

Numbers Overview

The continuation of the Torah...written by Moses

We've come thru Genesis and Exodus and Leviticus...now Numbers.

Not until the writing of the Septuagint were the current book divisions made

The name of the book given by the writers of the Septuagint means
"in the wilderness"

But the writers of the Vulgate used "Numbers" and it was adopted by the
English translations

Why is the name of this book "Numbers?"

"number" appears 44 times

"numbered" 83 times

The 4th Book of Moses is a timeless story of walking and warfare that comes short of
victory

If you do not see yourself in Numbers, you are not really looking

We are in the wilderness (the world), this life is our Exodus and wandering.
We face trials and tribulations through which the Lord will deliver us

Trial: an event not to show God how strong I am, but to show me how weak I am
and how strong God is

John 15:5 with Phil 4:13 and 2 Cor 12:9-10

Objective: to test our faith

Lesson: God is attracted to weakness

The wandering Jews covered the same ground over and over again - so do we
God's kids do not flunk classes, they just take them until they pass!

The children of Israel have been at Mount Sinai for 11 months while the LORD gave
His Law to Moses

Now it's about time to get moving.

How to move and how to set up camp when they stop must be established

Numbers Chapter 1

v1-3 Take ye the sum:

The tabernacle of meeting has been set up (Ex 40:2) and the LORD is meeting with Moses on the first day of the 13th month since the exodus from Egypt...in the April/May timeframe

He tells Moses to take a “census/headcount” of the

- Jewish males...not those of the mixed multitude
- able to go out to war...20 years old and up
- armies by tribe

Remember, Israel is the LORD’s chosen instrument of judgment to cleanse the land He promised to AI&J

v4 a man of every tribe:

To assist Moses and Aaron in this significant and systematic task will be the patriarch of each tribe...listed below in v5-15

v5-15 the names of the men that shall stand with you:

The tribes are not listed in birth order...and of course Levi is not listed (represented by Moses and Aaron and the Levites are not warriors)

The meanings of the names are very interesting.

1. Reuben: “God of the Rock”, son of “Spreader of light”
2. Simeon: “Peace of God”, son of “Rock of the Almighty”
3. Judah: “Enchanter”, son of “People of liberality”
4. Issachar: “Given of God”, son of “Small”
5. Zebulun: “God of his father”, son of “Strong”

Joseph (to whom goes the double blessing of the firstborn)

6. Ephraim: “God of hearing”, son of “People of splendor”
7. Manasseh: “Reward of God”, son of “A Rock has ransomed”
8. Benjamin: “Father of judgment”, son of “War-like”
9. Dan: “Brother of help”, son of “People of the Almighty”
10. Asher: “Accident of God”, son of “Muddler”
11. Gad: “God is gatherer”, son of “Known of God”
12. Naphtali: “Brother of wrong”, son of “Having eyes”

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v16-19 the renowned of the congregation:

These are the heads of the tribes...their specific names given to us by God Himself

They helped Moses and Aaron take a headcount of able-bodied men in their respective tribes

Note: The LORD is an excellent bookkeeper...the Lamb's Book of Life has specific names written in it...

names of people who

- believed on the One the Father sent
- love Him...as evidenced by their obedience
- did whatsoever He told them to do

Note: the tribes listed below are in a different order... again not by birth order

v20-21 Rueben: 46,500

Note: by their generations

In Matt 24:34, "generations" means people/nation (Israel) vs an expanse of time

v22-23 Simeon: 59,300

v24-25 Gad: 45,650

v26-27 Judah: 74,600
the largest tribe

v28-29 Issachar: 54,400

v30-31 Zebulun: 57,400

v32-33 Ephraim: 40,500

Do you think there were 40,496 or 40,502 and the LORD just rounded to the nearest ten?

No, these are actual, precise numbers from the Creator Who opens and closes wombs

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v34-35 Manasseh: 32,200
the smallest tribe

v36-37 Benjamin: 35,400

v38-39 Dan: 62,700

v40-41 Asher: 41,500

v42-43 Naphtali: 53,400

v44-46 all they that were numbered: Total: 603,550 + Levites
Ex 38:25-26

Observations:

1. An accurate “cross-check and confirmation”
 - God is a God of details
 - God loses none that are His
2. The LORD delivered on His promise to Abraham...thru one son!
3. This implies the total population of the nation to be in excess of 2 million
 - Daily bread: 50 railway cars EVERY day
 - Water: 12 million gallons EVERY day...
in the middle of a desert!

Is the LORD big enough to meet your daily need?
Matt 6:31-33

v47-49 But the Levites:

This is not Moses seeking to protect his family from the perils of war...
this is the LORD’s command.
The Levites were heavily involved in another form of warfare

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v50-51 shalt appoint the Levites:

The Levites were strictly the LORD's...for His house and His things.

Any stranger...from another nation or another tribe...would lose his life if
did what only the Levites were to do.

e.g. Uzzah (2 Sam 6:1-8)

God says what He means and means what He says

v52-54 Israel shall pitch their tents...Levites shall pitch around:

The very **center** of the camp of the children of Israel was the LORD...
abiding between the cherubim above the mercy seat in the
Tabernacle of meeting

The Levites were to set up camp all around the Tabernacle and the other
tribes were to set up camp in a very specific way (Ch 2)

But the Levites were to guard the tabernacle while protecting their other
brethren by being a buffer

Numbers Chapter 2

The Camp of Israel and the marching orders of the nation

v1-2 standard...ensign: standard:

General instructions for setting up camp:

- by standard (flag or banner)...will be 4
- by ensign (marker)...one per tribe

v3-9 on the east side:

Toward the morning star...not NE or SE...

was to be the standard of the tribe of Judah (lion)

Joining Judah on the east were the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun.

Why Judah?

- Judah is on point, leading the armies of the LORD
- Who is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah?
- Who is the Morning Star?

Why Issachar and Zebulun?

Totaling 186,400

v10-16 on the south side:

To the south of the tabernacle...not SE or SW...

was the standard of Reuben (man)...

and following Judah in the march

Why Reuben?

Joined by Simeon and Gad?

Why?

Totaling 151,450

Not balanced with the east side...

v17 camp of the Levites:

The Levites set up camp around the tabernacle, in the center of the camp of Israel...and followed Judah and Rueben when on the march

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v18-24 on the west side:

On the west...not NW or SW...
opposite Judah was the standard of Ephraim (ox)...
and 4th in the march of the armies

Why Ephraim?

Joined by Manasseh and Benjamin
Why?

All Rachel's kids are together?

Totaling 108,100
Way out of balance with the other standards

v25-31 on the north side:

Finally, on the north...not NE or NW...
opposite Reuben was the standard of Dan (eagle)...
the rear guard

Why Dan?

Joined by Asher and Naphtali
Why?

Totaling 157,600
balanced with Reuben

v32-33 all those that were numbered:

Total of all 4 standards = 603,550
Ch 1:46

Note: In 38 years due to unbelief, those 603,550 will become...2

1. Joshua
2. Caleb

v34 Israel did:

A very good start: Obedience

Wow! So what!

Why are all these painful details recorded in Ch 1-2 for us to read...and study?

2 Tim 3:16

John 5:39

Heb 10:7

3 observations

1. God is a God of order in a confused world...
we must never forget that because we live in confusing, perilous times
2. A picture of His plan of salvation
Balaam and Barak (Num 22)
The Cross of Jesus
The way back to fellowship with God – the foot of the Cross
3. A picture of a greater reality
Rev 4:1-11
Rev 5:6 (Tabernacle in the midst of the “camp”)

Do you believe the Bible is trustworthy, in that it teaches spiritual truth and not spiritual error?

Do you believe the Bible is

- a. Completely trustworthy...infallible, without error
Why study anything but the Bible? Go to Bible studies?
- b. Completely untrustworthy...pure fiction
Why are you here?
- c. A mixture of truth and error...trustworthy and untrustworthy?
Who determines what is trustworthy and what is untrustworthy?
Can they be trusted to do so?

Here at CCA we believe A

If you believe B or C...why are you in this church?

Why are you a part of a Body with which you disagree?

If you believe A, are you a part of Bodies that believe B or C? Why?

Not believing A introduces confusion; who is the author of confusion?

Numbers 1-2 are proof to me that A is true...every word, every number

The Camp of Israel sends an eternal message of salvation for lost men

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Numbers Chapter 3

Last time...Ch 1-2

- Numbering the tribes...except the Levites
- The Camp of Israel...when settled and when on the march

Ch 3-4...the numbering and job assignments of the Levites

- tribe chosen by the LORD for Himself
- no land inheritance...the LORD is their inheritance

This week...trusting and serving the LORD

Ch 3:1-16

v1-3 the generations of Aaron and Moses:

First...the families of Aaron and Moses...

Aaron's in particular...chosen to be the priests
which is why he is listed here before Moses,
the only place in Scripture apart from birth genealogies.

All other "ministry" verses (47), Moses is listed first

Aaron was chosen by the Sovereign LORD to be the High Priest and
his sons to be priests.

They were anointed to take that office (Ex 30) of service in the house of
the LORD to officiate between man and God

1. Nadab ("liberal")
2. Abihu ("worshipper of God")
3. Eleazar ("helper")
4. Ithamar ("coast of the palm"...border of victory)

v4 Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD:
Lev 10:1-2

Aaron's two oldest sons

- Nadab: "liberal"
- Abihu: "worshipper of God"

made a fatal mistake....

- an unauthorized/illegal use of fire
- took self-centered, haughty liberty with their worship of God (as names say) which they were not commanded to do by the Word of God...mocking the holy things of God and...

right then, right there...were killed by the LORD.

A refining fire came out from the LORD...to purify His priests.

Luke 12:48

Part of His judgment: they had no children...the end of their line

Is there modern day "strange fire" in Christianity?

There is a pandemic of strange fire!

- Roman Church (Thyatira)
- Protestant Churches (Sardis)
- Evangelical Church (Laodicea)

- Traditions of men (make Word of God of none effect)
- False doctrine (contrary to Bible, ear-tickling)
- False Gospels (Social, Prosperity, All-inclusive)
- Denial of biblical inerrancy (God is not author, Scripture is untrustworthy)

Strange fire results in apostasy

- not keeping the Word
- denying His name

Like the bird-infested mustard bush that grew into a tree, the Church is home for a vast multitude of "liberal worshippers of God" that I believe Scripture says will be refined by the fire of the 70th Week of Daniel

(Thyatira, Sardis, Laodicea will go into Tribulation...
but not faithful Philadelphia)

Eleazar and Ithamar, the faithful sons who trusted the Word of God,
minister in the house of the LORD under the oversight/supervision
of Aaron

- The High Priest
- their father

as do faithful sons before Jesus Christ and God the Father
2 Peter 2:9 chosen generation, royal priesthood,
holy nation, peculiar people...
strangers and pilgrims (v11)

With Aaron's 4 sons in mind, from [Matt 7:21-23](#) and John 6:29
("trust, to entrust") we learn it is

- one thing to **drop** the name of Jesus...it is another to **take** His name, to lose your identity in Him
- one thing to **know about** Jesus...it is another to **know** Him
- one thing to **believe** in Jesus...it is another to **trust** Him

I believe a parachute will save my life if I jump out of an airplane.
But I am not about to jump out of an airplane to prove it...
I don't trust the parachute, the parachute packer, etc
(I have not learned to trust...no desire to learn)

Standing here, I believe...but I do not trust my life with a parachute

But I have learned to trust my life with Jesus unequivocally
I have learned that He is absolutely trustworthy...
and that I am not, nor is anyone or anything else

The faithful sons **take**, **know** and **trust**...active faith vs intellectual belief

- obeying the Word of God, their absolute and only authority...
His will be done, not theirs
- depending entirely, relying completely and whole-heartedly
upon Jesus Christ rather than themselves or any other

Faith can be merely spoken, trust can be seen by others...
in the doing of the faith

v5-6 Bring the tribe of Levi near:

Now, the LORD commands Moses to bring and present the Levites to Aaron the High Priest so that they may serve him.

Do we wait until we are presented to the LORD to serve Him?

Do we wait until we are given the Kingdom to serve Jesus?

1 Tim 4:8 speaks to the priority of Jesus Christ and serving Him...now

How do we serve Jesus now?

- Obedience (John 15:14, John 14:15)
- Be busy about the Father's business (Luke 19:10)
- Loving the least among us (Matt 25:31-40)

All of which require

- trust (active faith)
- surrender of self-will
- the power of the Holy Spirit, Who is Eleazar (helper) and Ithamar (victory)

Yet many Christians believe in Jesus but do not trust Him.

The root issue in believing but not trusting is fear

- of man
- of the unknown (Heb 11:8)
- of being "out of control"

To believe in Jesus but trust in yourself instead of God is irrational and double-minded/unstable.

"With God all things are possible."

"Why are you fearful, o ye of little faith?"

There is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear

God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind

I have also learned that

the more I trust the LORD,
the more I want to serve Him,
the more He uses me

The Almighty God uses ordinary people who are willing to take Him at His Word.

Project Pearl: It is not great men who change the world, but weak men in the hands of a great God.

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v7-8 they shall keep:

The entire tribe of Levi was entrusted to:

- serve the LORD
 - assist Aaron the High Priest with his duty/assignment
 - attend to Tabernacle on behalf of the children of Israel
 - do the work of the priests in the Tabernacle
the sons of Aaron: sacrifices, offerings, incense, etc
 - attend to the instruments of service in the Tabernacle
- serve others
 - attend to the needs of the children of Israel

We see a similar assignment in the body of believers

Matt 22:36-40

Acts 6:1-7

Gal 6:1-2, 9-10

v9 give the Levites unto Aaron:

The giving of the chosen tribe to the High Priest

John 6:37-39

as are the saints/believers

John 17

Notice they are “wholly given” to Him...

- His perspective: none are lost...eternal security
- their perspective: complete surrender, no excuses or exceptions or conditions

v10 thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons:

God, through Moses His prophet to man, is establishing order...

God oversees Moses...

who will “oversee” Aaron

who oversees his sons and the Levites...

Throughout Scripture, order vs confusion

stranger...put to death:

Ch 1:51...no defiled person can come near the holiness of God and live

Which is precisely why we have a High Priest

John 1:17

John 3:16-21

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v11-13 I have taken the Levites...firstborn:

Why v6?

Ex 13:1-2

The Sovereign LORD chose the Levites to be the firstborn of all the children of Israel

He made/pronounced them clean and set them apart for Himself

John 15:16

John 6:44

Rom 8:29-30

I am the LORD:

The LORD punctuates His choice by declaring Himself

Who can argue/take issue with the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth?

Yet how many of us do take issue with His ways and will by our

- disobedience...striving for our will be done vs His
- walking by sight
(with eyes that lie...our senses can deceive us...Wed night)
and not by faith (impossible for God to lie)
- believing (when I understand)
vs trusting (when don't understand)

v14-15 Number the children of Levi:

The LORD commanded Moses to not number the Levites in Ch 1-2...
now He commands Moses to number them

The other tribes:

- males
- 20 years and older...when pressed into military service

Levites

- males
- 1 month and older...when claimed by the LORD for His service

v16 Moses numbered...as commanded:
...according to the word of the LORD...
as he was commanded.

Did Moses have to pray before doing what he was told to do?
Did he have to pray before doing acting on his calling?

Did he put out a fleece?
Did he ask any clarifying questions or make any stipulations?

Did he ask "When?"
Did he hesitate at all?
Did he wait until he understood what the LORD was doing before he obeyed?

No, he simply obeyed.
He had learned that the LORD is absolutely trustworthy.

No hands...who here is living a victorious, joy-filled Christian life?
Who is living a defeated, frustrated, joy-less Christian life?

I'm not asking who is living a trial and tribulation-free life and
who is getting roughed up by one of life's storms.

Storms and trials being a constant in this fallen world...
Victorious and joyful vs defeated and frustrated...what is the difference?
Obedience to the Word of God...trusting the LORD Jesus Christ
Jesus Christ is your parachute.
It's very simple

Moses is an excellent model of obedience for us

- a keen sense of hearing the Word of God
- trusting the Word of God vs emotions or intellect or abilities
(anything of self)
- living by faith vs sight or knowledge
(not knowing "Why"...on a need-to-know basis)
- immediate...a heart quick to obey

...according to the word of the LORD...
as he was commanded.

The Word of God is not a book of suggestions.
Obedience is expected.

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The LORD stopped me at this verse and I meditated on it...

1. for my own personal walk and that of this fellowship...
where some are Acts 2:42 and Heb 10:25
but many are
 - too busy
 - too easily distracted and discouraged by the cares of this world
 - deceived by riches
 - very inconsistent and sporadic in their walkJesus is just not THE priority

2. given the days in which we live...
 - How much longer will a longsuffering, holy God stand by and watch his babies killed?
(abortion al USA or abandonment ala Egypt)
 - How much longer will a longsuffering, holy God stand by as the world embraces/tolerates/accepts homosexuality, which He calls an abomination?
 - How much longer will the Defender of Israel stand by while the nations bully His people and divide up His land to give to her enemies?

3. reading the news thru the lens of the Word of God...
[Obama speech in Berlin] (not say AC...look for JC)

4. our lives are but a vapor...
James 4:14
Christopher Laurie

With a clear-minded understanding that

- the times are evil and ferocious
- time is short
- high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed

how devoted to obeying the Word of God and serving the LORD Jesus Christ are we?

I want my life to be pleasing to the LORD Who died for me.

I want that for each of you.

I want all the blessings the LORD has for me.

I want that for each of you.

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How do you and I do that?

Gen 15:6 actions/deeds...Gen 22

Hab 2:4 life vs death

Heb 11:6 life is impossible without

Heb 11:1 substance and evidence

Heb 11:24-27 fearing only the invisible God

No man has seen the Father

Jesus does not show us the Father...

The Father shows us Jesus (Col 1:15)

And His testimony is true and trustworthy!

Before the days that are coming, we all must learn that the LORD is absolutely trustworthy...in every aspect of our lives

- a. Married folks, are our marriages peaceful, heaven on earth or are they stressed and contentious, hell on earth?
Difference: Obedience to the Word of God
If your marriage is not heaven on earth, now you know what to do!
- b. Do we work harder praying, in utter dependence upon the LORD or doing for ourselves, independent of the LORD?
- c. Is our lifestyle one of indulgence of self or denying of self?
Do our choices/actions declare we want God's will on earth, or our will in heaven?
- d. Are we comfortable in our society or are we strangers in a strange place?
Are we "camouflaged" Christians or are we salt and light?
Are we comfortable with God's plan...suffering and Phil 3:7-11?
Do we want an easy life...or an eternally meaningful life?
- e. Are we "wholly given" unto our High Priest, Jesus Christ or are we
 - half-hearted...partially given unto ourselves
 - double minded...and unstable in our ways

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- f. Does the love of Christ constrain/drive us to serve Him...
and others...wherever, whenever, whatever?

