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TWENTY LESSONS IN NUMBERS

By William M. Smith

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND LESSONS -- At the time these lessons were written, William M. Smith was serving as Superintendent of Union Bible Seminary, Westfield, Indiana. HDM now has in possession the following sets of 20 Lessons for Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Revelation. As we received them, these lessons were on loose-leaf sheets, printed on one side, and bound in folders. They could be used as either Sunday School or Bible Study lessons.

ABOUT THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE CHAPTER NUMBER AND VERSE -- The divider between the chapter and verse is not consistent, sometimes being a period and at other times being a colon. I have left them as they were. Also, there was **NO PERIOD AFTER THE NUMBERED ASSIGNMENTS** at the end of the lessons, and I have also left that as it was. --
DVM

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01 -- THE NUMBERING THE WARRIORS -- (Numbers 1:1-54)

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS relates the history of the wanderings of the Israelites from the time they left Mount Sinai, where the law had been given and the Tabernacle built, until they came to the east side of the Jordan River ready to enter the land of Canaan, a period of more than thirty-eight years.

There are Three Main Divisions in the book: First, Preparation for the march, chapter one to 10.10; Second, The journeyings through the wilderness, chapter 10.11 to 21:35; Third, Incidents that occurred on the east of Jordan, chapter 22.1 to the end of the book. In our present study we are dividing the book into twenty parts of our own arrangement.

The Beginning of the Book is Dated "the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt." Comparison with Exodus 40.17, which gives the date of the erection of the Tabernacle as "the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month," shows that this was just a month after the Tabernacle was erected. That month is occupied with the events recorded in the book of Leviticus.

The Relation of Numbers to the preceding books written by Moses needs to be considered at the beginning of the study of the book. In Genesis the history that begins with the entire race, describing the creation, the fall, the flood, and the Babel incident, narrows down, after the twelfth chapter, to the history of the descendants of one man, Abraham, and finally to only one part of his descendants, those descended from Jacob, later named Israel. Genesis closes with the descendants of Israel in Egypt. Exodus opens with these people in bondage to the Egyptians, and records their deliverance and journey to Sinai, closing with the account of the erection of the Tabernacle. Leviticus details the arrangements for the worship of this group of select people. All these things

having been set in order, the book of Numbers relates the experiences of the Israelites in their wilderness march from Sinai to the Promised Land.

One Practical Value to the Christian of the studying of the book of Numbers, as well as many other parts of the Old Testament, is to find therein some types, shadows and illustrations of Christian experience. Therefore, while in this study we will endeavor faithfully to bring out the meaning conveyed in the record itself, we will also try to point out some lessons profitable to the Christian in his pilgrimage toward heaven.

Two Interpretations of the typology of the wilderness experience of the Israelites are possible. In one sense this wilderness journey can be made to picture the state of a person who has been regenerated, of which the deliverance from Egypt is a type, but not yet sanctified, or one who has failed to go on in the state of grace pictured by the entrance into Canaan. In another way it is a picture of the experience of the Christian in his warfare with the forces of evil he meets in his journey through this world. It was this view the poet had when he penned the lines:

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim thro' this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
"Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing waters flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through."

Chapter One details the numbering of the twelve tribes exclusive of the tribe of Levi, twelve being maintained by dividing the descendants of Joseph into two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, which is made possible from the fact that Jacob had adopted them as his (Gen. 48.5). Only men above twenty years of age are counted in this numbering, and the total is given as 603,550. It is interesting to compare this number with Exodus 38.26, when the people were numbered about nine months before. The number there is identical with the number here, indicating that no deaths had occurred in the months intervening between these two numberings.

"Able to go forth to War" occurs fourteen times in this chapter, and serves as a key to its contents. It is first spoken of the entire company, in verse 3, and then repeated in connection with the numbering of each of the twelve tribes, and again in the summary in verse 45. Warfare lay ahead of these men, and they needed to be able for it. We may take a good lesson from this. While it is true that the "weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (II Cor. 10.4), as were theirs, yet we as Christians have a warfare, as described in Ephesians 6.10-20, and are eligible to be numbered as soldiers of Christ only as we are able to go forth to the holy warfare. There may be in the church persons who are not able to go forth to war, as there were women and children in the camp of Israel who are not numbered in this census. Christian reader, can you qualify as one "able to go forth to war," or will you be numbered only as a child or a woman, in the sense of not being able to bear the brunt of the holy warfare?

An Important Word, though it occurs but a single time in the chapter before us, is the word "pedigree." In order to qualify as a soldier in any tribe it was necessary for every man to be able to declare his pedigree. He had to show by his birth that he belonged to the tribe with which he was numbered. It is plain that none of the "mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt with the Israelites could qualify as soldiers. If you are to qualify as a warrior in the church of Jesus Christ, you must be more than an "associate member," you must be able to say you are born again. Doubt on this point will cripple all the service you may attempt for the Lord. Alas, there are too many in the organized church today who are wholly unable to declare that they have been truly born of the Spirit. Like the mixed multitude who followed the Israelites out of Egypt and who were ever lusting for the things of Egypt, these unpedigreed church members are ever lusting for the things of the world, and, when they get in the majority they manage things.

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02 -- THE CAMP OF THE WARRIORS -- (Numbers 2:1-34)

THE Numbering of the Twelve Tribes having been Completed, we now study their encampment, the order in which they were arranged when not on the march. In view of the fact that the number of men above twenty years of age numbered above 600,000 it is reasonable to calculate that the entire camp, counting women and children under twenty years of age, would total about two millions.

The Arrangement of the Camp is well worth studying. If any one supposes that the Israelites were an unorganized horde of semi-savages they have never studied the book of Numbers. In our first lesson we saw the importance, of the word "pedigree." In this lesson we call attention to another important word, and that is "standard." An Israelite must be sure of his pedigree in order to know under which standard he was to camp and march. Though the camp was large, every man had his place and every man knew his place. To anticipate a little, notice what Balaam says about the encampment of the Israelites in chapter 24: "And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes," (vs 2), and he further said, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! 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." (vs. 5, 6).

The Center of the Camp was the Tabernacle, and every tribe was located in relation to that sacred structure. No matter where they camped, or whether it were for "two days, or a month, or a year" (ch. 9.22) the arrangement was always the same. And when they marched each tribe took its place in relation to the Tabernacle.

The Size of the Encampment must have been considerable. It has been estimated that the camp was twelve miles around. A little thought will show that this is a conservative estimate. The city of Indianapolis, for instance, does not contain more than 400,000 people. The camp of Israel, we have estimated, had five times that many persons in it. A person would need to travel more than twelve miles to go around the city of Indianapolis. Yet the camp was probably better policed than any large city in America today. There is no record of a murder or a theft in all their march. In fact the law was so rigidly enforced that the man who took God's name in vain and the one who broke

the Sabbath day were promptly arrested and brought to justice. See Lev. 24.10-15 and Num. 15.32-36.

The Word "Standard" should be carefully noted. It occurs eight times in the second chapter. Once the word "ensign" is used. It appears that every tribe had a flag that each member of the tribe could readily know his place both in camping and in marching. All the tribes had the Tabernacle as the center about which to rally, but the members of each tribe had a standard around which the members of that tribe rallied. In like manner every Christian, who belongs to the one church has Christ as the center and yet should be true to the particular church to which he belongs. Each church has its standard and discipline, but all the churches, if true churches, have Christ as their center. It is appalling how lightly the average church member regards the discipline of the church to which he belongs. It not infrequently occurs that a church alters its standards to suit the worldly members of the congregation instead of the members altering their conduct to conform to the discipline.

The Twelve Tribes of warriors were divided into four camps according to the four points of the compass. On the east of the Tabernacle was what is called the camp of Judah, that being the leading tribe of that camp. Associated with Judah were Issachar and Zebulun, On the south was the camp of Reuben, and associated with that tribe were the tribes of Simeon and Gad, On the west was the camp of Ephraim, and Manasseh and Benjamin were associated with that tribe, On the North was the camp of Dan, containing besides Dan the tribes of Asher and Naphtali.

The Tribal Banners -- In view of the fact that mention is made of standards, it is understood that each of the four camps had its distinctive banner, or flag. Alfred Edersheim, a converted Jew, who has contributed much in the way of literature about the Jewish history and ordinances of value to the Christian church, says "according to Jewish tradition they bore as emblems 'the likeness of the four living creatures,' seen by Ezekiel in his vision of the Cherubim (Ezek. 1.10), the color of the standard being the same as that of the precious stones on the high-priest's breastplate, on which the names of the standard-bearing tribes were graven." If this interpretation is correct the banner of the camp of Judah would have been a lion on a background of blood red; the banner of the camp of Reuben would have been the head of a man on a ground of dark red; the banner of Ephraim the head of a bullock on a ground of amber; and the banner of the camp of Dan an eagle on a ground of bright yellow.

Israel in the wilderness is a remarkable spectacle. Here in a desert was a great nation living directly from the hand of God. Nature provided no food or water for this vast host, but they were fed and watered by the hand of God for some forty years. They built no city, and lived in a camp of tents. They had no lighting system, but God gave them light by night. Great nations lived in those days. There was Egypt and ancient cities of the east, the excavation of which has shown that they had a high state of civilization, but the brightest spot on earth was this encampment of Israel in the wilderness. And the reason was that God was in their midst. True there were multiplied faults in that nation, but out of that discipline of the wilderness emerged the greatest nation the earth has ever seen, and their future is yet to be unveiled. In like manner the church of today has its glaring faults, but greatest of all men who have lived and wrought on the earth have come from that ancient nation of Israel and the church of the present age.

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03 -- THE CAMP OF THE WORKERS -- (Numbers 3:1-4:49)

THE Tribe of Levi, which was not included in the numbering recorded in chapter one, are numbered and stationed in chapter three. The twelve tribes of whom we have already written were described as warriors. The tribe of Levi may be described as workers. They are not spoken of as able to go forth to war. Their service was more important than war.

The Selection of the Tribe of Levi doubtless is based on their behavior at the time of the making of the golden calf. When Moses returned from the mount, after his forty days there, when he had received the Ten Commandments and the specifications for the Tabernacle, he found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf that they had made and indulging in superstitious rites in connection therewith. Moses called for those who were on the Lord's side to rally to him, and the members of the tribe of Levi responded. They were given dreadful work to do in the judicial slaying of the naked worshippers of the calf. From this we may gather the thought that we should never allow human relationships to interfere with what God has called us to do. The tenderest ties may sometimes need to be severed in order to qualify as a faithful worker for God. It is to be noted that the Levites took their ground on God's side before He selected them as the priestly tribe. Header. If you would be favored of God with some particularly important service that brings you near to Him, it will first be necessary for you to resolutely take your place on the Lord's side, even though all the other religious people you know are wavering under some popular fad or fashion or movement that is not of God.

God Substituted the Levites for the firstborn of all the tribes, On the night of the Passover, when all the firstborn of the Egyptians died, God hallowed all the firstborn of the Israelites, as stated in the 13th and 14th verses of the chapter we are studying: "And I, behold. I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites are Mine; 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 of Israel, both man and beast: Mine shall they be: I am the Lord." Since God made provision whereby the firstborn of the Israelites were saved, He claimed them as His own, and now He substitutes the tribe of Levi for all the firstborn of all the tribes.

