasseh.

Num. 33:1 These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Num. 33:2 And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out.

Num. 33:3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

Num. 33:4 For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

Num. 33:5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth.

Num. 33:6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness.

Num. 33:7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which is before Baal-zephon: and they pitched before Migdol.

Num. 33:8 And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

Num. 33:9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.

Num. 33:10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.

Num. 33:11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.

Num. 33:12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.

Num. 33:13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.

Num. 33:14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

Num. 33:15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

The Bible tells what happened at each one of the places listed in verses 3–15. We will not review that information at this time. In all, the Israelites encamped at 42 places, or stops, during the 40 years. The first 12 were a result of the Exodus. After the Israelites left Rameses in Egypt, it took them 3 1/2 days plus the 1/2 day through the Red Sea and three days on the far side of the Red Sea to get to Marah—a total of seven days of unleavened bread. On the night of the Passover before leaving Egypt, they partook of the lamb in their individual dwellings. The Apostle Paul likened the type of the Passover lamb to Jesus' being slain as the Lamb of God. Seven days of unleavened bread followed the Passover night. From one perspective, the seven days picture the Gospel Age.

Rameses was the starting point of the Exodus. After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites encamped in the Wilderness of Sin(ai), and they stayed there for one year. Now we are getting near the end of the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, and the account is summing up from the first chapter of Exodus through the Book of Leviticus. Moses reviewed the experiences one way here and another way in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy, a long book, covers only a few days, as does the Book of Leviticus. With the Book of Numbers, however, the time period covered is almost 40 years. Moses summed up a lifetime of experience and gave very good advice.

Comment: In contrast, the Book of Genesis covers more than 2,000 years.

Num. 33:16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.

Num. 33:17 And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.

Num. 33:18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah.

Num. 33:19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez.

Num. 33:20 And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.

Num. 33:21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah.

Num. 33:22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah.

Num. 33:23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher.

Num. 33:24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

Num. 33:25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

Num. 33:26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.

Num. 33:27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.

Num. 33:28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.

Num. 33:29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.

Num. 33:30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.

Num. 33:31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan.

Num. 33:32 And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad.

Num. 33:33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah.

Num. 33:34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.

Num. 33:35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-geber.

Num. 33:36 And they removed from Ezion-geber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.

We are given a history of what happened at the first four or five stops after the Israelites left Sinai, and we are told how they provoked the Lord and Moses. Then the account is silent until the latter part of their journeys and experiences. Thus the account does not give details on all 42 stops—just on a few at the beginning and a few at the end when Balaam gave his prophecy, etc.

Ezion-geber, which is near Eilat, is fairly well known. Next the Israelites went north and “pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.” Miriam died at Kadesh, and Aaron’s death occurred subsequently (verse 38).

Num. 33:37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

Num. 33:38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month.

Num. 33:39 And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

Aaron died at age 123 on Mount Hor. Numbers 20:1 says that Miriam died in the first month, but the year is not given. Now, in Numbers 33:38, the year of Aaron’s death is supplied; it was the 40th year. In other words, in the 40th year, Miriam died in the first month and Aaron died in the fifth month. Stated another way, it was 39 years and 1 month into the wilderness wanderings that Miriam died, and 39 years and 5 months when Aaron died. At the end of the 40th year—that is, seven months hence—the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Thus Chapters 21 through 36 all occurred in a seven-month time period.

Num. 33:40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan,

heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

Num. 33:41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah.

Num. 33:42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.

Num. 33:43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

Num. 33:44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab.

Num. 33:45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad.

Num. 33:46 And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim.

Num. 33:47 And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

Num. 33:48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.

Num. 33:49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

After Aaron died, the itinerary of the Israelites circled around Edom and went north along the far side of the Dead Sea up to the plains of Moab in the vicinity not far from Jordan. From Nebo, the view was good across the Jordan valley of Israel and the Dead Sea.

Comment: There are no repeat stops in the listing. Moreover, Sinai today does not seem to have 42 places where 2 million Israelites could have camped.

Reply: Judging from the booty that was captured from other people, we see that Sinai and adjacent areas were much more densely populated in the period of history around 1575 BC. (The Exodus occurred at 1615 BC, 40 years earlier.)

Comment: Sufficient water was needed for 2 million people at each of the stopping places—a remarkable fact when we think of Sinai today. The area has changed.

Num. 33:50 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

Num. 33:51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

Num. 33:52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

Num. 33:53 And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

Num. 33:54 And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less

inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

Num. 33:55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

Num. 33:56 Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

When the Israelites stopped in the plains of Moab, Moses took time to describe what they were to do when they entered the Promised Land. The land was to be divided by lot for an inheritance in two ways. First, the wider boundaries were given that were assigned to the various tribes—the boundary lines that were to encompass the land allotted to each of the tribes. Then Moses said the lots given to the tribes as an inheritance were to be subdivided on a pro-rata basis according to the number of families. Each family would get enough land to provide an income throughout the year. In other words, land was given according to the size of the tribe and the number of families within each tribe.