Are we serving the LORD anywhere close to His love for us?

- at home...spouse, children
- at work...work ethic, integrity, words and behavior
- at school...different, peculiar, impervious to peer pressure
- at church...pew potato or involved
 - Children's Ministry
 - Cleaning Ministry
 - Men's/Women's Ministry
 - Marriage Ministry

Know this: a refining fire is coming!

- USA
- Church

The Word of God says so!

Either the Word of God is completely trustworthy
Or the Word of God is completely untrustworthy
What does history tell us?

Either Jesus Christ is LORD and we trust Him unconditionally
Or we are and we trust ourselves and our stuff
What is our track record vs His track record?

Either we deny self
Or we indulge ourselves
Are we ever satisfied in the flesh?

Either we unconditionally surrender to and obey Jesus Christ
Or we defy the LORDship of Jesus
Like Lucifer, Pharaoh, the Amorites, the Pharisees, evolutionists

Either we fear the LORD
Or we fear man and circumstances in this life
Who or what is bigger than Jesus?

Are we a people who believes in Jesus...but does not trust Him?
In many cases, I think "Yes"

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I want more of Jesus and less of me and less of the world.
I want that for you...do you want that for yourself?

Then what are you and I going to

- do that we are not?
- not do that we are?

Very simple

Heb 12:1-2

Eccl 12:13

Trust the LORD Jesus Christ with everything you are, have, want to be

LORD, help our unbelief!

[Altar call]

His service to us on the Cross was unconditional and complete...
what would you not do to serve Him?!

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Last week: trusting the LORD – unconditional obedience

This week...numbering and assigning the responsibilities of the Levites

v17 the sons of Lev:

3 sons

1. Gershon: “refugee” in a strange land...a stranger
2. Kohath” “ally” or “allied”...with the LORD
3. Merari: “bitter”

Which one describes me? You?

v18-20 the sons of:

3 sons...in birth order

From which come the 8 families in the tribe of Levi,
the smallest tribe

v21-26 Of Gershon:

The two families of Gershon

- numbered 7500 (one month and older)
- to camp west of the Tabernacle (closed end), between the Tabernacle and Ephraim (as a buffer)
- led by “God is gatherer”, the son of “belonging to God”
- for the setting up and taking down of the Tabernacle, assigned the soft structure and the coverings (“roofers” and “sheetrockers”)

v27-32 of Kohath:

The four families of Kohath

- numbered 8600
- to camp to the south (on the right when facing east) of the Tabernacle, between the Tabernacle and Reuben
- led by “God of treasure”, the son of “strength of God”
- assigned to care for the sanctuary...the furniture (furniture movers)
- supervised by Eleazar, now the oldest son of Aaron... overseer of the Tabernacle

Aaron, Miriam, and Moses are of Kohath (Amram)
(1 Chron 6:1-3a, 1 Chron 23:12-13)

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v33-37 Of Merari:

The two families of Merari

- numbered 6200
- to camp north of the Tabernacle, between the Tabernacle and Dan
- led by “rock of God”, the son of “father of might”
- assigned the hard structure (framers)

On the journey from bondage to Promised Land/inheritance, the LORD would lead the children of Israel.

When He moved, they moved.

When He stopped, they stopped.

Moving and stopping required the taking down and the setting up of the house of the LORD, the Tabernacle

It was the assignment of the tribe of Levi to do that...each family having specific responsibilities...as assigned by the Sovereign LORD

With every person equipped and faithfully obedient, this would have been a beautiful work of efficiency, unity, and harmony

This would be a model of how the Church is to perform

Eph 4:1-6, 11-15

Our individual and corporate service unto the LORD:

- His choice, His will, as to where and what
- our immediate and unconditional obedience
- His power, His doing (Phil 2:13)

If you are born-again (“one month or older”), you know enough to serve the LORD and others...we don’t have any seminary grads here

There are many non-teaching ministries...behind-the-scenes work...that keep this church functioning (or could be done that are not getting done)

Are you not serving? What are you waiting for? Consider this your invitation.

I learned early in my Christian walk that if you are hurting...and many are... the LORD’s best therapy is to serve someone else

v38 toward the east:

The 3 sons of Levi are on the west, south, and north of the Tabernacle... the east side, the entrance was the buffer zone of highest honor... between the Tabernacle and Judah... was given to Moses and Aaron and his sons

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v39 numbered of the Levites:
The total number of Levites was 22,000

Two interesting points:

1. Compared to the other tribes (even ages 20 years up!),
Levi was the smallest tribe numerically...
And faithful (Ex 32:26)

Question: What is the definition of a successful church?

- number of members
- size and beauty of facility
- size of operating budget
- faithfulness to the Word of God
- Laodicea or Philadelphia

No church or pastor is perfect...people ruin the perfection
But...is the church and the pastor faithful to the
Word of God and to the name of Jesus?

Is your place of fellowship a big social club or a place
of spiritual growth in grace and in the knowledge of
our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

2. Anyone been counting as we went?
 $7500 + 8600 + 6200 = 22,300$

- Copyist error in v28...missing letter turn 8600 into 8300?
- 300 firstborn of Levites...firstborn cannot redeem another firstborn?

v40-41 Number all the firstborn...take the Levites for me:

Rather than the firstborn of every family in the nation (Ex 13:1-2), the
LORD has chosen for Himself...has adopted as His own...
the Levites

An entire tribe is dedicated/devoted to serving Him and His people in His
house

We see this also in the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Peter 2:9 royal priesthood (order of Mel)

Rom 8:15 not spirit of bondage but adoption...Abba

Gal 4:4-7

Eph 1:4-7

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v42 Moses numbered:

Moses obeyed.

Did Moses have to pray first?

Did he put out a fleece?

v43 all the firstborn males:

22,273...the number of families in the other 12 tribes (2 for Joseph)

More than the number of the Levitical males one month and older (v39)

v44-48 five shekels apiece:

The 273 firstborn of the children of Israel that are above and beyond the number of Levites were not “lost” but were to be ransomed with 5 shekels each

(Ex 30 and Lev 27)

The money collected was to be given to the priests...

not for their worldly enrichment but to be used to worship Him and do His work

The antithesis of this truth is the mindset of Joel Osteen

(God wants me to be rich)

v49-51 Moses took...gave:

According to the Word of God, Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

Serving the LORD, being useful to the LORD, requires obedience...

Moses-style – immediate and unconditional

A faithful servant has developed his sense of hearing the small still voice of God

- in the Word daily
- cultivating a personal relationship with the LORD
- being not just a hearer but a doer of the Word
- by faith vs knowledge, understanding, intellect

Personal reflection: Are you a faithful servant?

Numbers Chapter 4

The detail assignments for the work of Tabernacle are given

v1-3 the sons of Kohath...thirty years...fifty years:

The Levites were fit to serve the LORD in the Tabernacle between the ages of 30 and 50...the prime of life

- emotional fitness: my personal experience and my observation is that most males are foolish and immature until age 30

- physical fitness: full strength
Rayland: “man strength”
Ken Cartwright or Don Paz vs me or Chuck Weekley
Levites will be doing heavy work in their service to the LORD

- spiritual fitness: understanding and maturity...fit to enter the LORD’s army/host (spiritual warfare...1 Tim 1:18)

Note: When did Jesus, our High Priest, begin His public ministry?

Luke 3:23

Therefore, when did John the Baptist, who was a Levite?

v4 the most holy things:

God is a God of order.

So why is He starting this passage with the sons of Kohath (son #2) vs Gershon (son #1)?

Because Moses and Aaron are of the sons of Kohath?

No...God is not a respecter of persons

Because the service of the sons of Kohath was the most important work?

No...every task assigned by the LORD is important if His people are to live and move in harmony

Because He is a God of order.

These are the work assignments for taking down and packing up His house when it is time to move.

This chapter gives us the sequential steps whereby that was accomplished.

Before you can disassemble the house, you must pack the furnishings

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v5-6 Aaron shall come, and his sons:

Aarons and his sons are sons of Kohath...but they are the only sons of Kohath that can enter the holy place and the most holy place.
So Aaron and his sons are the packers of God's most holy things (v5-14) and the rest of the sons of Kohath are the movers.

God is a God of order and priorities...
1st things 1st, everything in its proper time

Step 1: pack up the Ark of the Covenant...with mercy seat and cherubim

1. take down veil that separated holy place from most holy place
2. cover the Ark so that it cannot be seen by others...
that would be deadly
3. cover again, with a blue cloth
(sky blue...heaven)
4. cover again, with a covering of badger skins...for the Ark vs
the Tabernacle (v25)
(like all other furnishings so most certainly the Ark)
Badger skins to
 - protect it from the elements
 - make it look ordinary vs glorious and
spectacular to people they will encounter
will on the march (Is 53:2b)
5. replace the poles...removed so it could be covered

v7-8 table of showbread:

Step 2: The Table of Shewbread, in the holy place

1. cover with a blue cloth
2. place on the cloth all the vessels
3. cover them with a scarlet cloth
(we are His vessels, we are covered with scarlet/Blood)
4. cover all with badger skin
5. replace the poles

v9-10 the candlestick of the light:

Step 3: the Candlestick/Lampstand and utensils

1. cover with a blue cloth
2. cover with badger skins
3. place it on a "mat" with poles in the sides for carrying
(no rings on the Lampstand)

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v11 golden altar:

Step 4: the golden altar of incense

1. cover with a blue cloth
2. cover with badger skins
(can you see the glory of Jesus being covered with ordinary flesh?)
3. replace the poles

v12 instruments of ministry:

Step 5: all the other things...loose items, priestly garments, etc

1. cover with a cloth of blue
2. cover with badger skins
3. place on another mat with poles in the sides

The sanctuary is now packed and ready to go

v13-14 the altar:

Step 6: the altar of burnt offering (Cross of Lamb of God)

1. remove the ashes
2. cover with a purple cloth (Is 53:5, 10a)
3. place the utensils on the purple cloth
4. cover with badger skins
5. replace the poles

v15 sons of Kohath shall come to bear it:

Step 7: Aaron and his sons prepare, the sons of Kohath bear...

- on their shoulders...not on a wagon
- very heavy items...need "man strength" (ages 30-50)
- touching only the poles...not the most holy things
(LORD is very serious about holiness)

v16 Eleazar...oversight:

Eleazar is appointed the responsibilities to

- move the "consumables" of worship – oils, incense, offering
- oversee the packing, moving, setting up of the LORD's furnishings

The God of order places authority over the work...
His representative, not one to "lord over" "subordinates"

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v17-20 Cut ye not off:

The LORD is deadly serious about holiness...about the handling of His most holy things (John 5:39)

So to guard against mistakes and negligence by careless men, the LORD instructs Moses to instruct Aaron and his sons to instruct the Kohathites about their job (job training)

- specific task
- specific time/sequence
- specific methods
- by person...who will be accountable to so perform

Notice

- the order...so there is no confusion and therefore, no death
- the Instructor (1 John 2:27, John 14:26)...
there is only one LORD and all are to obey Him

v21-28 the sons of Gershon:

Step 8: Now that the most holy things have been prepared and removed, the Gershonites disassemble the soft coverings of the house

- fine linen curtains
- goat's hair coverings
- ram's skin dyed red
- badger skin covering
- east entrance
- outer walls of the complex

Their assignment is to take down, bear with wagons (Ch 7), and set up the walls of the complex and the house of God ("sheetrockers" and "roofers")

They were overseen by Ithamar, the LORD's representative...
not their lord and master

v29-33 the sons of Merari:

Step 9: After the “roof” and the “sheetrock” have been removed, the sons of Merari, the “framers”, take down and bear in wagons (Ch 7) the frame of the house and the complex.

Each family/man had a specific job to do...nothing more, nothing less
They worked in harmony and efficiency when they submitted to the authority placed over them...

- families to Eleazar or Ithamar
- Eleazar and Ithamar to Aaron
- Aaron to Moses
- Moses to the LORD
- ALL to the LORD

v34-37 numbered the sons of the Kohathites:

Before, they had been numbered from one month old and above.
Now those fit for service...30-50...are numbered

Kohathites: 2750 (of 8600)...32%

v38-41 numbered the sons of Gershon:

Gershonites: 2630 (of 7500)...35%

v42-45 numbered...the sons of Merari:

Merarites: 3200 (of 6200)...52%

The LORD knows exactly what He is doing – the most servants fit for heavy work are in the family assigned the heaviest work...
both in raw numbers and in %

v46-48 those that were numbered:

Total “man strength”: 8580...39%

v49 According to the commandment of the LORD:

None of this was done because Moses had a good idea for a program to reach the Promised Land...the LORD is commanding His people/sheep according to His revealed Word

This is all the LORD's plan – His order, His authority, His assignments

The LORD Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, the Body of Christ.

This Body is His, not mine

He calls the shots, I don't.

I have been called to be a leader among peers...

I am not LORD, I am the LORD's representative (with James 3:1)

He instructs me, I pass on to you what I get.

You receive it....and test it against His revealed Word

(Acts 17:11, 1 Thes 5:21)

If I start to think this work is about me...if I start teaching error...

you come respectfully (1 Tim 5) to show me the Truth

(God's Word)

If I "see the light" and repent, PTL and we keep moving.

If I refuse to see the light...seeing is a choice...then what do you do?

Flee like Joseph fled.

To a pastor who is following Jesus and will love you enough to feed you truth.

Your loyalty is to Jesus Christ, not to me or this fellowship.

If I no longer care enough to rebuke sin...I must step down and out.

Too many pastors, in their pride,

- are corrupted by money, power, and women
- hide behind "Don't touch the LORD's anointed!"

In their carnality, they have twisted the Scripture

Context: David (God's anointed!) speaking of Saul ("hands-off" God)

David

- moved out of Saul's house...it was no longer safe for him there
- tried several times to respectfully correct Saul's error
- but did not take on God's job – to deal with Saul, who was operating according to his flesh and not the Spirit of God

We all have a calling upon our lives...

a ministry to serve the LORD and His people

Are we faithful to the LORD and to His calling?

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Numbers Chapter 5

Up to this point...outward order (numbering, camps, Levitical responsibilities)
This week...inward order (holiness)

Holiness in action – cleansing

v1-4	purity in the camp
v5-10	confession of sin
v11-31	law of jealousy

v1-4 put out of the camp:

Repeatedly in Leviticus, the LORD commanded His people to be holy,
for He is holy

Now comes the command to take action on being holy...
to send away/cast out all

1. lepers: sin, uncleanness (Lev 13)
2. with an unclean issue from the flesh: the effects of sin
3. defiled by a dead man/corpse: the wages of sin

The command applies to both genders so that the camp where the LORD
dwells with His people is not polluted
Filthiness is contagious...and a killer!

Israel obeyed!

They heard, believed, did...they trusted the Word of God

We are given the same command to be holy (1 P 1:16, 1 Thes 4:7)

Action is required to purify our lives...Whose?

Is 64:6

- a. All of us would be cast out/sent away...were it not for the
sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the Father's grace
- b. Now, we are called to follow Jesus in holiness (Matt 16:24)
1 Cor 7:1
Walking: worthy, not as other Gentiles, in love,
as children of light, circumspectly (Eph 4-5)

Self-righteousness has no place in a healthy relationship with God...
none of us can boast in our holiness

- all have fallen short of the glory of God
- we are holy because Jesus is holy

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Next, the cleansing of individual sin

v5-8 commit and sin...confess...recompense:

When

- any person
- commits any sin
- against the holy LORD (Ps 51:4)
- is guilty
 - LORD knows
 - man knows by 2 or 3 witnesses

the sinner is to

- confess: agreement and admission of wrong-doing
 - in private (LORD)
 - in public (man)
- return: make restitution...repent
- have atonement made for him: forgiveness

The confession **and** repentance of sin

- required for forgiveness/cleansing...
- to be as public as was the sin
 - e.g. John Edwards

1 John 1:9

v9-10 offering...hallowed thing:

An almost parenthetical thought: the LORD provides for the priests via the cleansing of His people

- offerings: sin offerings etc
- hallowed things given: freewill offerings etc

Given the heart of man, the priests should never go hungry!

Now, the Law of jealousy

v11-15 man's wife go aside:

Situation:

A man suspects his wife has gone astray...committed adultery.
He has no evidence...apart "feeling something is wrong"

- the unfaithfulness is secret/hidden from him
- no witnesses
- not caught in the act

Whether she has or has not been unfaithful, in his jealousy
he initiates a "trial" to learn the truth

Adultery is a capital crime (Lev 20:10)...for both man and woman

Q: Why is the trial only for the woman?

Hold that thought.

Q: Why did the LORD make adultery a capital offense?

It destroys

- that which He made in His image
(man and wife, the 2 are 1)
- the social foundation and order of man

The rebellion of unfaithfulness...cheating...is unholy:

- breaks the marriage contract ordained by God
- dishonors the LORD and the faithful spouse
- defiles the marriage bed (Heb 13:4)
- introduces great confusion into the family
- may introduce bastard/illegitimate children into
the family (Deut 23:2)

Every marriage...Christian marriage in particular...is targeted by
Satan, who hates God and all that which has been made in
His image

Back to the text, the suspicious husband initiates a trial of his wife's
purity/holiness, going to the (High) Priest with

- his wife
- a jealousy offering
 - tenth of an ephah: one man's food for one day
 - barley: daily food for the poor, animal fodder
for all others...if she behaved like an animal
 - no oil: if she acted in her flesh and not in the
Spirit of God
 - no frankincense: if she acted without praying

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The purpose of the trial is not to ram-rod the vengeance of an angry or jealous man but to prevent an unrighteous divorce
(God hates divorce for the same reasons adultery is a capital crime)

v16 set her before the LORD:

The priest then initiates a 6-step trial to determine guilt or innocence

Step 1: The wife is set before the Judge

Who is the Judge of this trial?!