The Encampment of the Levites was close around the Tabernacle: the Gershonites on the west, the Kohathites on the south, and the Merarites on the north, Moses and Aaron and their sons, though of the family of the Kohathites, camped at the entrance of the Tabernacle, on the east, which was a convenient place for the exercising of leadership on the part of Moses, and of the priesthood on the part of Aaron and his sons.

The Work of the Levites was quite different from that of the ether tribes. C. H. MacIntosh, who has written his excellent "Notes on the Book of Numbers," divides the entire camp into warriors, workers, and worshippers. The twelve tribes, those "able to go forth to war," constituted the warriors; the Levites were the workers, and the family of Aaron the worshippers. "There was a nation of warriors, a tribe of workers, a family of worshippers."

The Responsibility of the Levites was greater than that of the other tribes. They served as a guard about the Tabernacle when it was at rest; and, when it was in motion. It was their charge and burden. They took it down when the camp moved, and set it up when the camp rested, and were responsible for its sacred vessels and equipment at all times, But they had the favor of being nearer to God than any of the other tribes. From this we may gather the thought that the nearer to God a Christian is the greater is his responsibility.

The Levites were Numbered from a month old and upward, and the entire tribe, counting the males only, numbered 22,000, but when it came to their service they were numbered only from thirty years old to fifty, and that number, capable of service in and about the Tabernacle, was 8,580. Each of three divisions of the Levites had their specific task assigned them. The Kohathites had the greatest responsibility, and that was "about the most holy things," the sacred vessels. The Gershonites had as their responsibility the curtains of the Tabernacle, the tent that covered it, the curtains of the court, and similar parts of the Tabernacle. The Merarites had as their care the boards of the Tabernacle, the pillars of the court, the sockets and pins and cords, and what pertained thereto.

The Levites' Tasks were assigned by the priests. In like manner the Christian's tasks are assigned by our Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, By His Spirit He can make known to every Christian his work in distinction to the work of others. Because every Levite had his specific task there was no confusion. Each division of the tribe had its general task, and every member had his particular task to do. When the signal was given to take down the Tabernacle and prepare to march, every individual knew exactly what he was to do, and as he did that promptly, he interfered with no one else. By each attending to his own duty there was no confusion and yet, all working together, were in perfect harmony. So it is now in the church when it is working under God's orders as given in His Word and revealed by His Spirit.

Large and Small Duties -- There were large and small things to do. Some loaded and unloaded boards from the wagons, while others had the honor of being assigned as one of those who bore the ark or the altar. Some individual may have had a pin or a cord to pull up, wind up and carry to the next place of camping, But for even a pin or a cord to have been missing when they set up the Tabernacle again would have been to have disturbed the unity of service. Let us not therefore envy the other Christian's position, or try to copy him slavishly, but let us each be content in knowing we are doing our appointed task pleasing to our Great High Priest, who has assigned us our place in the body.

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04 -- DISCIPLINE AND DEVOTION -- (Numbers 5:1-6:27)

Chapter Five first mentions the instructions of God regarding lepers. All these were to be segregated from the main camp. They evidently were not left to wander independently among the various tribes, but they camped outside when the camp rested, and marched in a separate company when moving from place to place. Compare Paul's instruction about putting the offending member out of the Corinthian church, as told in I Cor. 5.5, and the instruction to restore him as told in II Cor. 2.6-8. While putting people out of the church membership may seem a harsh treatment, as in

this case, perhaps it is the quickest way to restore them to full unity with the church as seems to have been done in this case.

The Law of Restitution -- Verses 6-8 relates to making restitution, evidently in case of one who has stolen something and undertakes to make it right. Not only is the principal to be restored, but a fifth part, or twenty percent is to be added to it. The question is sometimes asked, when a person feels it his duty to make right an offense of some years ago and the party is dead or cannot be found, how can he make it right? Verse 8 gives instruction on this point -- it is to be recompensed to the Lord through His representative, the priest. Evidently in terms of today this would mean to give it to some religious cause, and through the channels of the church to which the member belongs, or wishes to join, would be the natural way to do it. How important it is to keep one's conscience clear by straightening up any inconsistency of the past life!

The Trial of Jealousy that occupies the remainder of chapter five, indicates that even suspicion of wrong needs to be dealt with. While the suspected wife had to pass through a severe trial, yet, if the wife was innocent, it was a means of vindicating her and restoring her to the confidence of her husband, On the other hand secret unfaithfulness was detected and punished. The individual Christian may need to be tried as to his faithfulness to the heavenly Bridegroom. Happy is the Christian who can say, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me" Psalm 139.23, 24.

In Chapter Six we have instructions about a character that draws nearer to God than warriors or workers, and is above the average worshipper. This is the Nazarite. To be a Nazarite was evidently an optional matter with an individual, and both men and women were eligible to seek this holy separation. Three things are outstanding about what they must not do: they must not drink wine or partake of the fruit of the vine in any way; they were not to shave their locks; they were not to touch a dead body. If we can discover the meaning of this to us as Christians we will find a line of truth very solemnizing and yet very instructive and fraught with blessing to him who will take the spiritual position indicated by instruction that was literal to the Israelite.

The Optional Feature of being a Nazarite is worthy of attention. So often we hear people ask, What harm is there in doing this, or going to that place? Is it all right for me to do this or that? It is evident persons who ask such Questions are not seeking the nearness to God that the Nazarite vow pictures. He who seeks nearness to God will ever be asking. How can I best please God? Where can I go that will do the most good? He will not be asking is there any harm in dancing, and like questions.

The Drinking of Wine, and the eating of grapes was not forbidden the ordinary Israelite, it appears. But the Nazarite neither drank wine nor ate grapes moist or dried, or even ate the skin of grapes or the seeds. Christian, you look about you and you see Christians enjoying the things of the world, typified by the wine, and they seem to be in favor with God, so far as you can judge. They seem to be doing what appears to be what is ordinarily expected of a Christian. And yet are there not moments when in holy communion with God you feel a drawing away from these things to a closer walk with God? It is not the question of the right or wrong of these things. It is not whether or not they will make you lose your soul. But do they magnify Christ; do they make my communion with Christ sweeter? All the members of a great household may be in favor with their master --

menservants, maidservants, and all; but none have the communion with him that his beloved wife has. Are you and the Lord lovers, or are you just religious enough to make it to heaven?

The Unshaven Hair of the Nazarite made him conspicuous. He was surely out of style. He was undoubtedly an object of ridicule or curiosity. So many Christians want to appear well in the world. They do not want to cause remarks about their personal appearance. Jesus was the only true and perfect Nazarite, He made Himself of no reputation. His personal appearance did not concern Him. What people thought of Him was of no consequence. He came not to do His own will but the will of His Father.

He Did Not Touch the Dead -- To us this means more than not going to the funeral of a friend. Note these words, "He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister." These near relatives may sometimes try to persuade us to do something that, while not sinful in the strict sense, yet will break the vow of our Nazariteship. Jesus had to say to His mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

Consider Samson, a noted Nazarite of the Old Testament. He was a power so long as he kept his Nazarite vow. But an ensnaring woman did what a thousand Philistines could not do. She teased the secret of his strength out of him, and he spent his later days grinding in the mill of the Philistines, giving his life at last in his one remaining victory. It was not that he lost his soul, but he lost his power with God. He evidently was restored at the end, but how sad we feel every time we read the closing verses of his history. Reader, do you want power with God, or do you want to live just near enough to God to make it to heaven at the end? It will be wonderful to make it to heaven, but there are glorious victories to be won on earth. Do you want to win them? Then consider deeply the vow of the Nazarite.

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05 -- DEDICATION AND CONSECRATION -- (Numbers 7:1-8:26)

IN Chapters Seven and Eight we have the dedication of the altar in the Tabernacle, and the consecration of the Levites for their service in connection with the Tabernacle.

Chapter Seven is the longest chapter in the book of Numbers, and one of the longest in the Bible. Most of it is a record of the contributions of twelve men to the service of the Tabernacle.

Their Collective Offerings are first mentioned, "a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox." These were given to the Gershonites and the Merarites to assist them in transporting their part of the Tabernacle from place to place. The service of the Kohathites did not require these accessories, as their part of the Tabernacle was borne on their shoulders. From this we may gather that the most important work of God's service requires the least machinery and equipment. The boards, the bars, the curtains, the pins and cords were all essential to the Tabernacle, but it would have been but an empty tent without what the Kohathites carried on their shoulders. Janitors, carpenters, committees, and the like are all necessary in preparing a place of worship for the church today, but what would it all amount to if it were not for the ministry of the Word, and how empty is the church where the Gospel in its fulness is not preached!

The Princes' Individual Offerings occupy the greater part of the chapter before us. At first we may be impressed with the repetitions in this chapter. Why could not the gift of one prince be detailed, and the statement made that each of the other eleven brought the same things? That would have been man's way to save space and work, But it was not God's way. He dwells on the offering of each prince and records on the sacred page the detail of his gifts for the sanctuary. McIntosh in his Notes suggests this is a specimen page from the book of eternity. Somewhere in the archives of God is a record, not only of what these princes gave for the Lord's work but all that all His people in all time have dedicated to His work. This is but a sample page from that book. We have a song that asks the question, "Is my name written there?" Yes, if you are a child of God your name is written there and also a record of your service for the Lord. We may well remember also another song that asks another question, "Must I go and empty-handed, must I meet my Saviour so?" Little did these princes know as they made their offering, "each prince on his day," that what they were doing would be recorded in the most sacred Book in the world for millions through succeeding centuries to read. We may well believe the least offering given in His name is equally remembered before God. Notice the attention Jesus paid to the gift of the poor widow who gave two mites. (Luke 21:1-4.)

The Last Verse in the chapter suggests God's pleasure in the gifts of His people. After the offerings of the princes were all finished then we read, as Moses went into the Tabernacle, he heard the voice of God speaking. We may well believe that God will reveal His will to the faithful who give to His work.

The Golden Candlestick is mentioned first in chapter eight. We have just had, in the seventh chapter, the offering of substance to the work of the Lord, and now we are about to study the dedication of persons for the work of the Lord. But between them is inserted this instruction about the candlestick. The purpose of the candlestick is to give light in the sanctuary. To understand true giving and genuine dedication we must see it in the light of God's truth. How much giving there is that is merely to receive the praise of men; and how many forms of dedication are but forms! Giving, to be acceptable, must be as revealed in the light of God's truth, and dedication must be in fact rather than in form.

The Levites have already been mentioned in chapters three and four, but here we have their induction into their work. Three things are to be done to the Levites: they are to be sprinkled with Water of purifying, they are to shave their flesh, and they are to wash their clothes.

The "water of purifying" is doubtless the same as that described in chapter nineteen where it is called the "water of separation." This indicated their separation from other persons to do their specific work. Paul, speaking of his apostolic appointment in Romans 1:1 says he was "separated unto the Gospel of God." He who would work for God needs a separation, or setting apart for that work.

The shaving of their flesh indicates the setting aside of nature. The work of the Lord must not be marred by natural desires or preferences. The growth of hair is the natural product of the body. Human nature cannot do God's service; it must be set aside. Much work supposed to be in the service of the Lord is merely what the Quakers used to call "creaturely activity." Nature runs

here and there very busily engaged in what is supposed to be religious work, but what, alter all, will in the end receive the "I never knew you" of Matthew 7:28.

The washing of their clothes indicated the cleansing of their habits. Unclean habits unfit one for the service of the Lord.