Q: Moses' instruction in verse 52 was to "destroy all their pictures." The Revised Standard Version says that the Israelites were to destroy all the "figured stones" of the inhabitants of the land. Is the thought that they were to destroy carved and/or painted stones used in false worship?

A: Yes. Generally, the statues were rather strange. Even though three-dimensional, they were flat and not at all like the statues of Greece and Rome.

Comment: Moses did not tell the Israelites to kill the inhabitants of the land but just to "dispossess" them.

Reply: Yes, unless they resisted, in which case the inhabitants of the land were to be slain. Most of the tribes came from much farther north. They worked their way southward from the land of the Hittites and settled in the Promised Land. Canaan, one of the grandsons of Noah, took the choice land.

Num. 34:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 34:2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)

Num. 34:3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward:

Num. 34:4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon:

Num. 34:5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

Num. 34:6 And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.

Num. 34:7 And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor:

This “mount Hor” is different from the one on which Aaron died. The “great sea” is the Mediterranean, and the “river of Egypt” is the Wadi El Arish. Here the account is giving an outline boundary, or the general border, of the entire settlement of the 9 1/2 tribes on the west side of the Jordan.

Num. 34:8 From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:

Num. 34:9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border.

Num. 34:10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham:

Num. 34:11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward:

Num. 34:12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.

Num. 34:13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe:

Num. 34:14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance:

Num. 34:15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho eastward, toward the sunrising.

The “salt sea” is the Dead Sea, and the “sea of Chinnereth” is the Sea of Galilee. The rough, general description of the land to be given to the 9 1/2 tribes was as follows. When the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land, they were to wend their way southward on the far side of the Dead Sea all the way down to Kadesh-barnea. From there, they were to strike out more or less due west until they came to the Mediterranean Sea. They would follow the Mediterranean coast northward all the way up to Hamath and then go more or less eastward to the far side of the Sea of Galilee. From there, they would follow the river Jordan south until it emptied into the Dead Sea.

The general, and even less-detailed, description of the land for the 2 1/2 tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh was given next. Their land was on the far side of the Dead Sea, and it extended up to the Sea of Galilee.

Num. 34:16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 34:17 These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Num. 34:18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance.

Num. 34:19 And the names of the men are these: Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

Num. 34:20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud.

Num. 34:21 Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon.

Num. 34:22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli.

Num. 34:23 The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod.

Num. 34:24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiptan.

Num. 34:25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

Num. 34:26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan.

Num. 34:27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi.

Num. 34:28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

Num. 34:29 These are they whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Moses named the land-surveying team, which consisted of one prince from each tribe. These princes were to set the boundary lines. At the head of the team were "Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun." Each of the 12 princes would be particularly interested in the land allotted to his own tribe and thus would make sure that the boundary line was accurate and distinct.

Num. 35:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

Num. 35:2 Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them.

Num. 35:3 And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts.

Num. 35:4 And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about.

Num. 35:5 And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities.

Num. 35:6 And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities.

Num. 35:7 So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs.

Num. 35:8 And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.

The Levites, who had no inheritance in the land, were given 48 cities, six of which were cities of refuge. In other words, instead of having houses with a lot of acreage, the Levites dwelled in apartment buildings, as it were. However, surrounding the cities appointed to them, enough land was assigned so that they could raise crops and have some cattle. The cities were distributed on a pro-rata basis with a greater number of cities being given by the larger tribes.

Q: How were the cities laid out according to the cubit measurements?

A: The “cities” themselves varied in size, although most were just small villages, or hamlets. Hebron, one of the cities of refuge, is an example of a larger city. Whatever the size of the city or hamlet, the suburbs were then extended outward 1,000 cubits on each side. Thus the cities plus their suburbs were square, and they were larger or smaller depending on the size of the city itself, for the 1,000-cubit measurements began at the outer edges of the city and extended outward in the four directions.

Num. 35:9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Num. 35:10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

Num. 35:11 Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.

Num. 35:12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

Num. 35:13 And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge.

Num. 35:14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge.

Num. 35:15 These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

Num. 35:16 And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

Num. 35:17 And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

Num. 35:18 Or if he smite him with an handweapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death.

There were cases of accidental death, revenge death, and premeditated death. Today manslaughter receives a weak penalty as opposed to premeditated murder. In any event, the killer back there could flee to a city of refuge. However, he still had to stand trial—and the trial was held at the site of the incident. The elders conducted the trial, and if the party was found guilty of premeditated murder, he was put to death. However, if the party did not kill with premeditation, he was remanded back to the city of refuge and had to remain there until the death of the high priest.