The only one

- Who knows the truth and is the revealer of truth
- before Whom nothing is hidden or secret

v17 holy water...earthen vessel...dust:

Step 2: The priest prepares some bitter water

1. holy water: from the brass laver between the Tabernacle and the brass altar (not something sold by “holy people”)
2. earthen vessel: worthless compared to a copper vessel
3. dust from the floor of the Tabernacle
 - the effect of the curse due to sin (Gen 3:14)
 - humiliation and disgrace (Micah 7:16-17, Is 49:22-23)
 - our fallen “frame” (Ps 103:14)

v18 uncover the woman’s head:

Step 3: The woman is given the jealousy offering to hold before the LORD and the priest loosened/let down her hair...
an improper/immodest way for a woman to present herself

A woman’s hair was

- her glory, her covering (1 Cor 11:15) of her inward beauty (1 Peter 3:1-4)
- to be let down for only her husband

Hair loosened and let down in public was a sign of immorality...
how the whores wore their hair

v19-22 charge her by an oath:

Step 4: The priest, with the woman outside the Tabernacle but facing the LORD, “administers the oath of truth”

(why those taking the witness stand in our legal system put their hand on the Bible and swear to tell the truth)

The woman is not presumed to be guilty.

“If you are innocent of your husband’s jealousy, this bitter water will have no effect on you.

But if you are guilty,

- you will be made a curse among us
- your thigh will rot (Prov 12:4)
- your womb will swell.” (unable to bear children, v28)

The rotting and swelling are not natural effects of dirty water... they are supernatural effects caused by an all-knowing Judge

All three effects are shameful...as they should be to instill holiness
Divorce in this nation was painfully shameful until CA led the way on “no fault” divorce on Jan 1, 1970
All states but SD and NY followed suit by 1983
SD in 1985
NY: if both sign notarized document

Prior to no-fault, a couple’s “dirty laundry” was aired publically
A judge had to find the party at fault and decide whether or not divorce was the best resolution (not automatic)
Now....”We are divorced” without any showing of wrong-doing or a judicial proceeding

As a result of No-Fault divorce

- divorce rates are 50%...secular and in the Church
- 1M divorces per year

And

- poverty rates are up
- crime rates are up
- mental health cases are up
- marriage rates are down
- same-sex marriages are here

The American family is in trouble!

The children are the harmed the most...psychology lies
God hates divorce...it should be very shameful

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v23 write...blot...water:

Step 5: The 3 curses are written on parchment, rubbed off, and the “erasings” dumped in the bitter water

v24-26 cause the woman to drink:

Step 6: The priest

- offers the jealousy offering unto the LORD
- gives the woman the bitter water to drink, and the woman drinks the bitter water

Now...the Judge's judgment

v27-28 if she be defiled...be not defiled:

The LORD's lie detector (Num 32:23)...the supernatural effects... would declare the wife's guilt or innocence

- Guilt:
 - the wages of sin is death (barrenness, dead womb)
 - Lev 20:10 for the wife and the “counterfeit husband”

The judgment is painful

- physically: swelling and rotting...stoning
- emotionally: barrenness

- Innocence:
 - the truth does not harm the innocent
 - the innocent is untouched by the LORD's judgment
 - the innocent is set free

v29-31 This is the law of jealousies:

Jealousy of one's wife was not a sin...

but the trial was very pleasant for the woman he loves

Husbands: do not treat your wives such that she looks elsewhere for that which she desires from you

Wives: be faithful

Now, back to the thought I asked you to hold:

Why is the trial only for the woman?!

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What is really in view here?

- The relationship between God and Israel...the Husband and His wife
(Jer 3:20, Hosea, Is 54:1-8, Jer 31:31-33)
- The relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church...the Bridegroom and the Bride
(Eph 5:32)
- Idolatry is the spiritual equivalent of adultery...Israel **and** the Church cheating on their Husbands with the counterfeit husband Satan and their Husbands are jealous!
(Ex 34:14; 2 Cor 11:2-4; 1 Cor 10:14, 20-22; Is 42:8)

Corporately:

The Church is as unfaithful/adulterous as Israel (not Replacement)
Only the innocent will be untouched by His judgment
(Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea)
whore dead vomited

Individually:

1. our unfaithfulness to/cheating on our Bridegroom when we act
 - like an animal (barley)
 - in the flesh vs in the Spirit (no oil)
 - without praying (no frankincense)
2. a marriage lesson
Christian marriage is
 - a 3-person relationship...Jesus Christ is LORD
 - a spiritual, supernatural relationship
 - simple...yet humanly impossible

In Eph 5

- the man is to give his wife what she needs:
security
- the woman is to give her husband what he needs:
her respect

In the light of Eph 5:32

- Jesus gives His Bride security...eternal security!
- His faithful Bride gives Him respect...
reverence, preeminence, honor
- Jesus is jealous for us...
- We are commanded to be holy and pure and faithful
- Trials purify us of our "wanderings", "going aside"

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The one-sided trial in Num 5....
a picture of a much greater truth
a call for personal holiness before the LORD

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Numbers Chapter 6

Last week...the Law of jealousy....a picture of our relationship with Jesus Christ

This week

- Devotion to God...Nazarite vow (v1-21)
- Devotion of God...the priestly blessing (v22-27)

v1-2 vow a vow of a Nazarite:

“to vow a vow” to separate was:

- a “promise to promise” “to separate or dedicate” oneself unto the LORD...an oath of devotion
- to “do a wonderful thing”...something unusual or uncommon

v3-8 He shall separate himself from:

A Nazarite was ”to abstain” from:

1. everything from the grapevine...food and drink

- alcoholic beverages: wine (fermented juice) or beer or margaritas or martinis or Scotch & 7s or tequila shooters or any other hard liquor (strong drink: fermented from other fruits or grains)

Wine (juice of the fruit of the vine) in Scripture is used to portray the joy of the LORD (Ps 104:15 makes glad the heart of man)

However, the fermentation of grape juice

- by introducing a corrupting agent (yeast/leaven)
- the “death” of the leaven changes the nature of the juice...giving it a mind-altering characteristic
- excites the lust of the flesh
- a counterfeit joy...very temporary!

- grapes or raisins
- grape seeds or grape leaves

2. haircuts...his hair is as if it were a crown (v7b)

3. nearness to death...the wages of sin (sin: rebellion, dedication to self)

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Such a vow of “abstinence” was voluntary and for a specific period of time /number of days, during which time he was to be absolutely abstinent...holy unto God

Examples in the Bible

- Samson (Judges 13:2-5):
 - by the LORD to his barren mother...
 - for his entire life...
 - a special birth...Divine touch...supernatural birth
 - Afterwards: a wasted life pursuing the lusts of the flesh

- Samuel (1 Sam 1:11):
 - by his barren mother...
 - for his entire life...
 - a special birth...a Divine touch...supernatural birth
 - Wonderful thing/Afterwards: tight and right with God, devoted his entire life (Jer 15:1)

- John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-17):
 - by the LORD to his father,
 - husband of a barren wife...
 - for his entire life...
 - a special birth...a Divine touch...supernatural birth
 - Afterwards: forerunner to the Messiah, greatest man born of woman (Matt 11:11)

- the Apostle Paul (Acts 18:18):
 - by Paul's choice...
 - for a period of time
 - after a Divine touch...supernatural birth (Acts 9)
 - Afterwards: witness to the Jews in Jerusalem that ended before Caesar in Rome

God is looking for a man to use...who will be entirely devoted to Him
Nazarite: “I dedicate my life to You, LORD.”

Note: one of the national sins of Israel was the corruption of the Nazarites
(Amos 2:11-12)

v9-12 any man die very suddenly:

In this fallen world, death happens.

Should death happen unexpectedly for any reason in the presence of a Nazarite, he had to:

- be ceremonially purified, which included the shaving of his head...his crown removed
- bring a sin offering, a burnt offering to atone for his sin (“missing the mark”...his vow fell short)
- start all over...his “day count” is zeroed (time is perishable)

Death carries a very high price

God is not short-changed on the vows made to Him

v13-21 when the days of his separation are fulfilled:

Having abstained from the grapevine, haircuts, and the nearness of death for the number of days promised to God, the Nazarite

- came to the house of God
- came with a very big offering
 - a lamb for a burnt offering
 - a lamb for a sin offering
 - a ram for a peace offering
 - unleavened bread and “cookies”
 - grain offering
 - drink offering

A Nazarite vow comes at a very high personal cost!

- shaved his head publicly...and burned his hair underneath the ram
- gave thanks unto the LORD...wave offering

So what?

What does this have to do with us?

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Let's look at the Nazarite vow again

- Making a promise to devote yourself to do something unusual, uncommon, wonderful

Matt 5:38-44

Rom 12:3, 9-21

Eph 4:15, 29-32

1 Peter 3:10 refrain his tongue from evil, deceit
1 Cor 6:18 flee fornication (sexual purity)
Matt 22:36-40 self is last
1 Cor 8, 10 Law of Love
Acts 1:8 Go, be witnesses of Jesus
Phil 3:7-11 all else is dung...suffering

- Voluntary, involving a Divine touch (supernatural birth)

John 1:12-13 power to be sons, born of God
2 Cor 5:17 a new creature in Christ
1 Peter 1:23 born again by the Word of God

- Abstinance from carnal pleasure of alcoholic beverages

1 Cor 6:10 drunkards not inherit the Kingdom
1 Cor 5:11 no fellowship with drunkards
Eph 5:18 be not drunk, but filled with Spirit
Matt 16:24 deny, Cross, follow

Matt 10:34-39

- Instead...abiding in the **True** Vine (John 15:1-5)

- Abstinance from haircuts...crown not to be defiled

1 Cor 9:25 incorruptible crown
Phil 4:1 disciples are joy and crown
James 1:12 endure-er, crown of life
Rev 3:11 hold fast so no man takes crown

- Instead...a crown that "can't be touched"

2 Tim 4:8 of righteousness Lord gives
1 Peter 5:4 of glory that fades not away

- Abstinance from nearness of death

2 Cor 6:14-18 unequally yoked

- Instead...

Rom 8:1 no condemnation
Heb 2:14-15 power, fear of death is destroyed
Matt 8:22 "Let dead bury their dead"

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- Separated all the days of his separation
1 Peter 1:15-16
- Accountable for the loss of perishable time
Eph 5:16 redeeming the time, days are evil
1 Cor 7:29a time is short
- Come to the house of God with an huge offering
(a very high personal cost)
Rom 12:1-2
1 Cor 6:12
- When the days of separation are fulfilled...
 - shaved his head publicly and burned his hair underneath the ram...cast his crown (Rev 4:10-11)
 - a feast...marriage supper of Lamb (Rev 19:9)

EVERY follower of Jesus Christ is to live “wonderful” like a Nazarite!

- His will be done vs ours...being a nobody vs a somebody
- Sold-out, uncompromising life...boldness vs fear
- Keeping His word and not denying His name...devoted

But not every believer does...not every Jew vowed a Nazarite vow

- unwilling to be a servant
- fold in the face of suffering
- deceived by riches of the world
- choked by the cares of the world
- weak in the faith...weakened by fear and unbelief
- emotion-driven vs grounded in the Word

AW Tozier: an unusual Christian was a suffering servant...
following Jesus (how shameful that such a Christian is unusual)

If you are not living like a Nazarite...if you are a Christian like Samson...
imagine what the LORD could do in and thru your life if you did!
Imagine what the LORD could do in and thru this church if it were a body
of Nazarites!

These days the LORD is looking for men and women who will

- be completely devoted to Him...
- “vow a vow” to be used to do something wonderful

As your pastor...I must teach you what this means...by example

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Devotion to God...now the devotion of God

v22-27 bless the children of Israel:

How the LORD thru the High Priest blessed His people

In His 3-fold blessing

- we see His nature (via whole counsel of God)
- we hear a blessing...and then an application of that blessing

v24

blessing: The LORD bless

Eph 1:3 Father, all spiritual blessings in Christ

application: keep...to be a hedge about to keep from evil, falling

Matt 6:9-13 Father, deliver us from evil

Jude 24-25 God, able to keep us from falling

God the Father...His protective love

v25 blessing: The LORD make His face to shine upon you

Mal 4:2 Sun of Righteousness

Rev 22:16 Morning Star

application: grace...favor, kindness

Rom 3:23-24

Rom 5:14-21

God the Son...His redeeming grace

v26 blessing: The LORD show His face...reveal Himself

John 14:16-17

application: peace (with God, of God)...

good, salvation/regeneration

John 14:26-27

Titus 3:4-7

God the Holy Spirit...His counsel, comfort, communion

v24-26

2 Cor 13:14

a blessing for those who will voluntarily “vow a vow”
to Him...be a Nazarite for Jesus!

By blessing the children of Israel as such, the LORD would

- put His name on them...mark them, seal them
- bless them...just as He said He would...good to His Word

The blessing is...Himself

The Giver is more desirable than His gifts (James 1:17)

The Blessor is more desirable than His blessings

To the LORD, the minister is more desirable than his/her ministry

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Num 6...devotion to God and the devotion of God
Challenging...comforting

Issues:

- holiness
- trusting the LORD

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Numbers Chapter 7

Last week...Devotion to God and the devotion of God
This week...submitting and equipping...before sending
The 2nd longest chapter in the Bible, after Ps 119

v1-3 on the day that Moses had fully set up:
The Jews are still on Mount Sinai

This specific day is not Ex 40:17...but was between
Num 1:1 and Num 10:11, when the LORD led them away from
Mount Sinai, beginning their march to the Promised Land

Num 1-6 needed to be done for the Tabernacle to be “fully set up”

- numbering of the tribes
- establishing the camp of Israel around the Tabernacle
- numbering the Levites
- assigning the duties of the Levites with the Tabernacle
- spiritual order
- everything in order

And before the children of Israel go, they need some equip-ment

the princes of Israel...brought their offering:

The leaders of the nation...Ch 1:5-16...brought gifts to the house of the
LORD

- not sacrifices
- given the “harmony” of the gifts, clearly was Spirit-led...
leaders were following the LORD

What were the gifts of the 12 leaders?

Moving vans for the LORD’s house

- 6 covered wagons...
 - to hide the contents
 - to protect from the elements
- 6 yoke of oxen (2 oxen per wagon/yoke)

Ox was a beast of burden...a servant of man

What kind of servants were these 12 oxen?

Obedient/submissive...not stiff-necked (explain)

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v4-9 Take...give...took...gave:

The LORD told Moses to

- take the gifts of the leaders
- give the gifts to the Levites, to equip them do their assigned responsibilities

First of all...what kind of a servant was Moses, the mightiest man in the nation of Israel, their deliverer and Law-giver?

Obedient...submissive

He heard the Word of the LORD and he did it...
without condition or hesitation

Next...the LORD...

via the inspired gifts of the leaders and the obedience of Moses...
equipped the Levites in proportion to their assigned work (Ch 4)...
moving His things, which were heavy and burdensome and
cumbersome

- Sons of Gershon...roofers and sheetrockers: 2 moving vans
- Sons of Merari...framers: 4 moving vans
- Sons of Kohath...furniture movers: nothing...their work was all manual labor...He alone would be their strength

The LORD called the Levites to dismantle, transport, and set up His house during their journey to the Promised Land

The Gershonites, Merarites, and Kohathites

- were each given a portion of that work...and not given the portions of work given to someone else
- have now been equipped to do their work and are ready to “move out”
- submitted, obeyed...and all things worked in harmony

The LORD calls us to serve Him...but He does not send us out to our assigned work without first equipping us for that work

That is why we study the entire counsel of God as we do,
verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, book-by-book
Acts 20:27, Eph 4:11-12

And the ministry/work assignment...the Plan...is His!

John 15:5 with Phil 4:13

Phil 2:12-13

Rev 4:11

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We are His servants...what kind of servants are we to be?

Obedient...submissive

Our assigned work/ministry is in

1. the home
2. the Church/His house
3. in the world

There are only servants...a few of which are also to lead

1. In the home we “hear” from both husbands and wives:

- “I want to be the leader”
- “I don’t want to be the leader”

Q: What is God’s plan?

A: Leadership at home is given to the man...

whether he wants it or not

Gen 2, Gen 3, 1 Cor 11, Eph 5, Col 3, 1 Peter 3

“body, soul, and spirit” of the two that are one

The LORD will equip

- the husbands according to their calling...
love their wives as Jesus loves the Church

(a loving husband can be a transforming
power in family and society)

- the wives according to their calling...
respect their husbands

(a submissive wife can be a transforming
power in family and society)

When both husband and wife submit to the Word of God
and live faithfully within the revealed plan of

God...heaven on earth

And the whole family is blessed and flourishes

When either or both husband or wife does not submit to the
LORD...hell on earth

And the whole family suffers as a result

Issue...difference between “heaven and hell”:

humility, obedience, submission

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2. In the church, we also hear,
- “I want to be a leader”
 - “I don’t want to be a leader”

Q: What is God’s plan? What is your calling?

If someone desires to be a leader but that is not God’s plan/
calling...not in harmony with God...that person
will not be equipped to lead and people will get hurt

Issue: pride, lack of submission

If someone does not desire to be a leader but it is God’s
plan that he lead, that person is not in harmony with
God either

Issue: fear, unbelief, lack of submission

3. In our mission out in the world, we also hear
- “I want to be a leader.”
 - “I don’t want to be a leader.”

Q: What is God’s plan? What is your calling?

To lead...to go out into another culture...
without being called by God i.e. not in harmony
with Him but in the flesh (emotions)...
will end in tragedy

- no supernatural patience and endurance
- not equipped for the hard road ahead

The leader, by submitting to the calling of the LORD, will

- “go” after he is equipped by the LORD
- be the servant thru which God’s plan is
accomplished

Those called to “follow” such a leader...

- financial support (cannot get jobs)
- prayer support
- encouragement

must be faithful to their calling if the work is to be done

Issue when disharmony: fear, unbelief, lack of submission

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What should we servants desire in our service to the LORD?

Whatever He so wills!

And we will be equipped and sent accordingly.

Our job is to submit to His LORDship

Order (harmony) is based on humility, submission, and obedience

- unconditional
- no-strings-attached obedience
- no reservations

Hindrances to God's plan: pride, fear, unbelief

Genuine problems in Christianity, in every church, in this church,
within each of us

If you are called to be a leader, submit and follow the authority placed
over you (ala leaders of Israel, Aaron, Moses)

If you are called to be a Gershonite, don't covet the work given to the
Kohathites

If you are called to be a Merarite, don't covet the work given to the
Gershonites

If you are called to be part of the rank-and file of the congregation,
don't covet the work given to the Levites

The whole Body, if it is to work in harmony, must submit and follow...
being faithful to the calling of the LORD

Do you have problems in your walk/calling with Jesus Christ?

Many do.