After Preparation personally comes service publicly. Having done the three things in which they were instructed, the Levites are brought before the Tabernacle. Here the assembly of the Israelites gather and lay their hands on the Levites. This symbolically transferred the sin of the whole encampment to their shoulders as the priestly tribe. Then the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the bullocks, thus symbolically transferring to them the sins that had been transferred to them by the assembly. Then the bullocks are sacrificed, typifying the atonement for the sin transferred to them.

The Offerings that were offered on this occasion typify the atonement made by Jesus Christ on the cross: the sin offering the need of man, the burnt offering the claims of God. All was completed in one sacrifice made by Christ on Calvary.

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06 -- THE MARCH IN THE WILDERNESS -- (Numbers 9:1-10:36)

THE First Anniversary of the Passover occurred before the Israelites started on their march from Sinai. The Lord instructed Moses as to the manner of keeping it, and the people kept it exactly as instructed. One incident occurred in connection with the Passover that inspiration has left on record, indicating how grace tempers law. Some men had necessarily been occupied in the burying of a dead body, and Were not ceremonially fit to keep the Passover. Chapter 5.2 states that such shall be put out of the camp, and 19.11 gives the time of their uncleanness to be seven days. Here was a conflict of laws, apparently. Every Israelite was to keep the Passover or be cut off from his people, and if one ate it with uncleanness on him it would not be accepted. These men did right; they inquired of their lawgiver, and Moses, who had no instruction for such cases, went to the Lord. Moses' instruction to the men was "stand still." This is a good plan; If one does not know what to do, stand still until you do know, The Lord gave instruction that these men could keep the Passover one month later, when they would have had time to be cleansed from their uncleanness. It is interesting to note in this connection that in the days of King Hezekiah, a similar circumstance caused the entire congregation to keep the Passover a month later than the regular time. See II Chronicles 30.2, 15-20.

The Movements of the Camp were directed by the Lord Who revealed His will through the movement of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Every Israelite had to be ready night and day to fold his tent and get ready to march. Every Levite needed to be ready to spring to his appointed place and take up his part of the Tabernacle furniture, curtain, pole, board, cord, or pin and take his place in the column to march as directed by the cloud. "At the commandment of the Lord the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the Lord they pitched." There was no room for doubt as to the Lord's will for them.

The Silver Trumpets are closely connected with the movement of the cloud. It seems that when the cloud moved every one prepared to go, but did not start until the trumpet gave the signal. The priests, being located nearest to the Tabernacle, would be the first to observe the movement of the cloud, and interpret its meaning by the sounding of the trumpets. When all was in readiness to march, the priests sounded an alarm, and the camp on the east started to lead the march, and when the alarm was sounded the second time the camp fell in line, followed in due order by the camps on the west and north.

The Cloud and the Trumpet do not guide the people of God today, but God has not left His people of this age without an equivalent -- even a better mode of guidance. As we read of how the Israelites were led by the cloud and trumpet it appears to us that they had no difficulty in discerning the will of the Lord for them. But history shows that they did not follow because of unbelief and disobedience. We have today the Scriptures and the Holy Ghost. Just as the cloud gave general directions as to where to go, and the silver trumpet specific instruction; so today the Bible gives general instruction as to our movements, and the Spirit specific instructions as to individual movements. And yet it seems as if nearly every Christian is in doubt as to the will of God. It makes one wonder if we really trust the Scriptures, and are all these people who profess to be filled with the Spirit really so filled. Israel's guidance was by sight and sound; ours is by the Word of truth and the inward revelation of the Spirit. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." (Psalm 37.23).

The March from Sinai toward the Promised Land began "on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year" of their pilgrimage from Egypt. They started their journey correctly: "They first took their journey according to the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses." Alas, -- how soon they were dissatisfied with the Lord's leadings and murmured in their tents! What a thrill must have come over the camp as one day the cloud that had rested steadily in one place for so long, was seen to move! We may well suppose that there was enthusiasm as every Israelite folded his tent and prepared for the march. The well-drilled Levites each picked up his appointed burden and cheerfully took his place in line.

The Order of the March is carefully described, On the first signal of the trumpet, the camp of Judah led the way. From verse 33 it appears that those who bore the ark went in the lead. When the camp was at rest the cloud stood over the most holy place where the ark was kept, and when the cloud moved it appears that the ark was carried so as to be directly under it, thus directing the march of the entire camp. Following the camp of Judah, the Gershonites and the Merarites, the Levites who had charge of the heavier parts of the Tabernacle, set forward and thus, when the cloud rested at the place of the next encampment, had time to erect it before the Kohathites arrived with the sacred vessels, as we see by comparing verses 17 and 21.

The Camp of Reuben then fell in line, followed by the Kohathites with the sacred vessels and furniture of the Tabernacle. This placed the precious vessels in the midst of the line of march in the place of greatest protection from any enemy that might be lurking in the wilderness. Then, in turn, followed the camp of Ephraim from their position on the west of the Tabernacle, and the camp of Dan from their place on the north. The whole line of march must have extended some miles when we consider the number of people in the company.

Hobab was invited by Moses to accompany them. Commentators are not agreed as to whether he finally accepted the invitation or not. Like many others, perhaps he failed to accept the invitation to take his place among the people of God.

Moses' Prayer morning and evening was that enemies might flee from before them, and God protect them when they camped at night. This first march appears to have been continuous for three days, from morning to night each day.

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07 -- COMPLAINT AND SEDITION -- (Numbers 11:1-12:16)

WHAT A Change we observe as we study the eleventh chapter! The host who had so enthusiastically first taken their journey "according to the, commandment of the Lord." are now complaining at the Lord's leading. As recorded in Psalm 106.13, which is a comment on their doings, "They soon forgat His works."

Their Complaint is directed against God's provision for their needs. Though "man did eat angels' food," they longed for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic of Egypt. "We remember" said they, but did they not remember the lash of the taskmaster in Egypt? Alas, when a soul begins to backslide he remembers the pleasures of his past sinful life, but forgets the bondage of it. While they had been delivered from Egypt, Egypt was still in their hearts. Is not this a picture of the regenerate soul, who, delivered from actual sins, still has within, the carnal nature that betimes rises up and demands satisfaction? There is no relief until that nature is crucified.

The Manna is described in Exodus 16.31 as tasting like "wafers made with honey," but here they try to improve it, with the result that "the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil."

Moses adds his complaint to that of the multitude, but on a different line. He does not complain of the manna, but of his calling. Why did God call him to such work as undertaking to direct this complaining multitude through that wilderness? Christian worker in the hard field, do you not know how to sympathize with Moses? Have you never been tempted to question "why" in regard to God's call to you to work in that hard field? But did not God know whom to call? Therefore do not complain.

The Mixed Multitude, who very likely were those described as in the "uttermost parts of the camp," appear to have started the complaining, and there the "fire of the Lord" fell. This mixed multitude had no tribal connection with the Israelites, could not declare their pedigree, and had no standard around which to rally. Is it not so today in the church? The people who have allied themselves with the church but have never had a new birth can soon get a church in trouble.

Moses' Complaint because of the heavy burden of caring for the people alone caused the Lord to divide the burden for him. Seventy elders were appointed to share the work, But it seems doubtful if the plan eased Moses so very much. God took the spirit that was on him and distributed it among the seventy. Some have seen in this the beginning of what later became the Sanhedrin that in the New Testament times passed sentence of death on Jesus.

Providing Flesh for so great a multitude seemed impossible and Moses seemed to doubt the Lord's ability to furnish it. But the Lord has resources that men do not know about. The "wind of the Lord" can tap resources that we do not dream about. Soon the quails appeared. They did not pile up two cubits high on top of the ground, but, as they approached to the camp, they flew low, about five feet above the ground, and were therefore easy to capture. Instead of having only enough for a single meal, they evidently dried them and had enough meat for a month. The result of gorging themselves on so much meat a plague broke out, and many of them died. As stated in Psalm 106.15, which is a comment on this situation, God "gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." Too often the things we covet and think we need, when the Lord consents to let us have them become a source of leanness to the soul.

More Serious Trouble soon developed. Right in the household of Moses developed sedition. Truly when a man's foes are they of his own household other people may feel justified in opposition to appointed leadership. Leaders are always scrutinized and something about their lives is made an excuse for rebellion. Jealousy evidently begins with Miriam. The one-time noble woman who led the joyful dance and song of the women at the Red Sea now appears in another light. The "Ethiopian woman" that Moses had married was doubtless the wife he had married in his exile in the days when he was a shepherd. We think of the term Ethiopian as referring to the black race, but it does not necessarily mean that here. The original is "Cushite," descendant of Cush, some of whose people inhabited the region of Moses' father-in-law.

Speaking against a servant of God, as did Aaron and Miriam, is a serious matter. It is well to take this to heart ourselves. Faults can be found in the best of God's servants, but they should not be made an occasion of rebellion against them and their office. Moses did not need to deal with this matter, God came to the defense of His servant and vindicated him, and Moses showed the spirit of forgiveness in his dealings with his erring brother and sister. If you as God's servant are maligned and spoken against for no fault of yours aside from infirmity, do not get disturbed about it. Turn the case over to God and love the evil speaker and pray for him.

The Symbolism of this transaction may be pointed out. Moses is considered a type of Christ. His people rejected his attempt to deliver them and he was driven into the wilderness. While there he obtained his bride. Even so the Jews rejected Christ when He came to deliver them, and sent Him away from them, He is now obtaining His bride. When the Apostle Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles it aroused the bitterest enmity on the part of the Jews, even as Moses' Gentile bride aroused the enmity of Miriam, As Moses delivered his people on his second visitation of Egypt, so Christ will deliver the Jews at His second coming.

Miriam's Exclusion from the camp delayed the march seven days. In like manner the rejection of Christ by the Jews has delayed their national career. The seven days are typical of the present age of Israel's setting aside while the church is being gathered. Only when the Jews are restored to their place as a result of their acceptance of Christ at His second coming will their national preeminence again be manifested. May the Lord hasten that day. The progress, not only of the Jew, but of all the world, waiteth on that happy providence. Meanwhile let us give the Gospel to the Jews.

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08 -- THE SPIES AND THEIR REPORT -- (Numbers 13:1-14:45)

THE Sending of the Spies was done because the people demanded it. This is shown by reading Deuteronomy 1:22,23. Here Moses, recounting the occurrences of the wilderness journey, says, 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." The sending of spies was not in God's original plan for them. He had already spied out the land, as related in Ezekiel 20:6, "I lifted up Mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a land that I had espied for them."

It was Unbelief that demanded that spies be sent to see whether or not what God had said was true. Two things moved Israel to leave Egypt: oppression in Egypt, and the lure of Canaan, Now they are at the consummation of their hopes, but doubt possesses them, and they must send spies to verify God's word to them. May it not often be so with the people of God today? God had said go in and possess the land, But they said, we will send spies. So God says, very well, send your spies. The spies went at God's command because Israel would not go at His command.

The Changed Plan. Though not in God's original plan for the Israelites, the sending of the spies, in the final view, was of God. Already Israel was without faith to enter the land, so these spies were sent to see, and, by their words and the fruits they brought back, testify that the land was as God had declared, "a land of milk and honey." Their testimony is (v. 27) "surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." All that God had said about the land was true. The Israelites could not blame their failure to enter the land on any excuse that God had misrepresented the land. The Epistle to the Hebrews 3 :19 gives the reason: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." It was not the giants that kept them out: it was their own unbelief. How inexcusable was that unbelief! Could not the God who had smitten Egypt with plagues, opened the Red Sea for their passage, fed them with manna, opened rocks to water them, keep the promise He had made that He would bring them in?