Num. 35:19 The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

Num. 35:20 But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die;

Num. 35:21 Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.

Num. 35:22 But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait,

Num. 35:23 Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm:

Num. 35:24 Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments:

The two extremes were accidental murder (such as an ax head flying off the handle and killing someone) and premeditated murder (killing with intent or enmity). In the case of accidental death, the responsible party had to flee as quickly as possible to a city of refuge lest he be killed by a relative of the deceased. The cities of refuge were places to go until justice could be eventually meted out in one form or another.

Num. 35:25 And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.

Num. 35:26 But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;

Num. 35:27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood:

Num. 35:28 Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

Num. 35:29 So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

Num. 35:30 Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.

One witness could testify, but one witness was not sufficient to cause a person to be put to death. If a person was found to be a false witness, he received the same penalty as the guilty party. For example, one who testified falsely in a murder trial would himself be put to death. Exodus 20:21 tells what to do if a husband and another party were fighting and injury resulted in the death of the fetus or the death of the mother. If the fetus died, the guilty party had to pay a price according to the value that was set. From the standpoint of the Bible, the fetus in the womb is not considered a viable person. We know this because if the fetus in the womb were regarded as a person and it died, then the guilty party would be put to death and not just pay a fine. In other words, a man's life did not have to be forfeited because of the death of a fetus. Only when the fetus was out of the womb was it considered a viable entity. However, it had some value in the sense of hope of life. The set price or value of the fetus depended on the number of months of the pregnancy. Of course if the woman died, the guilty party was put to death.

Num. 35:31 Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death.

Num. 35:32 And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest.

Num. 35:33 So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.

Num. 35:34 Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

In the Revised Standard, the word "satisfaction" is "ransom." In other words, no excuses or amelioration was allowed. What the Law declared was to be, but of course there were varying degrees of responsibility. In the case of accidental death with an ox or someone's getting injured through negligence (such as falling through a broken railing on a porch), satisfaction with an amount of money was in order.

In regard to the death of the high priest, David told Shimei that as long as he remained in the city, his life would be spared. If Shimei departed from the city, he could be killed. Years later Shimei did leave the city and its suburbs, and he was executed (1 Kings 2:36-46). But what is the antitypical significance of the death of the high priest?

Comment: In the Gospel Age, the high priest is Jesus, and the lesson is that we must stay under his blood. If we come out from the antitypical "city," we are back under the curse of Adam.

Reply: Yes, if we come out from under the robe of Christ's righteousness, we are naked.

Spiritually speaking, the death of the high priest can be considered in different ways. One standpoint is that as long as he (Jesus) is in office, the Christian is protected, but when the age changes and brings a new situation, the former protection will no longer be viable. The Christian in the Gospel Age is covered until death as long as he remains faithful to the Lord, but the Kingdom Age will usher in a change of dispensation. Our situation in that change of dispensation depends on whether we receive a favorable or an unfavorable report.

Num. 36:1 And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near, and spake before Moses, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel:

Num. 36:2 And they said, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

Num. 36:3 And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

Num. 36:4 And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be, then shall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

Num. 36:5 And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, The tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well.

Machir, the head of the tribe of Manasseh, was concerned that if Zelophehad's daughters received an inheritance, the property rights would pass to another tribe through marriage. The answer to the dilemma was to be given through Moses.

Num. 36:6 This is the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry.

Num. 36:7 So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

Num. 36:8 And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

Num. 36:9 Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance.

Num. 36:10 Even as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad:

Num. 36:11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers' sons:

Num. 36:12 And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

Num. 36:13 These are the commandments and the judgments, which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.

To keep the land with the designated tribe, the daughters were required to marry within the family tribal arrangement. Today the Arabs feel that land in Israel belongs to them, but they do

not realize how far back the deed goes—long before they were on the scene. The Arabs are actually latecomers.

Zelophehad's daughters were only a sample illustration of why this particular arrangement was made. Other instances would come under this solution as well.

Q: How can a Christian become the “slayer”?

A: Christians can “murder,” or slay, the reputations of others with words. If we hate someone, that hatred will be manifested sooner or later. A mild grievance can be contained and suffered, but hatred will boil over and reveal itself. At the time of conversion, we should not tell of grievous sins committed prior to consecration. If we palaver too much about our past, others will remember what we said.

Comment: There is a big difference between sins committed before consecration and sins committed after consecration. Grievous sins afterward must be publicly confessed.

The cities of refuge will also apply in the Kingdom Age, but our interest is focused on the Gospel Age and on what will affect us.