We are all called to

- John 3:30 decrease so He increase
- Rom 12:1-2 be not conformed...be ye transformed
- John 17 sent into the world
- Matt 28:18-20 Go make disciples, lo I am with you always
- Acts 1:8 receive power to be witnesses in JJSUP

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Are you struggling to do what you've been called to do?

1. In the home...to the "other side of the bed" because you are acting in an un-Christ-like manner to your spouse
2. In the Church/His house
 - Sent to CM...but have not gone
3. In the world
 - Sent to loved ones, friends, neighbors, co-workers but don't go because you are too fearful to share life-saving truth in love
 - Too fearful to go to JSUP because you think safety is in USA

What is always the problem?

You are ill-equipped?

Lack of submission to the LORD Who has equipped you

After being saved by grace thru faith in Jesus Christ, we do not hear

"What do you want to do for Me?"

What won't you do for Me?"

What are your terms for serving Me?"

Instead, we are told to walk with Him by faith...

and His plan for our lives is revealed one step at a time.

Before each step, He equips us to take it.

If we get out of step with Him...we stop growing and are not useful

"Why isn't God using me?"

Because you are out of step with Him

Pride, fear, and unbelief cause us to get out of step.

Sometimes we want to lead the LORD vs follow the LORD

- our will be done
- conditions for serving Him

Brokenness will be sure to follow...until we say "Whatever"

Harmony is found only in "Whatever"

His work in us and thru us is as dynamic as our humility, faithfulness, and submission to His LORDship

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The steps, the seasons, in my walk with Jesus...
all the while receiving the LORD's equipping

Step 1: He saved me!

I embraced His ways...I submitted to His LORDship
He called me to serve in Children's Ministry, Choir,
Men's Ministry, HF

Step 2: He led me away from a Word-lite, social fellowship to
Word-intensive fellowship (CC)

He called me to sit at His feet and to serve in HF

Step 3: He moved us to Phoenix and a different fellowship

He called me to serve in Greeting Ministry, Children's
Ministry, HF, Care Ministry

Step 4: "Go to Rockford IL?"

Yes, submitting to my LORD and my pastor
Stay, not called...a test of willingness to submit

Step 5: "Go to Queen Creek?" (while HF in our living room)

Yes, was not called but I submitted to my pastor,
who I knew was following the LORD
HF...but none willing to give their home
Go...1 year...another came to continue the work,
not the LORD's timing or calling for me

Step 6: HF became CCA

9 years ago...the LORD's calling and timing

Is there a Step 7, another season?

What if the LORD calls me home? It happens!

What if the LORD changes the calling in my life...

calls me to Egypt?

What will I do?

Submit and obediently follow

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If the LORD does that, what will He do here with CCA?

Jer 3:15

will happen

He will raise up another pastor that he has equipped

- loving
- humble
- meek
- kind
- compassionate
- gracious
- merciful
- longsuffering
- full of faith
- prayer-full
- listen vs teach...faithfully giving what is given, v-v, c-c, b-b
- have knowledge and understanding by submitting and obeying
- lead by following...lead by example

What will the LORD call upon you to do?

Unchanged: submit to His calling and follow Him

So, in v1-9, there is much beneath the surface regarding the dynamics of the ministry, serving the LORD

- His calling
- His equipping
- our submitting
- our faithfully doing

v10-11 the princes...offered for dedicating the altar:

Next, the leaders of Israel came forward with another offering...
to dedicate the altar of burnt offering (100% devotion)

Each of the leaders came on an assigned day

- God is a God of order...so there is no confusion
- another Spirit-led offering vs Moses-directed
- according to the order of the camp and the order of marching while on the move (Ch 2)

Days 1-3: camp east of Tabernacle, 1st to march (on point)

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v12-17 the first day...of the tribe of Judah:
So, in addition to the offering in v2-3, Nahshon comes forward on the first day with another personal vs tribal gift...a sizeable one at that

Some leaders say, "I serve the LORD by ministering to the people.
I give of my time. My time is my gift."

Wrong!
A leader's free will offering is material, just like everybody else's
A leader leads by example.

v18-23 on the second day...prince of Issachar:
This is a laborious read...but also glorious!

The gift of every leader was identical...big tribe or small tribe
Each was as valuable to the LORD as all the others...
none just "anonymously" grouped in a heap
Every gift given to the LORD is meticulously recorded by the
Bookkeeper of all bookkeepers!

v24-29 on the third day...prince of the children of Zebulun

v30-35 on the fourth day...prince of the children of Reuben:
Days 4-6: those camped to the south of the Tabernacle and who follow
the banner of Judah when on the move

v36-41 on the fifth day...prince of the children of Simeon

v42-47 on the sixth day...prince of the children of Gad

v48-53 on the seventh day...prince of the children of Ephraim:
Days 7-9: those camped on the west of the Tabernacle and who follow the
Levites

v54-59 on the eighth day...prince of the children of Manasseh

v60-65 on the ninth day...prince of the children of Benjamin
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v66-71 on the tenth day...prince of the children of Dan:
Days 10-12: those camped to the north of the Tabernacle and have the rear guard

v72-77 on the eleventh day...prince of the children of Asher

v78-83 on the twelfth day...prince of the children of Naphtali

v84-88 the dedication of the altar:

In summation...12 identical gifts by the princes/leaders of Israel who are leading by example...cheerful and generous givers unto the work of the LORD

All this stuff, these material offerings/blessings, have a purpose:
glorify the God of AI&J

And that is the purpose of all our material things, “possessions”
Christian man in SC with fruit tree in backyard
Vietnamese children as to pick – sure!
They broke some branches, made a bit of a mess
Next time – No...and fruit fell to ground a rotted
They persisted...he cut down the tree to be rid of the problem
Later: realized that fruit tree and the fruit it bore was a tool for
him to witness of the love of Jesus Christ to lost souls...
and he blew it

May that not be said of you and me!

Note: In the recording of their individual gifts, each was accounted to the “prince of the children of ___”...except Judah...
“of the tribe of Judah” even though 1 Chron 5:2.

Why?
Who is the Chief Ruler?
Who is the Prince of Judah?
Who is leading our march to the “Promised Land”?
Shiloh (Gen 49)...Jesus of Nazareth
Who are we following?

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v89 he heard the voice of One speaking unto him:
Moses could go into the Tabernacle to commune with the LORD any time
he wanted to for whatever reason...
Aaron could only once per year, on an assigned day in a prescribed way

Whose voice did Moses hear?
Who dwells there?
John 1:18
John 5:37, 39
Moses heard the voice of God...Jesus is God

Their conversation is not recorded for us...
but it was undoubtedly sweet communion...
The Master and His faithful servant

Perhaps..."Well done, good and faithful servant."

Be faithful to the small things He has given and equipped you to do...
Demonstrating your faithfulness and trustworthiness for bigger
things, for which you will be equipped by Him to do

Be faithful until the day He says to you: "Come in here. Well done,
good and faithful servant."

Numbers Chapter 8

Last week...the equipping of ministers/servants before they serve...
a study in submission, in following the LORD

The longer I follow Jesus, the better He looks!

This week...the dedication ceremony of those ministers/servants

v1-4 the seven lamps shall give light against the candlestick:

The LORD instructs Moses to instruct Aaron to light the lampstand in the Holy Place

- Ex 25:31-40 with John 5:39
- one solid piece of gold...100% deity
 - John 1:1
- Vine/shaft + 6 branches
 - John 8:12
 - John 15:4-5a
 - Matt 5:14-16
- hammered...the Light of the World was hammered!
 - Is 53
 - Ps 22

Aaron is to light the lampstand such that the illumination from the branches is directed toward the front and center...
toward and before the Vine/shaft

John 17:20-23	Vine + branches make 1 light
Rev 1	Jesus standing in the midst of 7 golden candlesticks...7 churches

So...the 1st order of business: the illumination by the Light of the world of those being dedicated

Per the LORD's instructions for this dedication ceremony of His ministers/servants, the Light is pointed toward...
the Table of Shewbread (John 6:35)

With the Light properly focused, the Dedication Ceremony is described
A very serious ceremony...7 parts

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v5-6a Take the Levites:

1. Separation

Those chosen by the Sovereign God to serve Him are separated from the rest of the children of Israel...also seen when

- the disciples attempted to learn regarding Judas's replacement...God's chosen
Acts 1:23-25
- The LORD made His choice known
Acts 9:11-16
- The LORD sent out missionaries
Acts 13:2...after Saul was equipped (4 chapters)
- Saints...believers (trust) of the Way the Truth and The Life
Eph 1:4-6
2 Thes 2:1-2, 13-14
Rev 17:14

v6b-7 and cleanse them:

2. Cleansing

In order to serve the LORD, the Levites...
those fit to serve (8,580 per Ch 4:48)...
had to be ceremonially cleansed...an outward cleansing to signify an
inward purity (akin to baptism, like last night)

After all, they would be handling the things of God...
all of which point to Jesus Christ

1 John 1:1-3

We must also be clean/cleansed to handle the Word of Life

Who is responsible for their cleansing...

- themselves
- Moses the Deliverer and Law-giver (prophet, God to man)
- Aaron the High Priest (mediator, man to God)
(both shadows of Jesus)?

The Deliverer and Law-Giver...God to man

Mal 3:1-3

3 step cleansing process...all outward, sign of an inward purity

- Sprinkle “water of sin”...the water that purifies from sin, water from the brass laver used by the priests
- Shave off ALL hair...anything unclean
Lev 14:7-9...like a leper/sinner
- Wash their clothes
Gen 35:1-2
Ex 19:9-11
Eph 4:22-24
Matt 22:8-13
Rev 2-4 white clothes given to overcomers...
by faith (1 John 5:4-5)

v8-9 gather the whole assembly:
3. Public gathering

Moses then called the entire congregation to the LORD’s house...
all the children of Israel and the Levites...
who are not to come empty-handed but with an burnt offering,
a grain offering, and a sin offering

v10 children of Israel shall put their hands on:
4. Laying on of hands

Moses brings the Levites into the court of the Tabernacle before the veil of
the Tabernacle and there the children of Israel laid hands on them,
leaned on them

Practically speaking...
given the finite physical dimensions of the Tabernacle complex
and the sheer numbers of the children of Israel and the Levites...
might this be “representative”?

The 12 leaders of the tribes representing their tribes laying hands
on the 3 leaders of the Levitical families while the entire
congregation watched?

What means this “laying on of hands”?

- the Levites are identified with the children of Israel/nation
- the nation is giving them to their God, per Ch 3
- the nation is transferring to the Levites their obligation to give unto the LORD all their firstborn

What else is in view here?

Acts 13:3

Rom 8:29

Heb 12:22-24

foreknow, predestinate, conformed, firstborn
church of the firstborn, new covenant, blood

1 Tim 4:14

an exhortation to each of us

v11 Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD an offering:

5. Levites offered unto the LORD

A wave offering...motion formed by Aaron

So that they may do the work of a bondservant...the bond is love

Bondservant...born-again believers

And it speaks of the type of relationship the LORD wants
with us: loving vs legal

Rom 5:8

because of God's wave offering, the Cross

1 John 4:9-10

v12a Levites shall lay their hands on...bulllocks:

6. Transfer of sin

As Aaron and his sons did, the Levites now do...lean hard on the burnt
and sin offerings to transfer their sins onto the innocent sacrifice

v12b offer...to make an atonement:

7. Atonement

via the burnt and sin offerings

A sinner cannot serve a holy, sin-less God...

his sin must first be removed if he is to serve

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v13-18 the Levites shall be Mine:

As has been declared before by the LORD, the Levites have been chosen by Him instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel, which He claimed for His own when He broke their bondage in Egypt via the 10th plague, the death of the firstborn...

All pointing to our freedom from the world and the power of sin and death by the death of the Firstborn (preeminent) of all creation on Cross

The Levites are

- not any more worthy in and of themselves than the other tribes
- the smallest tribe
- chosen, peculiar...given grace
- divided out by the God of division to serve Him by assisting the priests
- devoted, wholly (100%) given to the LORD

We born-again share those characteristics

Matt 10:34-39

If any boast, let him boast in the LORD

v19 the children of Israel:

What phrase is repeated? "Children of Israel"
16 times in this chapter, 5 times in this verse

Methodists a term of endearment of the Father's for those He has chosen to

- assist the priests
- tear down, transport, and set up His house
- be a buffer/hedge of protection for the unclean...intercessors

v20-22 did to the Levites:

The Dedication Ceremony described in v5-12 is now executed faithfully

And the Levites are now ready for active service to the LORD

v23-26 twenty and five years...fifty years:

The Levitical career...by calling, based on maturity

Kohathites: furniture movers, touch the most holy of things of God

- 25-30 years old: Num 4:1-3...5 year apprentice program –
 - assisting the assistants
 - watching and learning
 - doing small things to help out
- 30-50 years old: Full service –
 - the heavy, laborious work of bearing on their shoulders
- 51+ years old: No retirement –
 - excused from the heavy work
 - still ministered to the needs of the people
 - counsel with wisdom acquired only by years
 - prayer
 - help searching the Scriptures

Gershonites (roofers, drywallers) and Merarites (house movers

- 25-50 years old: Full service –
 - the heavy, laborious work of tear down, move, set up
- 51+ years old: No retirement –
 - excused from the heavy work
 - still ministered to the needs of the people
 - counsel with wisdom acquired only by years
 - prayer
 - help searching the Scriptures

Age of service is then age 20-50 (1 Chron 23:24-27)...
in Temple, no heavy work

If you want to serve the LORD...and who in their right mind doesn't...
it requires Dedication

1. separation
2. cleansing
3. public presentation
4. laying on of hands (give you to God, gifts from God)
5. offering (Rom 12:1-2...wholly, 100%)
sin nature and worldly culture (even in USA!)
6. transfer of sin...by faith
7. atonement...by the blood of the Lamb
8. action!

If you are "25-30" (not seniority)...watch and learn, help out where you can
Zech 4:10
1 Cor 15:58

If you are "30-50"...work hard! Don't be lazy in the LORD's business
[1 Thes 1:3](#)

If you are "51+"...teach the maturing, share the wisdom you have acquired, pray

Israel and the Levitical order would fail in handling the holy things of God
[Jer 2:4-13](#)

But God is faithful to His Word...He cannot fail
[Ezk 36:21-28](#)

Paul did not fail
[2 Tim 4:1-8](#)...in spite of [2 Cor 4:7-9](#)

Today, much of Christianity is failing...being led by men who are not following Jesus
Key to unraveling the deception of EC is who are these men following and what
do those men believe? (Jer 2:4-13)
The light in many churches is not focused front and center toward the True Vine
and the Bread of Life...is focused on a counterfeit (anti-[2 Cor 4:1-2](#))

This church...we are going to follow Jesus, the Word of Life
We will be "hands on" Jesus and "hands off" the world while in the world

Individually, will you and me imitate the Levites or Paul?
[1 Thes 1:5-6](#)
1 Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ
[Heb 10:22-25](#)

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Numbers Chapter 9

Last time...

- Illumination of the dedicated
- Dedication ceremony
- Levitical career (everyone involved and working)
 - buffer/hedge of protection for the unclean

Gustav:

- The mercy of God
- The buffer/hedge of protection of the clean

This week

- Passover
- Proceeding from Mount Sinai

v1-5 keep the Passover:

The LORD via Moses commanded the children of Israel to keep the Passover...

- the 2nd Passover...the one-year anniversary of Deliverance
- the 1st “free” Passover
- to be kept as He said to keep it (Ex 12)...and so they did

Note: This is the only instance recorded in Scriptures of Israel keeping the Passover during their 40 years of wandering
The next time we will read of the Jews keeping the Passover will be in the land...then day before the manna stopped (Joshua 5:10-12)

Notice the timestamp – before Ch 1:1

Why is this passage of Scripture “out of sync” with the flow of Numbers?

If we read the Scriptures carefully, interrogating them as we go, we will have questions.

Scripture interprets Scripture...so keep reading

v6-7 defiled by the dead body of a man:
However...there was a "situation"

Some number of men were unable to celebrate Passover because they were ceremonially unclean, having been defiled by a dead body (someone suddenly died in their house or they conducted a funeral)

So they went to Moses

- the judge of difficult matters (Ex 18)
- the friend of God (Ex 33:11)

asking why they would be excluded from this individual and national offering to the LORD their God

They were grateful and pleased to offer an offering to the LORD that delivered them from horrible bondage one year ago... but they did what someone had to do...and did not want to be left out

Their heart is pure before the LORD

The heart of these men is found in Christians who want to gather to worship the LORD every opportunity they can

They joyfully continue steadfastly in

- the apostle's doctrine...the study of the Word of God, the Bread of Life
- fellowship...comfort, encouragement, edification of the Body Heb 10:25
- breaking of bread...celebration of communion/LORD's Supper
- prayer...reliance upon the LORD and intercession/buffer

Christians with the heart of these men don't show up only when there isn't something better to do...

they think there is never something better to do...
they look forward to worship services and Bible studies...
they come with a heart of worship

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v8 Stand still and I will hear what the LORD:

Moses

- a powerful, accomplished, and gifted man (Acts 7:22), did not
 - take matters into his own hands
 - make a decision
 - offer a private interpretation
 - render an opinion

- the meekest of men (Num 12:3), sought out the Word of God (God's will) for the answer

He tells the petitioners to

“Wait.

I will ask the LORD and tell you what He says.”

So into the Holy of Holies he went...a place he could enter any time he wanted

This is a model for us whenever we have a question...about anything

- go boldly into the Throne Room of God
Heb 4:16

- search the Scriptures for the answer, for God's will

- direction and instruction comes from the LORD,
not from His servants
1 John 2:27
John 14:26

- the LORD's servants only point petitioners to
Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24) Who
has ALL the answers

v9-12 the fourteenth day of the second month:

God is fair

Deut 32:4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.

Is 45:21 *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; *there is* none beside me.

Rev 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

The LORD's decision in the matter is fair.

“If any of you or your future generations...
henceforth

be unclean due to a dead body or a long journey...

unplanned, with a pure motive

he can keep the Passover on the 14th day of the 2nd month...

one month later, time enough to get clean and return home
just like those who keep it on the appointed day.”

The LORD is fair and gracious

Note: This is why v1-5 is in Ch 9 (“keep reading”)

v13 clean...not on a journey...cut off:

But no other absences are excused, no other forms of uncleanness.