Defeat on the Eve of Victory. The enemy of God's people always opposes most strenuously the thing God most desires to do for His people, or what the Lord desires His people to do. The whole purpose of bringing the Israelites out of Egypt was not just to open the Red Sea for them, to feed them in a new way, to give them water in an unusual way, but to bring them into Canaan. They had followed God to the border of the land, and now fail in the very thing God has been doing all these other things on purpose to accomplish. May it not often be so still? God's people are led from step to step in the will of God, and then, under a last determined assault of the enemy, fail in the very thing that all the rest has been preparatory to. Alas that it is so often thus.

Caleb and Joshua, two of the twelve spies, stand out in glorious contrast to the host of the Israelites. They brought back a minority report, but they were right. And it is still often that way. The few are often nearer right than the many. It takes courage to differ from the herd of common people. Caleb said courageously, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." But the ten faithless spies responded, "We be not able." And their attitude delayed the purpose of the Lord for nearly forty years, But God can wait. He has all eternity to work in. If that generation would not go in, another generation was coming on who would go in.

Fickle Israel. At Sinai, when Moses did not return at the time expected, they made a golden calf and said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." Now they say, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." How terrible it is to doubt God! How it cripples every holy endeavor! Things come to people about as they believe. The mass of the Israelites believed God had brought them out there to let them die, and they died. But Caleb and Joshua believed God would bring them into the land, and into the land they eventually went.

Moses' intercession again saved the Israelites from instant destruction. How mighty were that man's prayers that he could turn back the righteous wrath of God! Even so Jesus now has allowed the penalty of sin to be laid on Him, and the Lord pardons us for His sake.

A Sad Tomorrow. After Israel's refusal to enter the land God said to Moses, "Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea." Truly did we once hear a preacher say that there are opportunities before us today, which if not entered into, will mean the turning point in life. Today we could enter in, but tomorrow God's instructions will be different. Alas, that so many never see the day of their opportunity! They wander the remainder of their lives, because at the opportune time they did not enter the path God pointed out to them. It is sad to lose one's soul; but it is almost as sad to lose one's life (his lifetime) because he did not know the day of his opportunity. Forgiveness may be found for disobedience to God, and heaven be made as a last step of faith, but, O, the sorrow of a life not lived in the plan of God!

Presumptuous Self-Confidence. The perversity of the Israelites is manifested in that, when the door was open and God said to go in and possess the land, they would not, and then, the very next day, they determined to go in contrary to God's instruction. Human nature is ever thus: just anything but obey God; anything except faith in His promises and conformity to His commandments. Their decision to enter the land came too late. They should have entered when God said go, when Caleb was pleading with them to go. But they paid the price of their presumption. The fruit of their doubts came upon them, The Lord allowed them to prove their own statement, that they were not able to take the land and truly they found they were not, They first transgressed the commandment of the Lord by not going in, and then they transgressed it by attempting to go in when He said go the other way. Reader, believe God in His promptings and in His checks. There is no other way to please Him and have His favor on your life and deeds.

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09 -- DISOBEDIENCE AND REBELLION -- (Numbers 15:1-16:50)

GOD'S Unchanged Plan stands out plainly in the first verses of the 15th chapter The Israelites refused to go in to possess the land and God has ordered them back into the wilderness; but this chapter begins with the significant words, "When ye be come into the land," a statement that occurs again in the 18th verse. Because one generation has failed God, is no reason why He should annul His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He can wait until a generation rises that will go on with Him. In like manner the entire nation has again and again failed God. Under the judges, the kings and the prophets Israel failed of God's plan for them, and even when Jesus came

they failed to recognize Him as their King, But Israel still has a future that will fulfill all the promises of God to their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

The Stranger is mentioned in this chapter (vs. 29) as being on the same level as Israel. While there were reasons why that nation should be in a sense exclusive, that exclusiveness did not shut the members of other nations out from God if they desired to worship Him.

Sins of ignorance need atonement, but the high priest of the nation by one offering could set them right before God. So now the sins of ignorance committed by all people are all covered by the sacrifice made by Christ our Great High Priest. A sin of ignorance did not cut one off from God's people, but a presumptuous sin did; but, judging from what we find revealed elsewhere in the Bible, a presumptuous sin confessed can be forgiven. But a presumptuous sin after being saved is certainly an exceedingly dangerous thing. The man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day, probably for the purpose of building a fire, evidently sinned presumptuously. In the penalty meted out to him we see what, by law, is due every sinner who knowingly breaks one of God's laws. Only grace through Christ's atonement could save any of us from a like penalty.

The "Ribband of Blue" on the borders of their garments was calculated to remind them of the commandments. How much we all need reminders of God's commandments!

The Sixteenth Chapter relates the cropping out of the rebellious spirit. Korah, the leader of this rebellion, was a member of the Kohathites, that portion of the tribe of Levi that had charge of the sacred vessels of the Tabernacle, and were therefore next to the priesthood in office. Associated with him were famous "men of renown" to the number of 250 princes. They aspired to a higher office than the plans of God had assigned them. It is to be noted that the background of sin is the desire to aspire to an office higher than God assigns one. Lucifer fell because he desired to be "like the most High" (Isa. 14.14). Adam and Eve fell under the temptation to be "as gods." (Gen. 3.5). The ambition of the Anti-christ will be to sit in the temple of God "shewing himself that he is God." (II Thess. 2.4). Let the Christian beware of aspiring to a position in the church higher than God places him. Though we may not think the persons holding office in the church are capable of their position or fit for it, let us wait God's time. He has ability to set one down and put up another.

The Penalty on These Rebels is notable. There is no record of Moses interceding for them. Instead he was "very wroth." Jesus now, as Moses, pleads with God for the forgiveness of sinners, but there is a time coming when mercy outraged will turn to wrath, and men will seek to hide from "the wrath of the Lamb." (Rev. 6.16, 17).

Korah and his Associates perished in a most striking manner. Moses left the manner of their punishment entirely in the hands of God. He left the fact of his appointment to office with God. The case was very important and his appointment as leader and the appointment of Aaron as priest needed to be demonstrated in an unforgettable way to all the nation of Israel. God therefore did the "new thing" by which all the nation could know without question that God had sent Moses to be their leader.

The Children not involved. Some have mistakenly formed the opinion that the children of Korah perished with him. But we have here a manifestation of the principle "the son shall bear the

iniquity of the father" (Ezek. 18.20). Numbers 26.11 gives us the fact, "Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." It is to be observed, also, that some of the Psalms are prepared to be sung by "the sons of Korah." See the titles of Psalms 42,44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 87 and 88.

Infliction of penalty does not change men's hearts, as is evident from the fact that "on the morrow" after this dreadful visitation, "all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron." Their complaint was "ye have killed the people of the Lord." Thus they attributed God's act to Moses and Aaron, But God quickly made them to know that Moses and Aaron were not the ones who brought disaster to the rebels.

The Intercession of Moses again saved the congregation from immediate destruction. The Christlikeness of Moses here is manifested. He demonstrated the spirit of Him of Whom he is a remarkable type. The deliverance of the congregation depended on the office of Moses as God's appointed servant, the very thing these rebels were calling in question. In like manner the Jewish nation owes its continued existence and eventual glorious future to the One Whose Diety they questioned, and crucified Him for claiming to be the Son of God.

The Plague and its Staying. Justice demanded the death of the rebellious congregation, and the plague began its deadly work. Under Moses' instruction Aaron took a censer, filled evidently with coals from the brazen altar, and put thereon incense. The brazen altar was where sacrifices for sin were offered and the incense indicated intercession, and, on the intervention of what typified the great work of Christ, God was justified in staying the plague. Thus grace triumphed over justice. "The very ones whom the congregation charged with killing the Lord's people, were God's instruments in saving their lives." (C. H. M.).

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10 -- THE PRIEST'S VINDICATION AND SUPPORT -- (Numbers 17:1-18:32)

THE Seventeenth Chapter tells of an effective way in which rebellion can be managed. It seems simple, but its credentials are that it worked where dread penalties did not work. Under God's instruction Moses asked the prince of each tribe to bring him a rod. They therefore brought him twelve rods, one for each of the twelve tribes of the four camps. Then the name of Aaron was put on the rod for the tribe of Levi. The thirteen rods were then placed where no man could interfere with them, where only God had access to them, before the Lord in the Tabernacle, and there they were left for God to manifest and confirm His choice of the tribe and man to act as His high priest. These rods were evidently dead, dry sticks, incapable of growth according to nature.

The Budding Rod -- The very next day when Moses went into the Tabernacle he discovered that the "rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." This was evidently the Lord's doings and was calculated to for ever settle who was appointed to be the priest.

Every Man Knew His Rod. Moses forthwith brought the rods out of the Tabernacle, and summoned the princes of the different tribes. They looked at the rods, "and took every man his rod." Moses is then instructed to bring Aaron's rod back into the Tabernacle "before the testimony,

to be kept for a token against the rebels." God then tells Moses that this plan would take away their murmurings, "that they die not."

Contrasted Rods. We know that Moses had a rod, and some one might inquire, Why was not his rod among the ones laid up before the Lord? Moses' rod stood for law and authority, while the rod of Aaron, the priest, stood for grace. It took the rod of judgment to inflict the plagues on Egypt, to open the Red sea, and similar acts. The rod of judgment would eventually have destroyed every murmurer in the nation of Israel, but the rod of grace indicated God's merciful dealings with sin. Reader, if the law is your only hope, and the keeping of the law your ground for expecting to be saved, you are woefully mistaken. It is only the grace of God manifested through Jesus Christ that can save you. We shall see the rods of Aaron and Moses contrasted again in a later lesson.

Priestly Responsibility. The opening verses of chapter 18 give some insight into the responsibility of the priestly tribe. Aaron is told that "Thou and thy sons, and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary." The meaning of this is that they offered the sacrifices and performed the ordinances that atoned for the sins of the people, picturing beforehand the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

Unity and Variety of Service is manifest in the fact that, while every Levite had his particular task to perform, it was all done under the direction of Aaron and in harmony with what every other Levite was doing. Was it as one of the bearers of the ark, one of the persons who loaded the wagons, the bearer of a socket or a pillar of the court, all was both individualistic and harmonious. Each had his task, and, while an onlooker seeing the Levites setting up the Tabernacle after a day's march might see what looked like confusion, yet, as they worked together, soon the building was in order. In like manner the work of the church includes persons of various gifts and duties. In this connection it is instructive to read the 12th chapter of I Corinthians, especially verses 11-20, where the church is likened unto the human body with all its members working harmoniously together, even though the parts are very different and the functions various, The Lord has many workmen and their tasks differ, but if each works under the direction of the one Lord, moved by the same Spirit, there will be harmony in service.

The Support of God's Workers. A considerable part of the chapter under consideration is about the support of the priesthood. Ample provision was made for Aaron and his sons and daughters, and every Levite had his share. The "best" and the "first ripe" were theirs. Their dependence was entirely on the Lord as He supplied them through the offerings of the people. Note this in verses 20 and 21: "Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them." This looked like poverty. But note this: "I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel." The minister of the Gospel today has a like inheritance as he devotes himself to the service of the Lord, And the people of God have the obligation to do as the Israelites of that day did in regard to their ministers. Yet we find ministers resorting continually to side lines to aid in their own support, while churches resort to schemes to raise money to support the ministers, instead of following the Lord's order.

The Tithing System was simple and adequate for the support of Levites and priests, and a study of it is helpful as indicating how a similar plan can be worked in the church. Read carefully verses 21-28. From this we see that all the tribes of Israel were to bring the tithes of their increase

to the tribe of Levi. Then the tribe of Levi tithed the tithes with which they were supported and gave it to Aaron the priest, evidently for himself and family. This answers a question sometimes asked: Shall a minister tithe his income that is made up of the tithes of the congregation he serves? This would seem to answer the question. Yes, he should pass his tithe on to others. This system was renewed when the Jews came back from Babylon, as we read in Nehemiah 10.37-39. If the question is asked, Did the high priest tithe? will say it appears that there were certain offerings that he was obliged to furnish out of his portion that were the equivalent to it.

Tithing In the Future -- A reading of Ezekiel chapter 45, verses 14 and 19 indicates that a system of tithing will be in vogue in the Millennium whereby the prince will be supported, and he in turn will make certain sacrifices out of what is given to him. Read also what Jesus says about tithing in Matthew 23.23 where He. reproves the Pharisees for their careful tithing of little things, and yet says these ought ye to have done and not leave the other undone.

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11 -- THE WATER OF SEPARATION -- (Numbers 19:1-22)

THIS Nineteenth Chapter is one of peculiar difficulty in the understanding, but equally important in its application to the needs of the human soul. At first we are puzzled as to this kind of a sacrifice in the book of Numbers, and naturally ask the question, Why was not this offering included with the live of which we studied in the book of Leviticus, How does this sacrifice of the red heifer differ from the sacrifice of the ram, the goat, the bullock, and similar sacrifices of which we studied in the previous book?

Some Differences Noted. As a means of helping us understand the difference of this offering of the red heifer from the sacrifices recorded in the book of Leviticus, let us observe some differences in the two books under consideration, it is to be observed that the entire book of Leviticus tells of things in connection with the Tabernacle, and that during the giving of this book and the relating of the events in connection therewith the people remained in one place. The book of Numbers, on the other hand. Is an account of the journeys of the Israelites from Mount Sinai to the borders of Canaan.

The Symbolism Studied. While, as a matter of history, it is interesting to study the ordinances and journeys of the Israelites, there is little of practical value to the Christian in these records unless we grasp the symbols as indicating things spiritual in their nature. In our studies in the book of Leviticus we traced the symbolism of the five offerings in their application to Christian experience. We must now endeavor to search out the symbolism of the sacrifice of the red heifer.

The Wilderness Journey. There are two ways of interpreting the symbolism of the wilderness journey of the Israelites. One interpretation considers the period in the wilderness as picturing the time between one's regeneration and sanctification. Egypt. pictures the sinner in the world, the wilderness the experience of the unsanctified, and the entering of Canaan as entering the sanctified life. Spiritually this is undoubtedly the correct interpretation. But there is a sense in which the wilderness is a type of life in this world on our way to heaven. Physically we experience many things that remind us of the wilderness.

The Initial Experiences of the Christian life are pictured by the sacrifices in Leviticus, especially by the trespass and sin offerings. Here it is to be observed that the emphasis is placed on the blood of the sacrifices.

The Subsequent Experience is pictured by this offering of the red heifer, it is to be observed that the emphasis here is not on the blood, but on the liquid made by the combining of ashes and water. In other words the sacrifices of Leviticus picture the beginning of the Christian life -- the Initial cleansing from sin -- and the cleansing by the ashes and water the keeping cleansed from later contamination. Furthermore, the trespass and sin offerings dealt with actual sins and inbred sin, while the ashes and water cleansed from contamination incident to life that can hardly be classed as sinful in themselves.

Separation. It is to be noted that the substance made of the mixing of the ashes of the red heifer and water is called 'water of separation.' Four times in this chapter this term is used. The scriptures repeatedly make it plain that God desires His people to be separate from the World. But contact with the world cannot be avoided, and this contact has results that need attention. Who is there, no matter how well saved, who has not felt, after a day in contact with the world a sense of uncleanness? Words have been heard, things have been seen, that are calculated to dull the spiritual sense. These must not be allowed to enter into the heart and contaminate the life. That which the water of separation typifies needs to be done to erase the effects of these unwholesome contacts.

Neglect Causes Cutting Off. While the contact with a dead body, a grave, or a bone, did not cause immediate exclusion from the camp of Israel, neglect to avail one's self of the benefits of the water of separation, would lead to being cut off from the congregation. Sometimes in reviewing the activities of a day, a Christian is reminded of some words he spoke or things he did, that, in the light of afterthought appear wrong. They are not chargeable to him as sin, for there was no intent in the will to do wrong, but, now that light has come something must be done about it, or it will become sin. The word or the act that thus appears must not be repeated nor must the matter be allowed to remain on the conscience..

Preparation of the Ashes. Read carefully the chapter and see how these ashes were produced. The heifer must be one that never wore a yoke. it must be perfect. This suggests the perfectness of Christ and the fact He never bore the yoke of sin. Everything in the Old Testament economy that dealt with the question of sin in any form pointed forward to the perfect sacrifice of Christ. The heifer must be slain to produce the ashes. So Christ must be slain before He can deal with sin, for it is the blood that is the basis of forgiveness and cleansing. The priest sprinkled the blood in the Tabernacle, but did so only once. So Christ had to suffer but once. All the Old Testament sacrifices were repeated over and over, but He offered one sacrifice for ever.

Outside the Camp. Hebrews 13:11,12 emphasizes the fact that Jesus suffered without the camp. The ashes of this heifer were laid up outside the camp, and he who desired the purification provided thereby was obliged to go outside the camp..

The Ashes and Water, The ashes represented the finished work of Christ. The water represented the application of the atonement of the need in hand. Water often refers to the Scriptures. See Psalms 119:9 and Eph 5:26. A clean person had to apply the remedy. This indicates that a person who was involved in the same fault could not serve. Jesus, on occasion of washing the disciples' feet, said, "ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Perhaps this means that when a Christian sees another do what he knows is likely to contaminate him. It is his duty to bring to his attention the Scripture applying to his case.

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12 -- THE TWICE-SMITTEN ROCK -- (Numbers 20:1-29)

THE Twentieth Chapter of Numbers, especially the first thirteen verses, records one of the most interesting events in the book, an event, however, that is very inadequately and incorrectly dealt with by many expositors, mainly because they do not distinguish between two different rocks and two different rods.

A Similar Occasion to the one recorded in these verses is recorded in Exodus 17.1-7. At that time the Israelites had but lately left Egypt. They had entered into a desert region and there was no water for man or beast. They blamed Moses for all their perplexities, and chode with him for ever bringing them out of Egypt. Moses declared they were almost ready to stone him, But he resorted to the Lord and received instructions what to do.

The Smitten Rock. While the events recorded in the history of the Israelites actually occurred, it is necessary for our instruction to ever keep in mind that they have a typical or symbolical application to Christians. This is warranted by the words of the Apostle in I Cor. 10.11: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: (margin "types") and they are written for our admonition." It is interesting to observe in this same chapter verse 4 that the Apostle tells us regarding the rock in the wilderness that it was Christ -- that is to say it represented Christ. While the rock in Exodus and the rock in Numbers were doubtless widely separated geographically, yet, typically they stand for the same thing: they represent Christ.

The Smiting Rod. In Exodus Moses is instructed to smite the rock with the rod "wherewith thou smotest the river." This rod was the rod of judgment. For Christ to be the Saviour of men it was necessary that He be smitten with the rod of judgment. The judgment due us must be placed on Him, As the prophet says (Isaiah 53.5) "He was wounded for our transgressions." The smiting of the rock in the desert brought forth water for the Israelites. The smiting of Christ has opened the fountain of living waters for our sin-sick souls.

The Spoken-to Rock, But Christ needs to be smitten but once. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once." (Rom. 6.10). God's instructions to Moses in the case now before us in Numbers 20 are very explicit, He is not to smite the rock but to speak to it; and the spoken word, had Moses followed instructions, would have brought abundance of water from the rock. Hebrews 6.6 speaks of persons who "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh."

The Flowering Rod. We need here to revert to Lesson X, in which we dealt with chapter 17. Under God's direction the head of each tribe had brought a rod to Moses who laid them up before the Lord. The next day it was found that Aaron's rod, which was among those laid up, had "budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." God said of this rod, "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." Notice that rod was laid up for use on just such an occasion as now confronted Moses and Aaron, and God instructs them to take this rod, gather the people together and speak to the rock. There was to be no smiting by any rod.

What Moses Did. Moses and Aaron, who had fallen on their faces before the Lord, were told to take the rod, the flowering rod, and gather the people together before the rock and speak to it. But when they had gathered the people, instead of speaking to the rock, Moses smote the rock, not with the flowering rod, but with his own rod, the same rod with which he had performed the miracles in Egypt and with which he had smitten the rock nearly forty years before as recorded in Exodus, chapter 17. He even smote it twice.

The Disobedience of Moses. It is plain that Moses. In this case definitely disobeyed the Lord, The Lord at once tells him that he will not allow him and Aaron to take the people into the land of Canaan, The disobedience was the result of unbelief.. "Because ye believed Me not," is the Lord's word to them. Moses had once gotten water out of a rock by smiting it, and he believed that he could get it again the same way. But evidently his faith did not grasp God's promise that water would come simply by speaking to the rock.

The Penalty on Moses, That Moses was forgiven his sin in disobeying God there can be no doubt. But there are some results of disobedience. that forgiveness does not remove, as is evident from this case. The case is referred to again in Numbers 27.14 and Deut. 3.26 and 4.21. From these references we find that it was for the people's sake that Moses was not allowed to go into Canaan, God was obliged to make of this incident an object lesson for Israel and for us that disobedience has results that will not be countermanded, though the sin of the act itself may be forgiven, as it was in Moses' case.. God's grace can for. give, but God's government must be upheld. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" is true of saint and sinner alike, But the saint's reaping is in this life, as was the case with Moses, That is one thing that prayer will not change. As noted in the later references, Moses prayed that he might go into Canaan, but the Lord said to him, "Speak no more unto Me of this matter." (Deut. 3.26).

Why Did Water Come? The question might arise as to why God responded by sending water if Moses and Aaron disobeyed Him. Had no water come, it would have forever discounted Moses before the people, and also the people would not have believed God. Note God's wonderful grace: though His servants dishonored Him before the people. There is a difference between gifts and grace. Moses had the gift of working miracles, and he wrought this miracle, even though at the time he was not doing it as God commanded it should be done. The fact that a man can work n miracle is not certain evidence that what he does is of God.

Moses and Aaron both died before the Israelites entered Canaan, the death of Aaron being recorded at the end of this chapter, and that of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 24.

While refused entrance into the earthly Canaan we may well believe they entered heaven by the grace of God.

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13 -- THE BRAZEN SERPENT -- (Numbers 21:1-35)

CHAPTER Twenty-one, tells, first of all, of a victory the Israelites gained over the Canaanites. Israel, after wandering the greater part of forty years, is gathering together and bending northward toward Canaan. King Arad of the Canaanites goes to battle against them. In response to a vow the Israelites make, God gives them victory over his army. Nearly forty years before the Israelites had been defeated in this same locality, when presumptuously trying to enter Canaan after Moses had told them God's decree, and the place had been named then Hormah, Now the place is again named Hormah. Compare Numbers 14.43 with verse 3 of this chapter.