For the children of Israel, the Passover is

- a remembrance of the mighty deliverance of the LORD who set them free
- prophetic...and future generations must know and celebrate it

The LORD looked upon unexcused absences from appointed fellowship with Him as rebellious ingratitude for His deliverance from bondage

Therefore, to be in town and clean and to not participate in the Passover was cause for separation...execution or excommunication

God's grace is not an excuse to sin...your will vs His will

Rom 5:20 – 6:2

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v14 if a stranger shall sojourn with you:

The stranger sojourning with the children of Israel could also celebrate the Passover, as long as they did it in accordance with God's instruction to the Jews.

Of course, the Passover pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world

The Gospel is for the Jew first and then for the Gentile...

the strangers who are grafted into God's olive tree (Rom 11)

There is not one way of salvation for Jews and another way for Gentiles.

The just shall live by faith (OT written to Jews and NT written to Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free)

To celebrate the LORD's Supper...

to commune with Him in the remembrance of His delivering us from the power of sin and death...

one must be a believer in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 11:27-28)

v15-16 the cloud covered the tabernacle:

When the LORD's house was erected (Ex 40:34-35), the LORD moved in, visibly via His Shekinah glory.

The glory of God filled and overwhelmed the tabernacle, wherein resided the Law in the Ark of the Covenant.

During the day, the glory of the LORD appeared as a cloud

(protection from the desert sun)...

during the night as fire

(protection from the darkness and cold)

Ps 105:39

The Shekinah glory of God gave the children of Israel visible assurance that God was with them and leading them.

Today, we are told

2 Cor 5:7

Heb 11:1

Heb 13:5b

The Holy Spirit of God leads us

We have the Word of God as a lamp unto our feet

We can see His fingerprints on our lives

We come upon open doors and closed doors

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Calvary Chapel Ahwatukee

Now, a year after they arrived at Mount Sinai, time is drawing near for the children of Israel to leave.

How they were to march has been established.

Where they are to go has long been promised – the land promised to AI&J, their inheritance

When they are to go and when to stop must be established.

v17-18 when the cloud was taken up...At the commandment of the LORD:
The LORD Who was leading them told the children of Israel when to move and when to set up camp, which was communicated via

- the moving of His glory
 - ascending
 - moving...at the speed of the weakest
 - settling/staying
- His spoken Word to Moses
 - 7x in v18-23 “commandment of the LORD”
 - by the hand of Moses (v23)

When the LORD ascended and Moses gave the command, the children of Israel pulled up stakes and marched

Remember...the Levites would do that for the LORD’s house and their own tents

They would do this by faith...because none of them had ever been where the LORD was leading them
Heb 11:8

Between our freedom from bondage and our inheritance, we are led in this wilderness by the LORD,

- our God
- our Deliverer
- the Law-Giver

We follow Him by faith, not knowing where we are going

v19-23 when the cloud tarried long...a few days...even until morning:

When the LORD moved, the children of Israel pulled up stakes and moved.

When the LORD stayed, the children of Israel set up camp and stayed.

How long the LORD stayed, how often He moved, was God's choice. They journeyed according to the will of God.

If the LORD stayed put for many days and then moved, the children of Israel did not complain...to the LORD or to Moses

Neither "LORD, we are comfortable here, we have grown roots. We like it here!"

Nor "When are we going to move, LORD? We ain't gonna get there by sitting around here."

Instead, they waited and served the LORD in that place as long as He wanted them there.

If the LORD stayed put only a few days and then moved again, the children of Israel did not complain

Neither "So soon, LORD? We just got here."

Nor "Can we stay a bit longer, LORD? We like it here."

Instead, they moved and waited and moved and waited as the LORD commanded.

If the LORD stayed put only for the night and then set out again in the morning, the children of Israel did not complain.

Neither "Why bother LORD? As soon as we get set up, we have to pack up. You're killing us!"

Nor "Moses, go in and talk to the LORD for us. We're tired"

Remember...the Levites pulled double duty –
the LORD's house and their own tents –
at both ends

If the LORD moved in the middle of the night, the children of Israel did not complain

Neither "I'm too tired! Can't we just wait until daybreak?"

Nor "I can't see what I'm doing!"...for they had Light

Instead, they submitted to His leadership and followed.

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The children of Israel moved when they were told to move,
stayed when told to stay
Their feelings and opinions did not dictate the action...God's will did.

It takes effort to follow Jesus...
Matt 16:24 does not come with a hammock and lemonade
It takes unconditional submission to follow the LORD...
Matt 16:24 does not come with a published time schedule

Following the LORD is not about growing roots and getting comfortable...
it's about waiting and moving

He wants us to do both without complaining...rebellion

- "I know better than You."
- "My will be done, not Yours."

The clay is in no position to dictate terms to the Potter

We are on a journey...we're just passing through.
The LORD is leading us
We are to follow immediately and without complaining
1 Cor 10:1-11 history of Israel is our example
He didn't say it would be kush-y
2 Tim 2:3...a servant/soldier under orders

God does not have a routine schedule, He could move at any time.
Therefore, be watching and be ready.

Never get comfortable or set in your ways, the Lord could move you to
another ministry or another place at a moment's notice.

[Spurgeon's *An All-Round Ministry*, pg 55-58]

Several weeks ago I startled some of you by asking,
"What if the LORD sent me to Egypt..."

Each of you needs to ask yourself the same or a similar question.

Each of us needs to wait, look, and listen with vigilance for the
moving of the Shekinah glory of God on our lives...
and follow without complaining

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Numbers Chapter 10

Last week...final stages of preparation before leaving Mount Sinai

Instructions on moving

- when the glory of God ascended and moved
- at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses
- waiting and moving...without complaining

This week...

- Last instruction...trumpets
- Forward, march!

v1-2 Make thee two trumpets of silver:

One last instruction before setting out for the Promised Land –
make two trumpets to communicate to the 2.5M+ children of Israel

- solid pieces of silver
- hammered, beaten into shape

Purposes of the trumpets

1. gathering of the congregation
2. move out/advance on the journey

v3-4 blow with them...blow with one:

When gathering the assembly...

- use both trumpets to gather the entire congregation
 - “all hands on deck”
 - at the door of the tabernacle
 - **the LORD has something to say** (Ex 29:42)
- use one trumpet to gather the leaders
 - “Staff Meeting!”
 - muster around Moses

Both of these soundings of the trumpet(s) were steady, continuous blasts

Note: Who is the “they” that will be blowing the trumpets?

Keep reading

v5-6 blow an alarm, then the camps...shall go forward:
2nd purpose for the trumpets...signal to journey/advance

These soundings were short, broken, uneven bursts

The children of Israel would know it was time to journey when

- The glory of God ascended from the tabernacle
- Moses issued the command from the LORD
- The silver trumpets would sound

With the first such burst, the armies on the east led by Judah would advance

With the second, the armies on the south led by Reuben

Etc

We are the LORD's army on a rugged journey between our freedom from bondage and our inheritance...

We are commanded to advance

(Matt 16:18, Eph 6:10-18)

Can you see the glory of the LORD moving?

Can you hear the LORD's command/Word?

Can you hear the trumpet sounding...

can you hear what God is saying?

If yes to any or all...are you advancing?

Or are you comfortable right where you are and motionless?

v7 But when the congregation...blow:

Repeating, making a distinction between the sounding of the trumpets for gathering the congregation vs advancing in their journey

v8 the priests, shall blow:

Back up in v3-4, who is the "they" blowing the two silver trumpets?

By continuing to read, Scripture answers our question about Scripture

A: The two sons of Aaron, Eliazar and Ithamar each have a silver trumpet and are the ones to sound them

v9-10 And if ye go to war...Also in the day of:

Other reasons the trumpets would be sounded:

3. To go to war...a call to arms..."Battle stations!"

And they will be remembered before the LORD

Who fought for them thus far?

Ex 14:14

The battle belongs to Whom?

The LORD

Who the Captain of the LORD's army and the
Captain of our salvation?

(Joshua 5:14, Heb 2:10, Eph 6:10)

What is the nature of the fight?

(Eph 6:12, 2 Cor 10:3-5)

4. To announce their holy days...solemn days, celebrations...
days of devotion

New month

Feasts of the LORD, including Feast of Trumpets

(Lev 23:24)...Jesus' appt to return to the earth

Jubilee (Lev 25:9)

For a memorial before their God

What are all these things about?

(John 5:39)

Who gets all the glory?

What is our offering?

Thanksgiving and humility

(a broken and contrite heart)

4 purposes for sounding the trumpets:

gathering...journeying....war...devotion

The trumpets had different soundings, depending on the message

With each sounding of the trumpet, God

- **has something to say**
- **intervenes in the lives of men**

This passage in Numbers 10 (just before leaving Mount Sinai) gives us the context, the framework, whereby we can understand the soundings of trumpets in the rest of Scripture

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Sounding of a trumpet

Revelation of God

Ex 19:10-19

God is watching

Ezk 33:1-7

Christian walk

1 Cor 14:7-8

Rapture

1 Thes 4:13-18

Rev 4:1

Day of the LORD (70th Week, end of judgment of Israel, Rev 6-19) [Rev 1:19]

Joel 2:1-11

Joel 2:12-18

Rev 8:1-2 (Rev 8-9)

Matt 24:27-31

Rev 1:7

Rev 19:11-16

Setting up Kingdom

Ps 47:1-8

Resurrection

1 Cor 15:51-53

v10

Moses has the silver trumpets hammered from single pieces of silver
Now...the children of Israel are ready to advance, to leave Mount Sinai
(never to return) and begin their journey to the Promised Land

Purpose

gathering (right after they arrived at Mount Sinai)
(followed by Num 10, leaving Sinai...4 purposes)

war...warning of impending (ultimately, His)

war (spiritual)

2 Cor 5:18-20

Matt 16:18

Eph 6:10-18

2 Cor 10:3-5

While journeying/advancing between freedom from
bondage and our inheritance

Time of suffering tribulation, affliction, persecution

2 Cor 4:1-11

gathering

war (horses, chariots, battle array, ranks, His army)
gathering and devotion...**before** trumpet in v1-11

war

gathering and war (Jesus' return to earth)

war and gathering

gathering

v11-13 cloud was taken up...Israel took their journeys:
Nearly 12 months after they arrived at Mount Sinai, the LORD leads the children of Israel on their journey to the Promised Land

Initially, they went from one wilderness (Sinai) to another (Paran)

- where Ishmael the son of the Egyptian bondswoman Hagar lived after being sent away by Abraham (Gen 21:12-21)
- where David will go after hearing of Samuel's death (1 Sam 25:1)

v14-16 camp of the children of Judah:
The sons of Aaron sounded the trumpet with short bursts to signify "Move out" (v5-6).
First, the armies under the banner of Judah

v17 Gershon...Merari:
Then 2 of the 3 families of Levi load up their wagons and follow Judah

v18-20 camp of Reuben:
Next, the armies under the banner of Reuben

v21 Kohathites:
Then, in the center of the formation, the Kohathites, carrying the holy things of God
The Gershonites and Merarites would have the next camp set up for them when they got there

v22-24 the camp of the children of Ephraim:
Next, the armies under the banner of Ephraim

v25-27 the camp of the children of Dan:
The rear guard, the armies under the banner of Dan

v28 Thus were the journeying:
Methinks the march of Israel would have been very impressive.
Certainly very orderly!

v29 come thou with us:

Moses' wife's family has been at Mount Sinai with the children of Israel.
As the LORD leads them away, Moses, speaking to his brother-in-law,
invites them to come along

“The LORD is leading us to the land He promised to AI&J.
Come with us, walk with us. Join us on this journey.
We will share the spoils/blessings of the land with you.
God has spoken good things about us; He means what He says and He
says what He means.”

We are on a journey also between our freedom from bondage and our
inheritance...
we are to freely give invitations for others to join us that they may also
share in the blessings of eternal life, right?

And our invitations should be as urgent as Moses' (LORD was leaving...)
Because God has something to say...trumpets...very soon.
He is going to intervene in men's lives...both gathering and war

v30 I will not go:

Speaking for the entire family, Moses' brother-in-law declines the
gracious offer of a lifetime...
the best offer he will ever hear in his life.

An ignorant and tragic, carnal and self-centered choice...
“No thank you” to

- salvation/eternal life
- blessings of the Giver of every good and perfect gift

A decision most of humanity makes.
The decision all make initially.

v31-32 Leave us not...instead of eyes:

Moses pleads with his family to make a more rational decision...
a decision of faith to walk with God
Heb 11:8-like vs going “home” away from God

“Don’t go ‘home’, go with Him and us to God’s land!
Nothing at ‘home’ compares to what God is offering you!
God is so good! He’s been so good to us!
If you walk with Him too, He will be as good to you!
Our journey will be enhanced by you, you will share in God’s blessings!
It’s a win-win decision!”

Moses was not arguing or imposing his will upon his family...
he was lovingly, graciously inviting and pleading with them
The LORD was moving, it was time to go, to follow
Hobab needed to make a decision

What did Hobab decide?
His final decision is not recorded here...
but when you keep reading...[Judges 4:11](#)

Also a decision most of humanity makes – in silent contempt
“No thanks!
I don’t need or want the God of AI&J, His people, or His
blessings.”

Like Moses, we hear the trumpet telling us to journey.
We know the trumpets of gathering and war are coming...
We must plead with our families/friends to hear the trumpets...

- what God is saying to them
- His desire to intervene in their lives for their good

We cannot argue with them or impose our will upon them...it’s time to go.
We have a journey to complete.
We must pray for them.

This convicts me.
I’ve stopped warning and inviting my family...I need to warn them again.
God have mercy on me...
They’ve been warned and invited but Ezk 33 rings in my ears.

In the account in Num 10, what is next is “Let’s go!” (Deut 1:6-8)

As we journey, trumpets are sounded

1. gathering
2. journeying/advancing
3. war
 - warning (in USA...Israel, abortion, homosexuality...
trumpets have names: Andrew, Rita, Katrina, Gustav, Ike...)
[FoxNews article]
4. devotion

We do these things together...as a family of God and as an army of the LORD

If you are an isolated, disconnected, uninvolved spectator, I encourage you to
make relationships and get integrated into this family

I encourage you to be a part of one family...

Not floating or drifting between families, part-time brother/sister in several...
being accountable in none

I encourage you to be a part of one army...

Not fragmented in your service, splitting time between multiple armies...
being effective in none

Do you fear the journey?

Do you fear the war?

Do you fear the rejection of men if you invite them to come with us?

Do you fear the suffering and persecution and tribulation while we journey?

Why?

[1 Peter 3:13-15]

The only thing I fear is...missing out (Heb 4:1)

Let’s go!

[Altar call]

the sounding of the trumpets...

- our responsiveness
- invitation

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Last week...the journey began

This week...trouble in river city [Missouri River Valley Leadership Conference]

v33-34 the ark...went before them:

When it was time to start the journey, the glory of the LORD ascended
and led the way. And He stayed with them.

Yet the Ark, carried by some of the Kohathites, led the way?

Did they break ranks?

How is this consistent with v21 and Ch 2:17 (center)?

Perhaps for this initial march only

This march is a three-day journey...to Kadesh

Lest you think the LORD is a cold-hearted, cruel taskmaster,
keep reading.

Num 33 is a listing of the Travel Log of the children of Israel from
Mount Sinai to Kadesh...

the march in these verses in Ch 10 are chronicled in
v16-36 in Ch 33...about 20 stops in this rugged territory.

At Kadesh, the LORD rested for a long time

(spies sent out from Kadesh, for example)

The LORD is a kind, considerate shepherd

God goes before us....

the Good Shepherd leads His flock...

the Word of God is our guide.

He will never leave us not forsake us.

v35-36 Rise up, LORD...Return, O LORD:

Moses' "battle cry" if you want to look at it that way was a statement of
complete reliance upon the LORD

"Go before us and dash Your enemies to pieces and send them away with
their tails between their legs.

Then come back and be with us Your army."

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Numbers Chapter 11

v1-3 the people complained, it displeased the LORD:
In Ch 9:15-23, we read of no complaints.
It is the LORD's will and expectation that we follow Him...
waiting and moving...
without complaining

He knows best...He knows all
He has our best interests in heart
He has a perfect plan

But sometimes what is best for us, what is in our best interests,
does not seem like it to us
During those times, we have to trust the LORD and follow him by faith

The children of Israel, in their short-sightedness and unbelief,
are complaining...after a short 3 day journey

- the journey thru the wilderness is a very difficult journey
- life as a soldier is a hard life (2 Tim 2:3-4)
- "living out of a suitcase"...not permanently settled...
gets taxing

Their complaints reveal the contents of their heart:

- self-centeredness
- ingratitude
- distrust
- questioning the LORD's guidance...an unwillingness to follow
- questioning the LORD's power to deliver on His Word

The LORD Who has been so good to them (Ch 10:29-32) is extremely
displeased by the attitude of their hearts...
so He reveals to them His hot displeasure and His power to destroy to
correct their attitude

Our God is a consuming fire!
Heb 12:29, Deut 4:24

The children of Israel cry out to Moses, the friend of God, who intercedes
for them
And "peace" returns to the camp of Israel

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While on our journey, we complain, too, don't we?
Whenever we are discomfited, disoriented, distressed, inconvenienced...
we have a tendency to cry like a stuck pig.
And we reveal the contents of our hearts to be exactly that of the children
of Israel

Thankfully, Jesus intercedes for us (Rom 8)

Remember:

- the journey is long and rugged...it's not a Caribbean cruise
- we are at war and the soldier's life is a hard life
- all these unpleasant things are just bumps in the road...to glory

The prosperity in this nation has bred a complacency in the hearts of
Christians...

What appears to be happening in USA? [*USA Today*]

- Mammon is failing
- our enemies are buying us (Prov 22:7b)

And consider Russia last week

Financial crisis might be the avenue of rise and acceptance of a
charismatic individual who seems to have all the answers...
a counterfeit who will intercede for them

We will

- hear much complaining from "Christians"
- see who will be faithful in the hard times ahead

v4-6 the mixed multitude...wept again:

The peace in the camp is short-lived...because theirs is a superficial faith

It seems the complaining starts with the mixed multitude (Ex 12:38)...

- Egyptian and/or other national "groupies" that went with Israel
after the God of Israel showed His mighty hand upon
Pharaoh and the Egyptians
- unholy, not among the chosen people

This riff raff quickly begins to lust for the "fine things" of Egypt...
and their complaining is contagious

Out there in the wilderness...a hot, barren wasteland...they long for how
life used to be in Egypt before following the God of AI&J
"Why did we ever leave Egypt?!" (v20)

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Their flesh cries out for a wide variety of food and bemoans their hardship
with only “this manna” to eat

Ramy: it was the falafels they missed (best!)