The Edomites, descendants of Esau, refused to allow the Israelites to pass through the narrow strip of country they possessed, and, as the Lord told Moses that they should not have any of the land claimed by Esau (Deut. 2.5) it was necessary for them to detour around their land by going southward along the desert country known as the Arabah to get around their country. This was a most discouraging journey, and the people again had one of those murmuring spells so common to their wilderness wanderings.

The Fiery Serpents. This murmuring against God and against Moses brought retribution from God. Fiery serpents appeared among the people, and their deadly bite resulted in many of the Israelites dying. At this time the Israelites assume an attitude they had not before manifested, They came to Moses and confessed that they had sinned and asked him to pray for them that the fiery serpents might be removed from them. Here is a lesson well worth considering. The Israelites' confession opened the way for God to help them. In like manner, when a sinner confesses to God that he has sinned then God can and will undertake for him. As stated in I John 1.9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God's Answer to Their Prayer was effective, but not as they had asked it. They had asked that the serpents might be removed; but, instead of removing them, God provided a remedy. This is similar to the manner of dealing with sin. We might well desire that He would remove sin from the world, but, instead of removing sin from the world, He has provided a remedy for the sin-sick soul.

The Serpent on the Pole. God instructed Moses to make a serpent of brass, probably a copy of the biting serpents, hang it on a pole, and cause it to be announced through the camp that a look at the pole would heal the serpent's bite. The simplicity of the remedy and the ease of its application seemed on the face of it wholly inadequate to do what was desired, But the record says, "It came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." If a man was so near dead from the serpent's bite that he could not walk, he needed only to turn his head and look at the serpent of brass. Indeed if he was so near dead he could not turn bis

head, he could roll his eyes and look on the serpent, and, wonderful to consider, the healing power would thrill through his body and he would be well.

The Great Antitype. We have in the serpent on the Pole possibly the most evangelical type of the Old Testament. We know this for the reason that Jesus referred explicitly to it in His conversation with Nicodemus. After speaking of the fact that a man must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God, Jesus says, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3.14, 15). In the case of the bitten Israelite, healing depended on something entirely outside of anything he could do to help himself. By no means of his own that he could devise could he be healed. He might suck the bitten place, he might put a poultice on it, he might apply every remedy he could think of, and yet he would die. But one look at the serpent on the pole and he would live.

Looking and Believing. In the case of the Israelite it was a look that saved. In the case of the sinner it is believing that saves. Salvation is not within the reach of any man's own endeavors. He may make amends for the past evil deeds, he may keep all the laws rigidly, he may deny himself, even torture himself, and still remain a sinner in the sight of God. But one look in faith away to Jesus crucified and salvation is freely given.

The Place of Faith. In both the bitten Israelite's case and in the sinner's case, faith is the saving element. Unless the Israelite believed he would not be healed. How much faith did it take to be saved from death by the bite? Just faith enough to believe that looking at the serpent on the pole would heal. If some Israelite stopped to reason and discuss the inadequacy of the remedy, his bite would still continue to sting and death draw on apace. But, when he ceased reasoning and looked he was healed. So it is with the sinner. So long as he reasons about the remedy for sin he will not be saved from his sins. But once he looks believingly at the Cross he is saved. One of the great preachers of England tells how, after trying for months to save himself, he heard a very commonplace preacher preach from the text, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," and was instantly saved, as he looked.

Water Again Secured, As the Israelites marched on they again needed water, The Lord said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." In this case there was neither smiting a rock or speaking to a rock, but singing caused the water to spring up as the princes dug with their staves.

Conquest East of Jordan. The remainder of this chapter tells how the Israelites conquered the country east of the Jordan river. They offered to pass through the country of Sihon peaceably. but Sihon resisted them, and as God had not forbidden their fighting with that nation, the Israelites conquered them. In like manner they later took the territory of Og king of Bashan. It is noticeable that from the time the Israelites confessed they had sinned, and God provided the remedy for their serpent bites, they began to be a conquering people.

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IN This Lesson we will study Balaam as to his character, leaving his prophecies for the next lesson. From the space given to this man it is evident the Lord would have us learn a lesson from the man as well as from his words, He is mentioned in seven other books of the Bible, four in the Old Testament and three in the New Testament, and never in a favorable way.

A Strange Combination, As the Student's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures says, "It is one of the great mysteries of the Bible, that a gift of prophecy can be possessed apart from moral character." This should caution us to not too readily conclude a man's ways please God simply because he can say things that are true. Jesus cautioned on one occasion, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say, and do not." (Matt. 23.2,3).

Balaam's Pious Profession. It is to be noted that Balaam made great profession of regard for God. Note these statements. "I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me." (Ch. 22.8). "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God." (Ch. 22.18). "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." (Ch. 22.38). "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?" (Ch. 23.12). "All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do." (Ch. 23.26).

Balaam's Covetousness. People sometimes unintentionally name their price. With loud profession Balaam boasted, "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." (Oh. 22.18). See also Oh. 24.13. And yet it was the desire of getting Balak's silver and gold that induced the wily soothsayer to go with Balak's messengers against the plain leading of the Lord. Inspiration has correctly diagnosed his motives. "Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." (II Peter 2.15). "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward." (Jude 11).

Balaam's Stubbornness. Balaam made great profession of seeking the mind of the Lord about the proposed trip to help Balak out of his trouble. He asked Balak's messengers to remain over night while he professed to seek the leading of the Lord, and sent them away the next morning. Note, God specifically told Balaam on the occasion of his first asking His guidance, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." That should have ended the matter, and Balaam should have cheerfully said to the messengers that he would not go with them, instead of whiningly saying, "the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."

Balaam's Persistence, On the arrival of the second delegation from Balak, Balaam took the matter to the Lord again, which was entirely unnecessary. It is fatal to understanding God's leading to take the same question to Him the second time when His leading has been plain and clear. It is possible to have one's mind so set on doing something that is attractive that the sense of God's leading is reversed. It is impossible to get the mind of the Lord when one is determined to do something. Balaam fell into this condition. The desire for Balak's money was stronger than his desire to please God. He wanted the favor of a wicked king more than he wanted the favor of God. In this condition of heart it was mockery for him to ask God to guide him. But God condescended to give a sign -- that if the men came to call him he could go with them, but there is no evidence that he so waited for them to call him.

Balaam's Perversity. "Thy way is perverse before Me." said the Lord after Balaam had smitten his ass three times. If ever a man had reason to believe his way was contrary to God's wishes it was surely Balaam. His beast of burden, the very name of which is a synonym for a fool, better understood God's leading than her rider. Once she turned out into a field to avoid the angel, another time she crowded against a wall, bruising Balaam's foot, and the third time fell down under him, unable otherwise to avoid the angel of the Lord.

The Speaking Beast. God wrought a miracle in order to restrain Balaam from his perverse course. As we read in II Peter 2.16, "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet." Balaam was crazy, for so the word "madness" means in old English, for that money of Balak. God's plain word, "Thou shalt not go with them," was enough, but added to it was the failure of the sign of the men coming to call him, and now the providences of God in turning the beast of burden aside from the road, and eventually opening her mouth to preach to him. But over all these tokens of God's leading Balaam went on his way to perdition.

Balaam's Deplorable End. While we read in chapter 24.25, "Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place," that is not the end of his history, for we read again. In chapter 31.8, Where the account is given of Israel's victory over the Midianites, "Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword." It is evident, though he returned to his place, he did not remain there. He came back, not this time to prophesy, but to scheme a new way to get that money of king Balak.

Balaam's Wicked Device. In chapter 25, immediately after we have read of Balaam's return home, the record says that the Israelites "began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab." As a result of this God sent a plague among them in which many thousands were slain. In chapter 31.15, 16, when the soldiers return from the battle with the Midianites, Moses says to them, "Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor."

What Balaam Did. With a little thought we can fill in the picture. Balaam wanted that money so badly that he resorted to the device of telling Balak to invite the Israelites to the sacrifice of their gods (Ch. 25.2) and that thus they would be made to sin against the Lord, and the Lord Himself would then destroy them. Thus the man of the wicked king was partly accomplished.

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15 -- MESSAGES OF BALAAM -- (Numbers 22:1-24:25)

THIS Lesson is based on the same chapters as the previous one. In the previous lesson we considered the character of Balaam. In this lesson we will review the four messages he delivered in the presence of Balak, king of the Moabites and the elders of Midian.

Balaam's Inspiration. In spite of the wicked character of Balaam his messages were inspired of God. We determine this from what the record says. Chapter 23.5 says, "the Lord put a word in Balaam's mouth." In vs. 16 it says, "the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth." Chapter 24. says, "the Spirit of God came upon him." And finally in Chapter 24.16, just as he is

beginning his last message, we read, "He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High." It is evident Balaam wanted to please Balak, but God intervened. In Joshua 24.10 the Lord says, "I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he blessed you still." Possibly Balaam was once a good man, but the love of money caused his ruin.

Balaam's Four Parables. Balaam spoke four times in all, and each time there was an ascending scale in his prophesies. The Student's Commentary suggests that we have in these four discourses Separation, Justification, Sanctification, and Exaltation. Let us look at them one at a time.

The First Parable. Here we have Israel's separation from all other nations. "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Here Israel is "singled out and partitioned off to be a separated and peculiar people," as C. H. McIntosh says in his valuable Notes on Numbers. It is still thus: he who would have God with him must first of all consent to a separated life. Study the great characters of the Bible and see how true this is. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and many others were distinct from the other people of their day, Samson is a notable example. As long as he retained the marks of his separation he had power with God and against his enemies. But when he gave away the secret of his power he admitted, "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall be weak, and be like any other man." Yes, when he became like other men his power was gone. And yet how often we hear today, as an excuse for questionable conduct, "They all do it." How people hate to be different! It was so with Israel. Their plea with Samuel, when they asked a king, was, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations." (I Sam. 8. 19, 20).

Naturally Balak was displeased at this utterance of his hired prophet. But hoped by a change of the place of his altar to accomplish his purpose.

The Second Parable. When Balaam speaks the second time he goes a step further in his description. Passing from the negative of what the nation of Israel is not, he takes up the positive of what they are. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perversity in Israel." The history of the nation as we have read it through the book of Numbers does not seem that way. But the message speaks of their condition in the sight of God ideally, when their sins are forgiven. Their experience with the serpents and the remedy of the serpent on the pole had wrought a great change in them.

The individual Christian goes over much the same ground personally that Israel did as a nation. First there is separation and then cleansing. While the past of a Christian is much like Israel in the wilderness, salvation works a great change. There are still errors, but not willful sins, and God views His people through the merits of His Son Christ and so seeing them sees no iniquity in them.

Balaam's Futile Endeavor to Please. Balak was more displeased with Balaam's second message than with his first one. Balaam wants to please Balak and get that gold and silver, so the third time he did not go to try and get a message. "He went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness." It appears that the first time he went to a place where he could see the entire camp of Israel, and the second time he went to a place where,

as Balak advised, "thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and thou shalt not see them all." Now, this third time, Balaam looks clear away from the camp of Israel, but it appears he fell into a trance and he saw in vision the camp of Israel in its entirety more vividly than at any time before.

The Third Parable. In the first parable we had the negative view of Israel as not like other nations; in the second we had them positively seen as blessed; in this third parable we see that they have influence on other nations. "He shall pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters." In like manner is the individual Christian: first separated from the world, a negative attitude; then cleansed, a positive attitude; and then the Christian becomes active in being made a blessing to other people.

Balak was terribly incensed by this third statement of Balaam. He smote his hands together and demanded that he flee to his place, meaning, evidently, that he should go back home. But, before leaving, Balaam is given one more message from the Lord about Israel.

The Fourth Parable. Balaam prefaces his parable with the statement, "I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." Here the seer enters the realm of prophecy and sees far down the future. He sees a time when Israel shall be the greatest nation on earth, for there shall a Star rise out of Jacob. It has been suggested that possibly this prophecy of Balaam was known by the wise men in the east who were moved to search for "He that is born King of the Jews." (Matt. 2.2). In detail Balaam tells what shall become of several nations in the time when the "Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

Moab, the nation of which Balak was king is particularly mentioned, along with Edom, and other nations. Amalek, mentioned as "the first of the nations," possibly because it was the first nation that opposed Israel, comes in for special mention.

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16 -- THE PLAGUE AND THE SECOND NUMBERING -- (Numbers 25:1-28:31)

THE PLAGUE that Visited Israel was because the Israelites were induced to join in a feast with the Moabites. This feast was of a religious nature and was connected with the worship of the heathen gods the Moabites worshipped. Connected with the rites was the sin of adultery, one case of which is stated in the relation of Zimri and Cozbi, who were of prominent families in Israel and Moab respectively.

The Counsel of Balaam brought about the condition that resulted in the plague. As already referred to in Lesson 14, it is plain that Balaam, after starting home, came back and gave Balak the scheme whereby he planned for the destruction of the nation of Israel. His plan succeeded in destroying 24,000 Israelites. Some find a discrepancy in the figures here and in I Cor. 10.8 where it is stated that 23,000 died in this plague. Perhaps it can be harmonized by the statement that the 23,000 died "in one day," while the other thousand may have died the day after or before.

The Zeal of Phinehas stayed the plague.. The situation demanded a drastic remedy, and it seems that Phinehas was moved of God in his work. Of course no such measures are now

permissible; but even in the circles of the church there are times when tenderness to an offender may be unfaithfulness to God.. But who is sufficient for such occasions?

The Second Numbering, The book of Numbers is well named. We studied the first numbering in Lesson 1, where the first chapter of the book was studied, and now, some thirty-eight years later, the Israelites are numbered again. In this case, the same as there we have only those "able to go to war." Their numbers had been somewhat decimated by the plague, but there is unusual similarity in the numbers. In the first numbering there were 603,650 (Ch. 1.46); in this later numbering there were 601,730 (Ch. 26.51). In neither case were the Levites included, as they were numbered by themselves.

A New Generation. While the number in both cases is quite similar, there is one great difference, pointed out in Chapter 26, verses 64 and 65: "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, 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."

Caleb and Joshua had demonstrated their faith by their works at the time they, with ten other spies, searched the land, as told in Lesson 8. Through all the vicissitudes of thirty-eight years since that time they professed their faith, they have lived on through plagues and serpents unscathed. Their unbelieving brethren ate the same manna, drank of the same water from the rock, were led about by the same cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, but they did not enter into Canaan, The Epistle to the Hebrews (Ch. 3.19) tells why: "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." And the lesson is applied to the church in vs. 12 of the same chapter: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. In departing from the living God."

Almost There, but Lout. Perhaps some of that unbelieving generation died in that last plague of Baal-peor which swept away so many thousands. It is sad to think of people who run well for a season, and then, in some hour of great temptation, fall away and are lost.

Joshua's Promotion. The closing section of chapter 27 tells of Joshua's being promoted to be Moses' successor. It is to be noted that God favors trained people for leadership. He did not find Moses ready for the leadership of His people until he was "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and later trained in a very different school in keeping sheep for forty years. Joshua 'had been Moses' right hand man all through the wilderness journey. Reference is made to him in Exodus 17.9-14; 24.13; 32.17 and 33.11. It was as Moses' servant that Joshua learned how to be his successor. If it took eighty years to prepare Moses for leadership, and forty years to prepare Joshua to be his successor, young workers ought not to chafe if God puts them through long arduous training to prepare them for their life's work.

Daughters of Zelophehad. Before leaving the 27th chapter we must not overlook the plea of these five remarkable women. The Bible makes much of them, The names of Mahlah, Noah, Roglah, Milcah, and Tirzah occur, not only here, but also in Chapter 26, verse 23, and 36.11. In fact the latter chapter, the last one in the book of Numbers, is practically all about them. and questions that were raised by their plea. We find them also mentioned in Joshua 17.8. It is evident

the Lord would have us give these women more than a passing glance from the fact that so much is made of their demand for an inheritance in the Promised Land.

Women of Faith. It is to be noted of them, in the first place, that they believed a possession in the Promised Land was something desirable. While they report the sad fact that their father "died in his own sin," as one of them who entered not in because of unbelief, it is plain that they did not share his unbelief. They had heard enough of the land flowing with milk and honey to make them want an inheritance in it, and they believed the fact that their father had no sons was no reason why they should not have an inheritance in the land.

Women of Courage. There is nothing unwomanly about these women, but they showed courage: "they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation," and bore their testimony. It is plain that, if they had not done so, they would not have had an inheritance in the land, As it was, Moses found no precedent in all the revelations God had given him up to this time about a case like theirs. Therefore he was obliged to seek special information from the Lord. And the Lord honored their faith. The lesson to us is that there are things in God's promises for us that we will have only as we claim them. When the land was finally divided, as related in Joshua, they again claimed their inheritance.

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17 -- THE DAILY OFFERINGS AND THE ANNUAL FEASTS -- (Numbers 28:1-29:40)

THESE TWO CHAPTERS present. In spite of what may seem tiresome detail to the casual reader, a wealth of encouragement to the faithful worshipper of God through Christ. The sacrifices that were required of Israel had two principle purposes: the worship of God, and atonement for sins. We find worship typified in the burnt, meat, and peace offerings; and atonement for sins in the sin and trespass offerings. The detail of these offerings is given in the first eight chapters of Leviticus, and are dealt with in our Twenty Lessons in Leviticus. What we have in the chapters now before us will be better understood if the student has studied those lessons.

The Daily Offerings. It will be noted in vs. 2 that the daily offerings are called "sweet savour" offerings. This means that they typify worship of persons whose sins have been pardoned. Acceptable worship is not possible from persons whose sins have not been pardoned. Throughout the year, and every year, from the time the Tabernacle was set up, and on throughout the history of Israel until Christ came fulfilling all type., these offerings were required, though not always offered because of the departure of Israel from God's order for them. Every morning and every evening the attention of Israel was called to the worship of God as they saw the smoke of the burnt offering ascending from the altar in the Tabernacle or Temple. Well may we now as regularly offer worship to God through Christ the Lamb of God.

The Weekly Offerings, On the Sabbath day two additional lambs were offered. These, too, were burnt offerings. They did not take the place of the regular morning and evening sacrifices, but were supplementary to them. From this we may gather that morning and evening family worship should not be neglected on the Sabbath, but be supplemented by worship in public gatherings.

The Monthly Offerings. Much more elaborate offerings were required at the beginning of each month: "two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot." To these were added in the monthly offerings, one kid of the goats for a sin offering." All these did not replace the daily offerings in the morning and evening, for it says, "beside the continual burnt offering." While worship predominates in these offerings, provision is made for any sin the worshipper might have committed.

The Annual Offerings, These occurred in connection with the seven feasts of the year. Four of these are described in chapter 28 -- Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Feast of Weeks, the latter afterward known as Pentecost. The other three all occurred in the seventh month of the Jewish year -- Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles. It is to be observed that two of these feasts occupied eight days -- the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the first month of their year, and the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month,

The Passover Is briefly mentioned in a single verse. From the fact that every household had its Passover lamb on that occasion, it does not appear that any additional offerings were made on that day at the Tabernacle, aside from the regular daily sacrifices morning and evening.

The Firstfruits, as will be seen from Leviticus 23.11, was on the day after the Sabbath after the Passover, and was therefore symbolical of the resurrection of Christ. This does not come out very clearly in the chapter we are studying, but comparison with Leviticus chapter 23. ii and 15, which shows fifty days between the Firstfruits and Pentecost, will make this clearer.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread -- This began the day after the Passover and lasted seven days, making with the Passover a period of eight days of feasting, and included in that period would be the feast of the Firstfruits. Every one of the seven days there were to be offered "two young bullock., and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year - one goat for a sin offering." (vs. 19 and 22). All these beside the regular morning and evening sacrifices. (vs. 23,24).

The Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, as it was afterward called, came fifty days after the Sabbath after the Passover, therefore fifty days after the feast of Firstfruits. Jesus was resurrected on the anniversary of the feast of Firstfruits, and the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost came On the anniversary of the Feast of Weeks.

Feast of Trumpets is described in chapter 29, verses 1-6. That day special additional offerings were made consisting of "one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year and one kid of the goats." (verses 2 and 6). And it is to be observed that the daily morning and evening offerings and the first of the month offerings were also offered.

Atonement, On the tenth day of this seventh month came the day of Atonement. Again you will note the additional offerings beside the daily offerings. (verses 8-11).

Feast of Tabernacles. The description of this feast takes more space in the chapter than any of the other feasts. From Leviticus 23.34 we know this was called the Feast of Tabernacles. This lasted seven days, with an additional day of solemnity. (Compare vs. 12 and 35). The additional offerings of these days were the most elaborate of any of the feasts. On the first day thirteen young

bullocks were offered, along with two rams and fourteen lambs, and a kid of the goats. The rams, lambs and kid were offered every one of the seven days, but the number of bullocks diminished from 13 the first day in 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, and 7 until the seventh day, when they ceased, and another kind of offering was made the eighth day. All these beside the regular morning and evening sacrifices.

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18 -- VOWS AND VENGEANCE -- (Numbers 30:1-31:54)

THESE two chapters are not closely connected as to subject matter, but are both treated in this lesson because of their coming together in the Bible.

Chapter 30 is occupied entirely with some instruction about the making and responsibility of keeping vows. If a man made a vow there was no release for him: he was obliged to do what he vowed.

The Vow of a Daughter held valid if her father did not disapprove of it. But if he disapproved her vow was annulled.

The Vow of a Wife likewise held if her husband did not annul it, but if he disallowed it she was released from her vow.

The Vow of a Widow, or one divorced stood, and she was obliged to do what she had vowed.

Some Lessons. Undoubtedly there are lessons in these instructions that do not appear on the surface. God holds the relation of Father to the Jews (See Isa. 64:8) and we know Jesus holds the relation of Husband to the church (See Eph. 5:23-32.). Just as the vowing daughter or wife were under obligation to keep their vows, unless disavowed by their father or husband, when they heard of it, so every person, Jew or Gentile, has obligations to God that must be kept, unless some provision is made for their release. Verse fifteen of the chapter we are studying says of the man, when he disavows his daughter's or wife's vows, "he shall bear her iniquity." So God, by the sacrifice of Jesus, has made provision whereby all people may be forgiven of their unkept vows, if they take Jesus as their Savior.

Chapter 31 relates a remarkable war. It was occasioned by the interference of the Midianites with the progress of the Israelites. Through the counsel of Balaam (verse 16) the Midianites had devised a plan to corrupt them, and they had succeeded to an extent, 24,000 having died in the plague that ensued. I Cor. 10:8 says that 23,000 died in their plague in one day.

A Holy War. We of the Christian dispensation do not believe in wars -- even holy wars. But under the dispensation of law things were different. The unusual thing about this war is that it was conducted by Phinehas, a priest, not by Joshua as was the war on the Amalekites earlier in the wilderness journey, (See Exodus 17:8-16). Though Joshua was about to take over the leadership of

the people, not a word is said about him in this war. Note also that the prominent instruments of the war are the "holy instruments, and the trumpets," (v. 6).