While their stomachs complain, their memory abandons them

Forgotten is the cruel slavery

The divinely-provided bread from heaven is despised vs treasured

It seems we can see ourselves in the children of Israel

- influenced by unbelievers vs influencing them
(1 Cor 15:33 and 2 Cor 6:14-18)
- superficial memory...follow Jesus as long as things are well
with us, until life gets hard
- wickedly faulty memory
- insatiable flesh lusting for variety and quantity and luxury that
is contrary to the Spirit and the quiet contentment with
what God has provided

Rom 7:18, 8:5-8

What in the world has its grip on you?

Get out of the world and get the world out of you

v7-9 the manna:

A review of the Bread of Life from heaven...a miracle every day revealing
the power of the God they were following

We must guard against the work of God on our behalf from becoming
ho-hum

Perhaps that is why an occasional financial, relational, or health trial is
actually good for us

v10 Moses heard the people weep:
The entire camp is singing the blues, chorus after chorus of
“Woe is poor little ole me!”
After all He has done for them, the people are complaining bitterly against
the LORD!

The last time they complained...a few days ago...God’s judgment fell and
they were quick to call out to Moses.
Short-term memory is a real problem with the children of Israel,
the mixed multitude, and us

Not surprisingly to those thinking with a clear mind, the LORD’s anger is
aroused again.
This time He has company – Moses

Let’s look at Moses’ heart

v11-15 afflicted thy servant...kill me:
What is Moses doing?
Is he voicing a righteous anger like the LORD?
No! He’s complaining like the people are.

Complaining is contagious...it’s like a cancer

Is Moses complaining about the people...or about God...or about both?

“What have I done to deserve this humongous pain in the neck?
I thought I was Your friend...what did I do to deserve all this?
Am I the father of these people or are You?
They are complaining to me about food...they want meat to eat.
How am I supposed to feed all these people?
This job makes me feel like an incompetent weakling.
If this is how You are going to treat me, do me a favor and just kill me
right here and now!
We’ll just call it a mercy killing.”

Wow! A super-sized pity party!

This is coming from Moses?!
He is just an ordinary man like you and me
James 5:17 subject to like passions as we are
1 K 19:1-4 LORD, take away my life, I’m no good

Note: These, I believe, are the 2 Witnesses in Rev 11!

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The Word of God exhorts us to not whine and complain,
to throw a tantrum like Moses and Elijah did
2 Cor 12:7-9 instead glory, when weak His strong
Rom 8:18 sufferings cannot compare to glory
1 Peter 2:20-23 following Jesus' example

v16-17 seventy men...thou knowest:
The LORD is gracious!
He did not smack down Moses!
(I would have if I were God)

He tells Moses to go pick 70 men to help him with this burden.
The LORD will empower them just as He has empowered Moses.

Q: Will Moses learn a lesson from this later? We'll keep reading

v18-20 until it come out your nostrils:
The LORD, Who never passes up a teaching moment, is going to teach the
complainers a lesson by giving them what they want.

"I know what is best for you.
But you don't think so, you think you know better than I.
(LORD is dealing with 2.5M teenagers!)
You despise that which I have provided for you.
So I will give you what you want...until it comes out your nostrils and
you hate the meat you insist on having."

The LORD is going to chastise their contempt
We must be very careful about that which we complain!

v21-22 suffice them:
Moses is still self-absorbed and, walks out on thin ice.

"May I remind you how many people we are talking about!
Where are You going to get that much meat?"

Oh...be careful, Moses!

Moses is still having his little tantrum and his condescending, sarcastic
tone is "playing with fire" (remember how this chapter started).

Moses is having a lapse of faith, caused by over-excited emotions.
Emotional experiences are not necessarily of God or faith-based

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v23 LORD's hand waxed short:
Amazingly, we do not hear the LORD respond,
"Excuse Me, Moses.
Might I see you over here behind the woodshed?"
(Would if I were God!)

"You doubt My power?
Have you forgotten the Red Sea incident?
You doubt My Word?
Are you calling Me a liar?"

I think the LORD is very gracious with us, don't you?

v24-25 Moses went out:
Without further comment, Moses does as he was told.
And, of course, the LORD did what He said He would do.

v26-29 Eldad and Medad:
2 of the 70 men hand-picked by Moses did not go to the tabernacle with
the others as instructed.
Perhaps out of fear of the living God, they remained in the camp.

Whether or not we are faithful, the LORD is faithful.
And exceedingly gracious.

However, Eldad and Medad were "rattled out" and Joshua, Moses'
assistant, was indignant.
Funny how we so clearly see the faults of others while being blind
to our own

Hearing Moses' response, it appears he has dismounted from his high
horse.

His answer to Joshua has the sound of humility...
the sound of the LORD's heart

"Are you worried about my authority being weakened or my position
being usurped?

Don't be.

My desire is that every person in this camp have an intimate, on-fire
relationship with our God."

Moses is speaking from God's heart now, not his own
John 3:22-31 John Baptist, decrease/increase
Mark 9:38-40 casting out devils, not with us...on our part
1 Cor 1:10-17 Paul vs Apollos....Jesus! (not a competition)

v30-32 wind from the LORD...quails from the sea:

The LORD again demonstrates His power to the whiners and complainers
– He directed the wind (what man or god can do that?!)
and with it showered the camp of Israel with quail.

A day's journey from every side of the camp, the quail were
“easy pickins” for the Jews and the mixed multitude

- 4 feet deep?
- flying 4 feet off the ground?

Methodists rabid in their lusting for meat, the people had a field day
gathering all the meat they could possibly want

v33-34 between their teeth...very great plague:

True to His Word to Moses, the LORD taught the children of Israel a
lesson about

- lusting in the flesh
- whining and complaining
- unbelief

“Graves of greediness/longing” is an eternal entry in their travel itinerary

Ps 78:12-31 sinned/spoke against God...
Ps 106:14-15 lusted

v35 the people journeyed:

The murmuring stilled, the journey resumes.

A lesson we all need to learn.

To whom can we relate in this passage?

- Mixed multitude longing for what the world has to offer?

Need deliverance from death and hell via forgiveness of God by grace thru
faith in Jesus Christ

Mammon and the world will fail...only Jesus does not fail.
Put your faith and life in Him

- Children of Israel, so quick to whine and complain when things are not
smooth and convenient?

Need to take our eyes off ourselves, fix our eyes on Jesus, and
stop complaining

- Moses?

- Parents of teenagers

Rebellion, active defiance or passive

In all things there is a teaching moment...
may need to give them what they want...
and so much of it they will loathe what they wanted

“Don’t want to live by the rules of my house,
the place of my provision and protection?
Here...have a stout taste of “freedom”.
Go ahead, take a long stiff drink of what you think you want.”

- Pastors of congregations

Complacency...Heb 10:25 is a challenge
Jesus playing 2nd or 3rd fiddle, can’t compete with all forms
of recreation and worldly pleasure...
“pulls” of the world greater than His draw unto Himself

Come but no fruit or growth...food but no exercise

Continuous discouragements, distractions, and temptations
cares of this world
deceivableness of riches (Mammon is failing)

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I gotta be transparent with you.

I was lot like Moses in this chapter this past week.

Initially, I was venting my heart but over the course of the week I started hearing the LORD's heart

1 Thes 2:7-11 nursing mother...loving father

I carry you in bosom

You see, I genuinely desire that

- all of you have a passionate, intimate, on-fire relationship with Jesus Christ
- all of you will study the Word on your own...
 - able to lead a Bible study in your neighborhood or at your workplace
 - not just coming with your mouths open wide like a little bird but digging for yourself
 - because times are going to get very difficult and we have the Answer
- His life in all of us will count (Gal 2:20)

That's Jesus' desire for each of us...He doesn't want to play 2nd or 3rd fiddle any more
This is not the time to have a lukewarm relationship with the LORD Jesus Christ

Don't let either pleasures or trouble in this life rip you off of the relationship with Jesus
wants to have with you

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Numbers Chapter 12

Last week: The ugliness of complaining and God's contempt for it

- fire
- quail coming out your nostrils

This week:

- The ugliness of pride and God's contempt for it...leprosy
- The superiority of Moses
- Lesson in forgiveness

v1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses:

First the children of Israel complained against Moses...

Now the criticism comes from his own family

- Big sister ("rebelliously")...Prophetess (Ex 15:20)
- Big brother...High Priest

Observations:

1. Satan leaves no stone unturned in his assault on The Deliverer and Lawgiver...
nor will he in about 1500 years from now in his assault on the One Who is foreshadowed by Moses
2. Miriam and Aaron...in birth order?
No, in "sin order"
This rebellion is Miriam's, as evidenced by the LORD's response
3. Who do all the complainers complain about?
The Sovereign LORD (1 Sam 8:7)

What is Miriam's and Aaron's complaint against Moses?

His wife...an Ethiopian/Cushite woman

Who is this woman?

a. Zipporah

The kingdom of Ethiopia/Cush is thought by some Biblical scholars to include the Saudi Arabian peninsula in addition to the land south of Egypt... the Midianites were part of this kingdom

b. Perhaps Zipporah has died and Moses has remarried

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Miriam's and Aaron's complaint about Moses is either

- derogatory in its tone toward Zipporah
- ignorant self-righteousness...Moses' "rebellion"
his new wife is not "one of us"...the chosen people
but she is not a Canaanite (Ex 34:16)

Either way, it is ugly
But that's not all...

v2a spoken only by Moses...also by us:
Miriam's and Aaron's 2nd complaint is against Moses' leadership...
his calling from the LORD

Both Miriam and Aaron are very gifted by the LORD –
Prophetess and High Priest – but...

“Has the LORD only spoken to our little brother?
He has spoken to us too!”

What is the ugliness here?

- Jealousy...of Moses' calling
- Insurrection...the rebellion against God's order
- Pride...the haughty self-exaltation to be equal with Moses

Whose heart does this sound like?!

Miriam and Aaron covet equal voice, equal vote...
not content to be anything less than #1,
not wanting little brother to have authority over them

Perhaps they, as respecters of persons, feel “their position” is
threatened by the appointment of the 70 elders...
Or perhaps they feel overlooked because are not one of the
70 elders

But Moses and they have a calling, not a “position”
And the LORD does not govern via democracy...
The kingdom of God is a monarchy...
His will be done, no man's will

Miriam and Aaron are on a power trip
I think this is the real issue...the complaint against Moses' wife is just a
smoke screen...the excuse, the justification for their attack.

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v2b The LORD heard it:
The LORD was listening...is always listening
Even to the unspoken (He hears our thoughts, knows our motives)

And every idle (“useless”) word must be accounted for (Matt 12:36)
The value of the words lies in the heart from which they spring –
love of others vs love of self (Matt 22:36-40, Matt 16:24)

Pride is love of self...humility is love of others before self

Love is also the value of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:29 – 13:3...2 Tim 1:7)
Miriam and Aaron are missing the mark on all three...
power, love, and sound mind

v3 Moses was very meek:
Inspired by the Spirit of God, Moses wrote this...
but the Holy Spirit is the Author

God is making a contrast between Moses and Miriam (Aaron)
Miriam sought to glorify herself...Moses sought no glory
Miriam was proud...Moses was humble and lowly...
a shadow of Matt 11:29

Moses did not come by it “naturally”
(Acts 7:22, Ex 2:11-14, 40 years a shepherd, now a servant)...
he is the vessel formed by the strong hands of the Potter

If you are not humble, you are not useful in the Potter’s hands
James 4:10

v4 the LORD spoke suddenly:
The LORD heard it...and “instantly” the LORD demands an account of
these idle words

He is highly displeased with

- the jealousy and pride in the heart of Miriam and Aaron
- the insurrection against His order

and is moving to “nip it in the bud” before it festers and corrupts

- them any further
- the children of Israel

Moses, Aaron, and Miriam care “called out” by the LORD...
told to come to the place of judgment

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v5 the LORD came down...stood...called:

Who is in view here?

John 4:24...John 1:18

Pre-incarnate Son of God, God the Son

Jesus "calls out" Aaron and Miriam

- called out by name
- to stand before God Himself
- for disciplinary reasons

Heb 10:31

v6 Hear now my words:

"I've heard your useless words.

Now you hear my eternal Word!

If there is a prophet among you...one who mediates between Me and you

(not a priest, who mediates between man and God)...

I will reveal Myself to him in a vision or a dream."

Prophets like: Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Joel...

i.e. all the prophets from Samuel to Malachi

v7 My servant Moses is not so:

"I don't reveal Myself to My servant Moses like that.

Of all the people in Israel, Moses is faithful ("true, trustworthy") to Me.

He does not 'blow his own horn' or exalt himself, as you do.

I exalt him."

Again, Moses is a shadow of Jesus Christ

Phil 2:5-11

1 Cor 4:2

God's measure of success is

- Internal, not external...humility and faithfulness, not numbers or legalistic traditions
- Christ-likeness, not man's credentials (degrees) (comparison with, distinction from other men)

This applies to believers and to Churches

- Philadelphia (Rev 3:8) is trustworthy, true, faithful
- Laodicea is not...is nauseating (Rev 3:17)

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v8a With him I will:

“I will not reveal Myself to My servant Moses with visions and dreams...

I will speak with him unlike all the prophets...

- face-to-face (Ex 33:11a)
- plainly, conversationally
- freely, friendly, familiar-ly
- not in parables or riddles or “in code”

He will see My form (1 Cor 13:12).

Note: And Moses will see the LORD face-to-face in Matt 17
(with Elijah again!)

Moses was superior to the prophets...who built on the foundation
laid by Moses (Hosea 12:10)

Moses is a shadow of Jesus Christ...Who is superior to Moses
(Heb 3:1-6, 1 Tim 2:5...The Prophet)

v8b not afraid to speak against:

“So where do you get off so boldly and brazenly attacking My servant?

Are you out of your mind? (no sound mind)

Why were you not afraid to speak like that against My servant?

(Why are you so brazen to speak against Me?)”

Rom 14:4

Jesus takes attacks on His servants very personally (Acts 9:4)

v9 the anger of the LORD was kindled:

The LORD was “lit up” with the jealousy, pride, and insurrection of
Miriam and Aaron and their resulting attack on His servant!

As angry as He will get when He cleanses His Father’s House in
Jerusalem

The LORD is not One to

- just let sin go unnoticed and uncorrected
- miss a teaching moment
- let a beloved sheep wander off to destruction

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v10 Miriam became leprous:

Before John 1:17, brazen sin is judged immediately

2 K 5:20-27

Gehazi post-Naaman

2 Chron 26:16-21

Uzziah, heart lifted up, into Temple

That which is on the inside is put on display on the outside

But in this instance, only Miriam? Not Aaron?

Miriam was the instigator, the ringleader...

Aaron again fails to stand before temptation (Ex 32)...

again easily influenced by

- a stronger personality
- peer pressure

PTL Jesus (Mel) is superior to Aaron (Lev)...[Heb 4:14-15](#)

v11-12 Alas, my lord:

In horror, Aaron recoils...turns...from the sight of his sister becoming an instant leper by God's hand of judgment (he's guilty too...maybe he's next)

In his plea to Moses, Aaron

- acknowledges his sin against the LORD (their sin)
- agrees with the LORD that they acted foolishly/wrongly
- proclaims they cannot bear God's judgment
- begs Moses to intercede for God's mercy

Aaron humbles himself before God and Moses ("my master/authority")

Here we have

- Confession...owning up to his sin
- Repentance...seeing his sin as the LORD sees it, turns from it

v13 Moses cried unto the LORD:

Faithful and true, lowly and humble...Moses immediately intercedes for Miriam, his chastised and humbled sister

Heb 4:16 in action

Moses acts and speaks out of compassion and grace, not vengeance and self-exaltation.

He cries out to the LORD Who is compassionate, gracious, and merciful

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v14 If her father had but spit in her face:

The LORD hears the cry of His servant...
but the lesson still must be learned

“If Miriam’s father had spit with contempt in her face, she would have
been ashamed/humiliated for seven days.

(And she would have learned a valuable lesson.)

My contempt for her sin against Me is far greater than that.

Send her outside the camp for seven days and then bring her back in.”

Miriam, who had desired to be

- above the children of Israel
- on leadership par with Moses

finds herself

- banished outside the camp of the children of Israel,
- shamed and humiliated for her brazen pride
- rescued by the very brother she attacked

v15 shut out...the people journeyed not till:

The nation’s advance to their Promised Land is arrested while Miriam
learns her lesson.

Thus, she was the “poster child” for Pride and Insurrection...
a public example, a national object lesson

Healed by the LORD, she would then go thru the formal purification
ceremony outlined in Lev 14

This is the 1st healing of leprosy in the OT and the only Lev 14
ceremony...Naaman was only other healing of leprosy...
and both were by the LORD

In the NT, Jesus healed leprosy...He is the LORD
He is superior to Moses and Aaron (Book of Hebrews)

The healing of leprosy: forgiveness (removal) of sin by grace thru
faith

v16 the people removed:

Once Miriam is healed, purified, and restored in the camp of Israel,
the nation advances...
to Kadesh, the southern border of the land of Canaan

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At every stop in their journey, an important lesson to learn.
At this stop before Kadesh....the lessons of

- pride and rebellion

If you are in rebellion against Jesus Christ...

- Heb 10:31
- confess and repent of your foolishness/sin
 - humble yourself before God
 - acknowledge
 - agree
 - beg
 - receive...by faith

Jesus has interceded for you!

- forgiveness

a. The forgiveness of the LORD

The LORD has contempt for

- brazen sin
- pride and insurrection
- attacks on His servants

He did not just let it go, He dealt with it...suddenly...
because the lesson must be learned (Prov 13:24)

And Moses never faced this problem with Miriam and Aaron again
They repented before a merciful God...
they repented because God is merciful
Rom 2:4

b. The forgiveness of Moses, a shadow of the LORD

- And the LORD heard it (v2)

Did Moses did not hear it?

Or did he turn a deaf ear to it...

"letting it go" like water of a duck's back?

What does the Word of God teach us?

Rom 12:18

Prov 26:4-5 What is the answer? Love and grace

Eph 4:1-3, 29-32

Applications:

We cannot stop men's tongues so it is best that we
stop our own ears and never mind their
tongues

Ours is a ministry of grace and peace...part of being
gracious and peaceful is treating passionate
words as if they had never been spoken

In personal matters causing us to suffer, it is best
not to know or even wish to know what is
being said about us

One sure way of keeping the peace is to let the fire
of contention alone...it will die out
i.e. we don't have to respond!

Consider it "no big deal" what men think or say
about us...
bear the injury in silence with patience
(even when the people we love attack us)...
trusting in the LORD Who hears it

Instead, care only for what the LORD says
"Well done good & faithful servant."

- Moses cried unto the LORD (v13)

Do we hear Moses' natural heart or the LORD's heart?

Natural heart: unforgiveness and hate...yielding death
LORD's heart: forgiveness and love...yielding life

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Numbers Chapter 13

Last time: Jealousy, pride, insurrection...and forgiveness

This time: Fear vs Faith

v1-3 search the land of Canaan:

Per the Travel Log recorded later in Num 33 and Deut 1, we know the children of Israel are at Kadesh-barnea (“sanctuary”)

To better understand, we must start 38 yrs in the future...Deut 1:19-23a

Moses: “Go and take what the LORD has given you.
Fear not, do not be discouraged.” (faith)

People: “Whoa there, Big Mo.
Let’s not be crazy by literally believing every Word of God and jump headlong into this.
Rather than blind faith, let’s test the waters.
Let’s send some advance scouts to give us report before we go.”

Problem: fear and unbelief
seeing the situation thru their own eyes vs
the eyes/Word of God
unwillingness to follow the LORD only

Moses: “OK. (I’ll take it to the LORD...Ex 18:19).”

Now, back in “real time”...

LORD: “Send your scouts to spy out the land.
Take one man per tribe (except Levi).
He must be a man of honor and authority in his tribe.”

The LORD accepts their proposal...He permits them to “do it their way”
He knows their frame, that they are but dust. (Ps 103:13-14)

The children of Israel do not know where they are going...
any more than Abraham did (Heb 11:8)

This is a walk of faith in the all-seeing God...not of sight of 12 men
They must trust the LORD Who is leading them...but they don’t.

So, the conquest of the land promised to AI&J is not off to a Rock-solid start...more of a “sandy” start
Matt 7:24-29

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v4-16 these were their names:

An eternal record of both disgrace and honor

The only ones of these twelve we will ever hear of again are

1. Caleb (“forcible”, “to attack”),
 - son of “He will be prepared”
 - of Judah (Southern Kingdom)
2. Hoshea/Joshua (“deliverer”, “Jehovah saves”),
 - son of “perpetuity”
 - of Ephraim (Northern Kingdom)

Their faithfulness is preserved in the Divided Kingdom.

God honors faithfulness and those who trust in Him!

In them, we hear our mission from our Commander-in-Chief:

Matt 16:18 with Eph 6:10-18

v17-20 spy out the land...see the land:

The scouts identified, Moses gives them their mission

- Spy out the land of Canaan, from the south (Negev) to the mountain (Hermon?)
- Assess the inhabitants of the land
 - their military strength – technologies and warlike-ness
 - the size of the armies they could marshal
 - their cities and fortifications
 - their presence: established and secure or nomadic
- Assess the land itself
 - fruitful or barren (enough for 2-3 million of us)
 - Good & Plenty or slim pickins
 - forested or not

And Moses gives them their marching orders

- Be of good courage...do not be afraid (methinks they were)
- Bring back evidence of the land God is giving us.

Timestamp of this operation: May/June...firstfruits of the vine

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v21-22 came unto Hebron:

So off they go...and they came to Hebron

- south of Jerusalem
- ancient city...older than the residence of the Pharaohs in Moses' time
- visited by Abram when he first came into the land promised to him by the LORD (Gen 13)
- where Sarah died and was buried (Gen 23)
- where the children of Anak ("long-necked") lived...a people "great and tall", "giants" (Deut 2)...ancestors of Goliath
- the inheritance of Caleb
- where David was anointed king by Judah

v23-24 the brook of Eshcol:

And nearby at Eshcol ("bunch of grapes") they go "super-sized"... picking a cluster of grapes so big it took two men carrying it on a walking staff!

The "national emblem" of Israel

Evidence that the LORD's vineyard is very fertile! (Is 5)

v25 forty days:

The spies were checking things out for 40 days... testing the land, judging the land

Gen 7:4, 12	days of rain in the Flood
Ex 24:18	Moses receiving the Law on Mt Sinai
1 Sam 17:16	Israel standing paralyzed before Goliath
Jonah 3:4	message: judgment in 40 days
Matt 4:2	tempted in the wilderness

v26-27 brought back word:

Mission accomplished, it is time to file their report before Moses, Aaron, and the entire congregation.

"Well, we've got Good News and Bad News.

First, the Good News.

Check it out! Truly the land does flow with milk and honey (is very fertile).

What the LORD said is true!"

Ex 3:8

Ex 33:1-3, 13-14

after failing test in Ex 24...Ex 32

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v28-29 Nevertheless the people:

“Now, the Bad News...

The children of Anak live there!

(no further explanation necessary)

They are very strong and live in great, heavily fortified cities

(will take overwhelming force to conquer)

Besides them, the land is filled with enemies...home to the Amalekites,
the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites!”

Note: From Judges, learn they had advanced military technology
compared to the children of Israel (chariots, iron)

Summary: The odds are overwhelmingly against the children of Israel

v30 Caleb stilled the people:

This “Bad News” got the people all agitated and fearful.

Caleb hushed them and gives his perspective.

“Are you joking me?!

There is no Bad News!

The odds are perfect!

God is on our side!

No matter how many or how big, the inhabitants of the land don't stand a
chance!

Let's go without delay and take what has been given to us!

We will overcome!”

How?

- Ex 14:14 (another Red Sea scenario)
- by faith in the LORD (1 John 5:4-5, Heb 11:1)...
- by looking up rather than around

Caleb and Joshua's perspective was

- God's perspective
- faith in the Living God
- God is able to do what He said He would do

v31-33 We be not able to go up against the people:
The other 10 have an intensely dissenting opinion

What is the perspective of the other 10 spies?

- Man's perspective
- Fear...the person or circumstance facing them is bigger than their God (misplaced faith)
- Unbelief...God cannot or will not do what He said He would

As a result, they "re-file" their report...
change it from Good News/Bad News to an evil/slandering report
laced with exaggeration

- "the land eats up the inhabitants"...
it is an unhealthy and evil land, not good land

despising God's land (Ps 106:24, Jer 2:7)
out of fear of man (Matt 10:28)...Jer 2:19b
- occupied by giants...
 - "who would crush us like bugs!"
 - "We were like grasshoppers crawling around in the vineyard of these giants!"

Forgetful foolishness (Ex 23:20-28)

Who are they listening to?

The God Who cannot lie...or...the devil/slanderer?

These things are given for our example

We have been sent on a similar mission to take what has been given to us –
the kingdom of God on earth
Matt 16:18

Along the way we encounter formidable enemies ...1 John 2:15-17

And we face giants...out there and in here (heart)
People, things, circumstances, and lusts that, were it not for Jesus Christ
(1 John 4:4, 5:4-5), would paralyze us and crush our hearts

- Pornography
- Drugs and alcohol
- Finances...not trusting the LORD with family's finances
- Gambling
- Homosexuality, adultery, and all other sexual sin
- Our outward appearance...vs society's standard of beauty
- Mammon and debt...vs society's measure of success (\$\$\$, Amer. dream)
- Alzheimer's or cancer...the slow, painful passing of a parent
- Cancer...or another terminal disease
- Death of a child

Are we looking at the giants or the grapes?

Is 65:8

- New wine: Eternal life...grace and forgiveness
- Blessing: Peace, joy, contentment

Are we

- Heroes of the faith
 - Caleb (“attacker”) and Joshua (“Jehovah is salvation”)
 - The distinct minority looking up, with God's perspective
 - More than conquerors thru Jesus Christ Who loves us
 - Walking on the narrow way that leads to life
- Frightened children
 - Fearful and unbelieving...paralyzed “evil reporters”
 - The vast majority looking around, with man's perspective
 - The soon-to-be vanquished (Num 14:37)
 - Walking on the broad way that leads to destruction

With faith, have no fear...and spring into action

With fear, have no faith...and are paralyzed

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We MUST not forget

- God is with us and for us
- God's hornets...driving our enemies away
- God's power to do what He says He will do (2 Cor 12:9-10)
- God's Word...promises ([Is 59:1](#), [Is 66:1-2](#), Ezk 36:36, Heb 11:6)

This journey and this mission of ours is not for the faint-hearted!

How can we be like Caleb...

- here in Num 13
 - willing to stand alone...with God
- at age 85 ([Joshua 14:6-15](#), [15:13-14](#))
 - knowing that a man of God in the will of God is
 - always in the majority
 - immortal until his work is done

By

- faith in God's Word
- walking in the Power of God (Luke 4:14, [Acts 4:24-33](#))

Next time...in 3 weeks

The LORD is King, but not Burger King!

He permitted the children of Israel to "do it their way" this time...
they will reap what they sow

It will be 38 years before the children of Israel see Kadesh-barnea ("sanctuary")
again

Lesson: Believe...and serve the LORD His way

Numbers Chapter 14

Last time...

- Doing it their way...Good News/Bad News became an evil report
- 2 looking at grapes vs 10 + multitudes looking at giants

Many...most...of us are facing circumstances that are bigger than us
We are looking at giants in our land...right in front of us or on the horizon

What are we going to do?

Be tossed about and pummeled by fear and worry?

Walk by faith with God?

Let's learn from the congregation of Israel...why we have their history

This time: (1st half of Ch 14)

- Mutiny against their Bounty
- Plea for Pardon

v1-2 murmured against Moses:

Their hearts melted by fear as a result of the evil report of the 10 cowardly spies, the congregation of Israel flips out

- self-absorbed crying and weeping all night long
(a sound we are hearing in this nation and around the world
facing a giant...the failure of Mammon...
an incredible opportunity to witness of Jesus Christ!)
- murmuring against Moses and Aaron...
i.e. the LORD vs His servants

murmur: an obstinate, enduring complaint

Perhaps heard, or under the breath, or unspoken.

Regardless, flowing from hearts turned against their God

Who has delivered them from bondage and death
(Ex 2:23)

“It would have been better if we had died in Egypt!

(violent oppression, beaten, whipped, starved, humiliated)

It would have been better if we had died in the wilderness!”

(hunger or thirst or exposure)

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This is like a born-again believer in Jesus Christ...
delivered from the bondage of sin, death, and hell...
in a time of great trial or tribulation or persecution...
job loss, rebellious children, financial distress, marital collapse...
complaining, "Oh, if I had only died in my sin!
I wouldn't have this problem if it weren't for Jesus!"...

This is ingratitude and a betrayal of immeasurable proportions...
as if the cross of Christ (work of God) means nothing

Here we have people acting on their emotions vs what they know
In the midst of great trial, we must

- die to self, pick up our cross, and follow Jesus
- exercise self-control (fruit of the Spirit) over our emotions and fix our eyes/heart/soul/mind on what we know
 - the Lord is on the Throne and in control
 - nothing happens to us but that which passes thru the will of God
 - our Good Shepherd loves us and is with us
- walk by faith and not by sight, depend on LORD vs ourselves

v3-4 better for us to return into Egypt:

Their bitter complaint (words from the heart) turns mutinous (action)
Hiding behind the weak (wives and children) as their excuse to not do as
God has commanded them, the "men" abandon ship

"Some 'Promised Land that is'!
Why did the LORD bring us into this evil land to slaughter us at the
hands of those giants, leaving our wives and children for plunder!
It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!
This freedom thing is way over-rated!
Let's choose a captain to leads back 'home' ...back to bondage, misery!"

Imagine..."We're back! I take size 8 shackles, my wife takes size 6, and
my kids sizes 4 and 3."

Fear, unbelief, mutiny against the almighty God...are irrational
Are you fearful in this time of trial and tribulation and persecution?
Are you fearful of the future?

[1 Thes 4:7-8](#) to despise holiness is to despise the holy God who
gave us the Holy Spirit as a seal of our redemption
[1 Thes 5:18](#) holiness is God's will, God's will is holy

Look back...
and see God's mighty protection, provision, power
Be at rest...
the peace of God will keep your heart and mind
Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...
one day at a time

v5 Moses and Aaron fell on their faces:
Other details...[Deut 1:29-33](#)

Crushed by the burden of these rebellious people, Moses and Aaron fall on
their faces before God and the nation
Men of faith are grieved by the words and actions of the flesh

v6-9 Joshua...and Caleb...rent their clothes:
Joining Moses and Aaron in trying to

- calm the fearful
- talk sense into the irrational

are the 2 faithful witnesses of God's land, Joshua and Caleb

Also heartbroken by the reaction of the nation, they stand on God's Word
They offer truth as the antidote to slander and fear, the balm of comfort

“The land is everything the LORD told us it would be!
Since we have God's favor, He WILL give the land to us.
He will go before us and will fight for us.
All we have to do is follow Him, walking in faith.
The giants in the land are finite, no match for the Infinite, all-powerful
God for Whom nothing is impossible.
They will not slaughter us, He will devour them.
Fear the LORD not man, don't rebel against our God!
So let's calm down and think clearly.
Let's examine the truth and make a rational decision.
Let's look at the grapes, not the giants!
Trusting in what God said, walking in faith, is the logical thing to do.
Have faith!”

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Is this a reasonable proposition...to have faith in an invisible God when the eyes in your head tell you to run and hide?

The testimony of Jeff Johnson's (CC Downey) wife Karen at Pastor's Wives conference:

- issue at church
- whole family gathered to pray at the Johnson's house
- little 2 year old grandson slipped away unnoticed...
- found him at the bottom of the pool
- paramedics called and worked on him...to no avail.
- he was gone, pronounced dead.
- decided to donate his organs so that another child might live
- took him to hospital...into OR...about to begin...
- he sat up and said, "No! No!"

Is this a reasonable proposition...to have faith in an invisible God when the eyes in your head tell you to run and hide?

A testimony of Marie Monson, Norwegian missionary to China between WW...time of social chaos, violence, and fear

- led to go to another missionary: weak heart, pregnant wife
- soldiers going unpaid, turning to looting to compensate selves
- one night, shot up the village they were assigned to protect
- Christians gathered in missionary house
- next day, other villagers sought refuge there:
 "You have protection"
- on the roof, taller than the soldiers, unarmed, shining,
 "foreigners"
- angels on guard!
- heathen saw, believers did not...a testimony to the heathen
- Divine protection for the weak, unable to face the trial

Faith in Jesus Christ is the most reasonable proposition.

We are facing giants in these uncertain times when the LORD has seemingly taken away His hand of protection from this nation that has mutinied against Him.

But...

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Are we going to walk by faith in the all-powerful God...
or will we freeze in place or turn tail and run in fear?
We need to calm down and think clearly.

Don't fear the giants...Rom 8:31
Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ
Nothing happens by chance to the children of God
We also have God's favor and power...Phil 1:6
He fights for us too.

So...

- fear the LORD
- be a Joshua and Caleb
- be faithful to Him and to the Word of God

Live 2 Tim 1:7 in these times and be a bold witness of Jesus Christ

Men of faith know that:

1. the battle belongs to the Lord
2. we have nothing to fear
3. obedience is the key to victory

v10a stone them:

The fearful and unbelieving people reject the truth and seek to kill the messengers of the truth...in order to silence the Truth

With mutinous and murderous intentions in the hearts of the people, mob mentality takes over and God's servants are in grave danger.

Their proposition is insane...as is always the case with unbelief!

John 11:47-48, 53 on the heels of resurrection of Lazarus

John 12:10-11

The Truth came to save sinners from death and hell.
Those who do not believe in Him choose not to be saved.
Like choosing to not see a doctor who can cure the illness,
thinking instead he is going to poison them.
Thereby sentencing themselves to death and hell.
God will let them die because they rejected His cure.

Fear is a very powerful and very contagious emotion...very natural
This is why reading the Word 1st thing every morning is so important –
eat spiritual food and receive the supernatural peace of God so we
can rationally face the day ahead...the only day we have.

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v10b the glory of the LORD appeared:

Truth: The LORD sees and hears and cares...and acts.

Pre-incarnate Son of God suddenly shows up in all His glory...

He personally intercedes on behalf of the faithful.

His very presence stops the mob in their tracks.

Imagine those with stones in their hands when a sudden, blinding light appears

And then...the LORD speaks!

v11-12 LORD said unto Moses:

But He is speaking to Moses...

He speaks to the people thru Moses just as
the Father speaks to us thru His Son

And clearly, the LORD is not happy.

“How long will these people...

that I created as a peculiar treasure unto Myself...

to reveal Myself to them and to the nations thru them...

despise Me by not believing Me?

Are all the signs and wonders I have done on their behalf to confirm

My promises totally unappreciated and so easily forgotten?

So...I will

1. slaughter them and disinherit them
2. start over with you, Moses, and create a better nation than the descendents of AI&J.” (ala Ex 32:10)

Gotta problem here...

If the LORD kills the descendents of AI&J and makes a new people from Moses...

or rejects Israel and makes the Church the New Israel...

He

- voids His unconditional promises to AI&J
- becomes a covenant-breaker...a liar
- makes His promises dependent upon the people's performance/faithfulness vs His performance/faithfulness

(ie salvation and sanctification are works-based vs faith-based)

Is that God's nature and His heart?

No.

So what is He doing?

Testing and teaching. (never passes up a teaching moment)

He is teaching His unbelieving people His nature and His heart through a test for Moses

Moses the intercessor is a shadow of Jesus Christ

(Heb 3:5, Num 12:3, Rom 8:34)

Moses intercedes on behalf of the rebels by pleading

- the honor and testimony of the LORD among the heathen (v13-16)
- the LORD's nature and heart as revealed by the Word of God (v17-19)

v13-16 Egyptians...will tell the inhabitants...the LORD was not able:

"If you slaughter these people and disinherit them (as they deserve), word of it will get back to the Egyptians...who do not forget Your mighty signs and wonders on behalf of this people.

Your enemies, worshippers of false gods, will have cause to blaspheme Your wonderful Name.

Note: the sins of God's children give the children of the devil cause to blaspheme God's name

The Egyptians will testify to the people inhabiting our Promised Land... where Your reputation currently precedes You because of the testimony of the Egyptians...

the inhabitants of the land are afraid of us...

of You because You fight for us and they know it.

If you kill this people with a single stroke, the inhabitants of our land will not fear You...they will believe that You are a

- failure...not powerful enough to do what You said You would do
- liar...not good to Your Word.

They will refuse to honor and worship You.