An Unnecessary War. It was not God's original plan for the Israelites to have anything to do with the Moabites, who were associated with the Midianites. (See ch. 22:3, 4). Deuteronomy 2:9 records that God told Moses "distress not the Moabites," and Numbers 25:1 records that it was the "daughters of Moab" that enticed the Israelites to sin. The Israelites were tempted to turn aside from their God-given work to associate with these Moabites and Midianites, when they should have kept themselves aloof from them. They were just passing by the country of these nations to their proper inheritance, and should not have responded to their enticements, and probably would not have done so had not Balaam devised the plan. He paid for his wickedness by dying with the slain Midianites.

Application to Christians, This history, like other things concerning the Israelites, was "written for our admonition." (I Cor, 10:11). C. H. M, in his "Notes on Numbers" thus applies it: "Israel should have had nothing to do with these Midianites; but having, in an unguarded hour, -- an unguarded moment, -- been betrayed into association with them, nothing remains but war and utter extermination. So with us as Christians. Our proper business is to pass through the world as pilgrims and strangers; having nothing to do with it, save to be the patient witness of the grace of Christ, and thus shine as lights in the midst of the surrounding moral gloom. But, alas! we fail to maintain this rigid separation; we suffer ourselves to be betrayed into alliance with the world, and, in consequence, we get involved in trouble and conflict which does not properly belong to us at all."

Victory against Great Odds. This was a remarkable war in many respects. In the first place the army of Israel was composed of only 12,000 selected on the ratio of 1,000 to each tribe, and we find from verse forty-nine that not one of them was killed in the battle. But the number killed on the other side must have been considerable, since the female children that were saved alive numbered 32,000 (v. 35). The spoil taken was also enormous as catalogued in verses 32-35. Had Balak, king of the Moabites, known it, he had no reason to fear the Israelites, for they had been commanded to leave the Moabites alone. But when he hired Balaam to help him out, and together they devised the scheme to corrupt the Israelites, he brought upon himself and his people this unnecessary destruction.

Through Fire and Water, On the return of the victorious army they were ordered to remain outside the camp for seven days for the purpose of purification. They were to purify themselves and their captives on the third and seventh day. This was doubtless done by the water of separation from the ashes of the red heifer referred to in chapter nineteen. See verse twelve of that chapter and compare with verse nineteen in this chapter. Mention is also made of this water of separation in verse twenty-three. In addition to purifying with this water of separation, such things as would endure fire were to "go through the fire," as well as through the ceremonial cleansing of the water. See v. 23.

Thankfulness Expressed. When the soldiers engaged in this battle were numbered and it was found that there was not one missing they expressed their appreciation of their deliverance by making an offering of their individual bounty. This amount has been estimated as amounting to

about 450,000 dollars. It would appear that they gave much more than a tithe of their bounty. Truly now every one who has gotten the victory over sin should make a willing offering to the Lord, even as did those soldiers.

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19 -- INHERITANCE OF THE TRIBES -- (Numbers 32:1-34:29)

CHAPTER Thirty-two relates the manner in which some of the tribes received their inheritance. The Israelites had been eminently successful in conquering the domains of the kings Sihon and Og, as related in chapter twenty-one. Now the tribes of Reuben and Gad had many cattle and they saw that this country that was situated east of the Jordan river was remarkably well adapted to the raising of cattle. So they, with half the tribe of Manasseh, as shown later in the chapter, petitioned Moses to allow them to settle there.

Moses' Reaction to this petition was at first contrary to the request of these tribes. From what he says to them he evidently considered it in the nature of a rebellion against the plan of God for them. It does not appear, from anything said in this connection, that Moses took the matter to the Lord for instruction. After the spokesmen for these tribes had explained the matter Moses finally relented and gave them possession of the land they desired.

Various Opinions have been expressed by commentators on the action of these tribes. On one side It might be asked why should not some of the tribes take over the land conquered on the east of Jordan? Was it conquered only to lie waste without inhabitants? On the other hand there had never been any intimation but that all the twelve tribes should settle in Canaan. The fact that it received the condemnation of Moses when first proposed would be a strong indication of the correctness of his first opinion.

The Motive back of the request of the tribes may well be considered. It reminds one of Lot's choice, for it was based on pasture for cattle rather than on pleasure in God's promised land. With a people wholly devoted to God's plan how could anything short of the best God had promised satisfy them? We might understand if they had contended for the best places in Canaan proper, but it surely looks as though they did not appreciate what God was preparing for them on the other side of Jordan, in Canaan proper, a land hallowed by the memory of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

A Questionable Attitude, The very fact that the attitude of these tribes has raised various opinions in the minds of Bible commentators and students is against the correctness of their request for that land. Things that are thoroughly right do not raise such differences of opinion. No one would have raised a question as to the rightness of their going over Jordan.

Later Developments indicate that the matter was cause for uneasiness. The twenty-second chapter of Joshua relates how their conduct brought misunderstanding among the tribes afterward. Later history tells of their being the first of the tribes of Israel to be carried into captivity.

The Lesson for Us. It is plain that these tribes did not crave the best things God had for them. In like manner there are people today passing as Christians who, while associating with the people of God, do not crave and seek the best things God has for them. They are too easily satisfied at some half-way house to God's best. Their decisions are based on what is good for their cattle rather than on what is good for their souls.

Chapter thirty-three is for the most part a catalog of the places passed through by the Israelites in their wilderness wanderings. Few of these places, especially those, of the thirty-eight years wandering can now be identified. One fact, mentioned in verse four, is interesting, from the fact it shows the nature of the plagues on Egypt: "Upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments." This gives the key to the manner of the plagues.

The Chapter Closes with Instructions about how to deal with the people of the land of Canaan when they cross the Jordan. They are not only to exterminate the inhabitants, now ripe for destruction, as they had not been in the days of Abraham (See Genesis 15:18), but they were to destroy everything that reminded them of their practices. Their pictures, very likely vile in their suggestiveness, were to be destroyed; their idols, though valuable from the precious metals on them (See Deut. 7:25) were to be destroyed and their high places that were used for their false worship were to be destroyed.

Warning is Given as to how God will deal with them if they refuse or fail to do His bidding after entering the land. If any of the wicked inhabitants are allowed to remain they will be a perpetual trouble to them, as they proved to be. Furthermore God says He will do to them as He intended to do to the wicked inhabitants they are displacing.

Chapter thirty-four gives the boundaries of the territory the Israelites are to inherit. As we trace it across the south border to the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) and then across the north end, we find the east border is the river Jordan. This leaves the tribes east of Jordan out of the domain here described, This is excused, however, with the statement, "The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan," which means the east side, as Moses was then on that side when speaking. This suggests what is said in the Sermon on the Mount about those who pray and give to be seen: "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." (Matt. 6:5).

Moses Commanded what the Israelites should do after they crossed Jordan, but he was not allowed to go over himself. However, his attitude was far from that of the tribes who desired to stay on the east of Jordan. He had no longings for the east of Jordan country. Read his earnest petition to God as recorded in Deut. 3: 23-28 and how God answered him. While Moses did not lose his soul for his error at the time he smote the rock contrary to God's instruction (See lesson 12) he did lose the privilege of leading Israel over Jordan and enjoying that good land for himself. Thus every act of misconduct on the part of God's people must be judged in some manner.

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INHERITANCE of the Levites. In the division of the land the tribe of Levi was left without any inheritance in the way of a territory set off from the other tribes. But God was not forgetful of them. Their faithfulness at the time of the idolatry in connection with the golden calf, when they were the tribe that responded to Moses' call, "Who is on the Lord's side," (see Exodus 32.26), led to their being set apart as the priestly tribe.

A Blessed Scattering. Jacob's prophecy concerning the tribe of Levi was, "I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." (Genesis 49.7) The tribe of Simeon was associated in this prophecy, but their scattering was different. They became absorbed in other tribes. But what was mentioned in the way of a curse by Jacob was turned into a blessing regarding Levi. Notice this statement regarding them in Deuteronomy 10.8, 9: "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name, unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him." In a manner similar to this those persons set apart for the ministry now have their dependence on the Lord as they faithfully keep their charge.

The Purpose of this scattering of the Levites throughout all the other tribes was intended as a blessing to those tribes. It was therefore perfectly proper that the tribes should be generous with them and give them cities within their borders in which they could dwell. In like manner, if God now sets apart certain persons as ministers of the Gospel, it is incumbent on those blessed by their ministry to give for their support. This is applied by the Apostle Paul in the following words: "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." (I Cor. 9.13, 14). In all forty-eight cities were given to the Levites, and the giving was proportioned on the size of the respective tribes' inheritance in the land. So now giving to God's work should be proportioned on the possessions and income of the individual.

Cities of Refuge. But, though the Levites received of the bounty of the other tribes, they were not exempted from giving of their inheritance. Out of their inheritance they gave six cities of refuge, and these cities appear to have been the best cities they had, outstanding for location and importance.

Refuge for the Slayer. These cities of refuge were not places of protection for murderers, but for the safety of persons who had accidentally and unintentionally been the occasion of the death of some person. In Deut. 19.5 we find the description of such a case: "As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live."

Responsibility of the Slayer. It is to be observed that the responsibility of getting to one of the cities rested upon the slayer. While the cities were in convenient places, and the way to them marked, as we judge from Deut. 19.3, yet the man had to go to the city on his own initiative. How absurd it would have been for the man to have said, "If I am to be saved I will be saved, and if I am to be overtaken by the avenger I will be, so what can I do about it?" Occasionally we find

people who are apparently not concerned about their salvation. With a fatalistic view of foreordination they say that God knows whether or not they will be saved, so what could they do about it. God also knew whether the slayer would reach the city of refuge, but who would sit down and do nothing about it if the avenger was on his track? These people who do nothing about their own salvation will surely be lost.

Responsibility for Continued Safety. Furthermore, the slayer who had fled to one of these cities, in order to remain safe was obligated to remain in it. If he wandered out of the city he endangered his life and was subject to the will of the slayer if he found him. There is not only a responsibility on the part of a sinner to save himself by using the means God has appointed, but there is the responsibility to remain in saved relation to God.

No Tribe Neglected. It is worth noting that, though there is a question as to the rightness of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh settling on the east side of Jordan, God arranged that there should be cities of the Levites there to bless them, and cities of refuge for their protection. This is another indication of God's mercy in caring for the infirmity of His people.

Zelophehad's Daughters come again to the front in the last chapter of Numbers. These five women are to be commended for their faith and courage in demanding a share in the land God was giving to the Israelites. Had they not claimed an inheritance it is evident they never would have had it. They are also to be commended for the fact that when instructed as to whom they should marry they obeyed the instructions given them.

Unclaimed Inheritances. There are too few descendants of Zelophehad's daughters. Think of the unclaimed promises in the Bible! Reader, how many of the promises have you definitely claimed and made them your own? There is not only the initial claiming of God's promises, but the maintenance of the claim. In Joshua 17.4 we find these women once more making their claim when the land was divided. They might have lost out on their inheritance even then if they had not insisted on it. They based their claim on the word of Moses. In like manner we base our claim on the word of the Lord.

Thus we come to the end of the book of Numbers. May the student of these lessons make his or her claim to what God has promised and maintain it through all the exigencies of this life until entering the inheritance laid up for the saints of God.

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THE END