What is at stake at this moment is not the lives of these rebels but

- Your Name
- Your Word/promises to AI&J
- Your honor among the heathen."

v17-19 let the power of my LORD be great...Pardon:

Having established the pre-eminence of his God, Moses pleads the nature and heart of his God as revealed in His Word/promises

“I plead that Your power would be great...as revealed by Your Word

- longsuffering
- great mercy/kindness
- forgiving evil and rebellion
- being holy and just...not washing away sin until the sin sacrifice to come (John 1:29)

I plead with You...to pardon/forgive these people, just as You have ever since we set out on this journey.

Don't stop being God because of the choices of the people You created!”

Remarkable...Moses is asking the LORD to spare the lives of those who were moments ago about to stone him and the other 3 faithful witnesses...Luke 23:34-like

The great power of God is tied to...

- Creation?
- Miracles, signs and wonders? (Red Sea etc)
- Raising the dead?
- His forgiveness of sin (grace)...raising from spiritual death
Eph 3:1-9...by the “chief of all sinners”
Acts 4:29-34a

v20 I have pardoned:

Wow! That seemed pretty easy!

All Moses had to do was ask...by faith

Moses asked according to the nature and heart of God as revealed by the Word of God

Then LORD God magnified His Word above even His Name.

He forgave...for His name's sake

1 John 2:12 your sins are forgiven for His name's sake
and about 19 other places in Scripture

His power is great!

Q: Do you believe it?

Forgiveness/grace/eternal life is but for the asking?

Gifts of God...only received by faith in the Word of God

v21 begins: “But”...a breath-taking contrast is to follow.

We'll pick it up there next week

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Last time...

- Fruit of the evil report: Fear, unbelief, Mutiny against the Bounty
- Mob turns murderous
- Moses' plea for Pardon
- Great power of God: pardon granted

This time...

- But...a little word to make a contrast...that takes our breath away
- Punishment is pronounced

v21-23 But as truly as I live...tempted me now these ten times...not see the land:

“I have pardoned...But...”

The LORD God of great power (grace, forgiveness of sin) is not finished speaking...

He has something to say that is in addition to, a contrast to, the “I have pardoned.”

“As certain as I am alive...

Jer 10:10-13 the LORD is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king...made the earth by His power

Ex – Num holy God, commanding His people to be holy the innocent will be pardoned and the guilty will be punished.”

v18

- pardon for the nation (vs wiped out in a single stroke)
- punishment for the guilty...all the men who believed the evil report instead of the Word of God
- visiting the iniquity for their children

The holy and just God proclaims judgment/punishment for the unbelievers who

- should have known better
 - have seen His glory (on Mount Sinai)
 - witnessed His miracles
 - in Egypt (10 plagues)
 - in the wilderness (water, manna)

- have tested Him already 10 times since leaving Egypt... from the get-go!
 1. at Red Sea (Ex 14:11-12)
 2. at Marah (Ex 15:23-24)
 3. in the wilderness (Ex 16:1-3)
 4. at Rephadim (Ex 17:1-3)
 5. at Mount Sinai (Ex 32:1-6)
 - 6-8 enroute to Kadesh (Num 11:1-3, 4-9, 31-34)
 - 9-10 at Kadesh (Num 14:1-4, 10)

- have yet to believe him

Judgment/Punishment: they will not enter into their inheritance, they will not see the very good land promised to the descendents of AI&J

Where are they? At the southern border

Unpardonable sin: unbelief, to not believe the Word of God (has a name...Jesus)

Pardon for the innocent and punishment for the guilty...
an absolute, universal truth
Gal 6:7-8

Difference between the innocent and the guilty,
between pardon and punishment:

- belief/faith (action...James 1:22)
- grace/forgiveness of sin (Eph 2:8-9)

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v24 But my servant:

“But”...another important contrast is about to be made (2nd)

The punishment does not apply for those in the midst of the punished who do believe His Word...Caleb and Joshua (v6-9, 30)

For they have a different spirit...

instead of rebellious, provoking, and fearful...self-centered

faithful, obedient, dependent, and uncompromising...God-centered

God honors, exalts, and protects the servants “with another spirit”...His

v25 get you into the wilderness:

Here, at the southern border of the Promised Land, the LORD gives the nation of Israel new marching orders...

about-face, back out into the wilderness

Sooooo close...but they would not go.

Delivered but defiant...and turned away because of unbelief

Inheritance is lost for 603,548 and delayed for all the rest

How close are you and I to the inheritance the LORD wants to give us?

God has set up 2 seats

1. Judgment seat: the guilty/unbelieving

Great White Throne...before sent away

2. Mercy seat: the innocent/believing

Cover the Law...blood applied

Jesus Christ...Who faced our Judgment seat

Acts 10:43 To Him give all the prophets witness, that thru His name whosoever believes in Him shall receive forgiveness of sin.
(great power of God unto eternal life)

Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

The one true, living, holy and just God directs us away from the Judgment seat to the Mercy seat...John 3:16.

We must respond by faith...John 6:29 ala Gen 15:6...
even when our eyes are telling us to run and hide

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Will we walk in the victory already won for us...

(John 16:33, 1 John 5:4-5)

Or will we not go because of fear and unbelief...and as a result
know only frustration and defeat?

We must receive by faith: Word of God + Power of God

v26-29 murmur against me:

No siree, the LORD is not happy when He is not believed/obeyed
“murmured against Me” vs Moses and Aaron (v2a)

The judgment that is as certain as His self-existent, eternal life:
He will give the men of Israel...His armies (Num 1-2)...
what they want

v2b...”They will die in the wilderness.”

All able-bodied men ages 20 years old and up...
(603,550 – 2 = 603,548)...

have murmured against the LORD, have despised Him...
and will reap what **they** have sown.

Paralyzed with fear, they made excuses for not obeying...
Not believing God, they sought to please themselves vs Him...
and in so doing condemned themselves

v30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land...save:

“Know with all certainty that they will not enter into their inheritance.
Only Caleb and Joshua will because they believed, they alone have
honored Me and are pleasing to Me.”

Meaning...faithful Caleb and Joshua must also wander in the wilderness
for 40 years with the faithless

Notice:

1. Only the faithful remnant will enter into His glory

v24, Num 32:12 “wholly followed” James 1:8, 22

The 2 faithful witnesses Caleb and Joshua will be delivered
thru the judgment of God on their unbelieving
countrymen...

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2. God's children (Gal 3:7) suffer, just as all people do
(all creation suffers/groans... because of sin)

Why do the children of God suffer?

As a testimony to the unbeliever...

so the unbeliever can see a difference between the
children of God and themselves
a difference that draws them to God

Why must we lose our jobs and suffer the same financial
distress as the Christ-rejecting world?

Why must we suffer trials and tribulations and temptations
like the unbelievers?

So the world, the unbelievers, will see a difference between

- us and them (1 Cor 10:13...same trials)
- the world and the Kingdom of God
(Luke 17:21, Luke 18:17)

Speaking to both... [Mal 3:13-18](#)

The discernable difference... [2 Cor 1:3-7](#)

We have comfort...they do not

We have peace...they do not

We have hope...they do not

We have joy...they do not

[Marie Monsen, pg 96-100]

Diff: bandits (pg 96-97)

money, clothes/coat

leather suitcases

ventilation, drinking water, exercise

Diff: passengers (pg 100)

Diff: gods (pg 108)

Diff: in Marie (pg 111)

Giving the unbelievers a testimony of the difference
between those who serve Him and those who don't,
the Father will draw them to Jesus (John 6:44)...
thru our suffering

Suffering...

as our Master suffered...

so the lost will be drawn to Him...

is a privilege!

James 1:2-4

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v31-32 But your little ones:

Speaking of the unbelievers, a 3rd “But” in this mutiny-filled chapter

“The women and children they hid behind and used as an excuse to not do
My will...they will enter My land following Me.
Those who despised Me will die and their bodies will rot in the
wilderness.”

The “army” has complained frequently and bitterly about dying in the
wilderness.

Their unbelief gets them exactly what they have feared.

“You don’t want to go into the land I have promised you?
Have it your way...again.”

The LORD will do what He said He will do...with us or without us.

Man’s unbelief does not change the absolute truth of God’s Word.

We need the faith of a child, we need to acknowledge that we are
as weak and dependent as a child

v33-34 forty years:

“Their children will suffer for their rebellion for 40 years....

one year for each day I testified to them of the goodness of My
land when I let them do it their way.

No one will go into My land as long as any of the despisers are alive...

no one enters the inheritance until the last one dies.

They were afraid to follow Me while I fought for them.

Now I am against them, not for them.”

A several week journey in victory becomes one of 40 years of judgment
due to their unbelief

To reject the LORD is to choose His rejection of you...aka death

Imagine being the last one...

everyone else, tired of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years

looking at you...

(“When are you going to die!?”)

Sounds like The Body of Christ

- being sanctified in the wilderness...until the last one “dies”
(to self)
- awaiting our redemption...to be snatched into the clouds to be
with our LORD who has not appointed us to His wrath
Rom 11:25 with John 12:25 (die to self)...

(good thing we don’t know who it is!)

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v35 I will surely do it:

“They have yet to believe Me, even though My Word is always good.
And this Word is good, too.
They mutinied against Me, their Captain.
They shall die in this wilderness, as they wished.”

Speaks to me of a point-of-no-return, when the LORD ceases contending
with a person and grants him his desire.

v36-38 died by the plague:

Then, the 10 spies, who were fearful instead of faithful and who delivered
the slanderous report that inspired all the murmuring against the
LORD, were suddenly judged.
They died suddenly before the entire congregation...but not J & C

God is always good to His Word...and gives ample evidence of that.
This is proof of v28-35 for the rest of the nation...
the remaining 603,538 in particular...
certain judgment on the installment plan

v39-40 the people mourned greatly...will go up:

Moses faithfully proclaims the Word of God given him...
and the people mourned even more than they did in v1-2

Our choice instead of the LORD's choice always leads to
mourning

At day break, the people proclaim,
“OK! OK! We'll go, we'll go take the land!”

I see several issues with this proclamation:

- It is not repentance, just another manifestation of unbelief
 - unbelief in the promises/blessings of God...
 - unbelief in the power of God...now
 - unbelief in the judgment of God
- It is still “our will be done, not Yours”...their terms vs God's
- Man's way to make right our sin: works-based vs faith-based

Their motive: Not to please God but to save their hides

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v41-43 Go not up:

Moses knows genuine faith and obedience when he sees it...
and this ain't it.

“Why do you continue to disobey and not believe the LORD?
Don't go up and fight the inhabitants of the land.
It's too late to go!
The LORD is not with you, you are on your own.
The enemy will destroy you...you are no match for them who would
have been no match for the LORD.
It will be your greatest fear (v3) coming to pass.”

A somber warning for us:

Go in God's time and in His way and He will go with us.
Go in our time and in our way and we go alone.
We cannot defeat the enemy by ourselves, we need God to fight
for us.

Word of God + power of God

v44-45 But they presumed:

A 4th and tragic “But”...as breath-taking as the others

In spite of the Word of the LORD and in spite of Moses' warning,
the people presumed to go fight...and got worked bad.
The Amalekites and Canaanites had the strategic high ground...
the Israelites without the LORD did not have overwhelming force
for a frontal assault.

Deut 1:41-45 (bees vs hornets)

An ill-intentioned, self-centered, stiff-necked people were easily defeated
by the enemy.

The flesh, the world, and the devil are too strong for us to fight.

We need Jesus!
When we go alone...certain defeat awaits
If the LORD ain't in it, don't go!

The timing of events in our lives is often tied to us...

- our obedience or our disobedience
- our fear or our faith

Heb 10:31 who must deal harshly with unbelief

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Do you relate more to the fearful 10 spies than the faithful 2?
If so, you need to repent and submit

Are you suffering a trial, tribulation, or persecution...
at work, in school, in your community?

Can the unbeliever see the difference between

- you and themselves
- the world and the kingdom of God?

Rejoice in the work of God thru your suffering!

Ask for and receive by faith the power of the Holy Spirit to walk
above the storm with Jesus.

So the lost can see the difference...and be drawn to the Way, the
Truth, and the Life while there is still time.

The LORD did not lead you out into the wilderness to kill you...
but to show the whole world His glory thru you.
Trust Him, His Word, His power

Numbers Chapter 15

Last time...a defining moment in the history of Israel

Because of fear and unbelief, they are sent the wrong way,
back into the wilderness

A rather contemporary passage of Scripture, methinks...(church, nation)

This time...encouragement to remember

v1-2 When ye come into the land:

On the heels of

- an evil report of God's Promised Land causing widespread fear and unbelief
- the LORD's punishment of the guilty
- a military defeat at the hands of their enemies

The LORD offers a word of encouragement to revive the hopes of

- the women
- the children under age 20 years old
- i.e. those who will not die in the wilderness

“My promise to bring you into My land stands firm.

When you come into the land...not “if” you come into the land...
because I am faithful...

v3-12 lamb...ram...bullock:

“...When you make an offering unto Me

- whatever the offering:
lamb or goat, ram (larger), or bullock (larger still)
- for whatever reason:
burnt offering, fulfill a vow, freewill offering, feast day,
peace offering

bring with it offerings from the fruit of the land:

grain, olive oil, wine/juice...

in proportion to the size of the offering.

Do this every time you bring Me an offering...this will be S.O.P.”

Meaning: God's land is a very good land, flowing with milk and honey,
just as He said and was testified by the 2 faithful witnesses

These offerings will also be God's provision for the Levites, who will not
be given a land inheritance but will serve the LORD in His house

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v13-16 born of the country...a stranger:

“And whoever brings Me an offering will do this...

- born of the country: Jew
- stranger: Gentile who is following the God of AI&J

The God of AI&J is the God of all men and He alone is to be worshipped

Rom 3:29-30

saving faith: believing what God says...

Gal 3:26-29

and obeying

v17-21 when you eat of the bread of the land:

“Likewise, when you eat of the bounty of My land...give Me thanks.

Acknowledge My faithful and abundant provision for you and
express your gratitude to Me.

Offer Me the first and the best of what I provide for you.

Show Me your heart.”

Giving back to the LORD the first and the best of what He has given us
is an act of worship...

showing Him the gratitude in our heart for His provision

v22-26 if ye have erred:

“If, as a nation, you err...

- disobey My commands without malicious forethought
- sin thru ignorance
- make a mistake

you will be forgiven when

- you offer a young bullock as a burnt offering with its
grain and drink offerings
- you offer a young goat for a sin offering
- the priest makes atonement

Even mistakes/sins of ignorance are sins that must be paid for

v27-29 if any soul:

“If an individual sins thru ignorance or makes a mistake,
he/she will be forgiven if

- he/she offers a young female goat for a sin offering
- the priest makes atonement

v30-31 But...presumptuously:

“But...”

A breath-taking contrast is about to be made

“The ignorant sinner will be forgiven when the price for sin has been paid and the mediator has atoned for it...
but...the presumptuous sinner will not be forgiven and will be destroyed, separated from My people.”

One who

- knowingly, defiantly oversteps the bounds established by God in His Word
- dares to boldly act in an “in Your face” affront against God
- has an insulting contempt...a blatant disregard...for the Word of God he knows i.e. is NOT ignorant and persists in it, does not repent before the holy God

For such a sin there is no sacrifice that can pay its price...

For such a person there is no mediator of atonement

Examples of presumptuous sin by God’s people...

Jer 15 Even if Samuel and Moses interceded for them,
I would still cast them out of My land

Ezk 14 If Noah, Daniel, and Job were in the land, only they
could save themselves and themselves
only...but not their children.

1 Cor 5 the bold and blatant sexual sinner will be delivered
unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh
that the spirit may be saved

As we discussed last week, God has set up 2 seats –

Judgment seat and Mercy seat.

According to His nature, He directs us away from the Judgment seat to the
Mercy seat...

those who proudly refuse His direction condemn themselves

There is no sacrifice or atonement for the willful, unrepentant sinner...
only condemnation and destruction

This pronouncement from the Holy One Who inhabits eternity and
holds the universe in the palm of His hand should strike fear in our
hearts! (Jude 3, 23)

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v32 man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day:
Case in point...”pre-Jeremiah”

Keeping the Sabbath holy...and the penalty for breaking the Sabbath...
was common knowledge by the children of Israel

Ex 20:8-11

Table 1 (relationship with the God of AI&J)
written by finger of God in stone

Ex 31:13-17

Ex 35:2-3

Here is a man acting in blatant contempt of and disregard for the Word of
God he knows...despising the Word of God

Rebellion is seething in the hearts of the people delivered out of Egypt by
the mighty hand of God...

- Lust (Ch 11:34)
- Envy/jealousy (Ch 12:1-2)
- Bitterness, obstinate complaining and unbelief (Ch 14:2)
- Now...a deliberate “In Your face” affront against God

v33-34 brought him unto Moses and Aaron...put him in ward:

This presumptuous sinner is brought before

- Moses: Deliverer and prophet, mediator between God and man
- Aaron: High Priest, mediator between man and God
- the entire nation

and put into prison...until it is known what God wants to do with him

Perhaps in the minds of the people:

“Ex 20, Ex 31, Ex 35...does God really mean it?”

v35 the man shall surely be put to death:

The Sovereign King Who has absolute authority...

The Judge Who knows the hearts of all men and is fair...

The God Who says what He means and means what He says:

“He shall surely die.”

Ezk 18:4 “All souls are Mine...the soul that sins shall die.”

The LORD Who gives life is also the LORD Who sustains life and
the LORD Who takes life

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v36 stoned him with stones:

In God's perspective, they are just making a rock pile...
heaping stones upon a heart of stone.

Lesson: Remember the Word of God...obey the Word of God
Sin is a very serious issue
Obedience to God is a Life or Death proposition

v37-41 they shall make them fringes:

He is the holy God Who led them out of bondage & misery in Egypt...
He commands His people to be holy...
He expects them to obey

To help the children of Israel...but not the strangers...remember and obey
the Word of God,
the LORD instructs them to include a conspicuously different, easy to see,
blue thread in the "fringe" of their garments

To remember and obey...is to know Him and trust Him
fringe = tassle = hem = wings

[Mal 4:2](#)

[Matt 9:20-22](#)

[Matt 14:34-36](#)

Applications of Ch 15

- v1-21 Give thanks unto God...always

God wants our hearts...He wants our hearts to be filled with thanks

He desires that we show our thanks to Him...

- acknowledge His provision for us
(material, spiritual)
- express our gratitude to Him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for His faithful provision
- trust in His continued provision
(did not bring His people out into the wilderness to kill them but to be glorified thru them)

by giving back to Him the first and the best of His provision...

- not a pittance out of our abundance –
an insulting expression of thanks
- not the leftovers –
a displeasing expression of thanks
- not nothing –
an expression of “no thanks”, of ingratitude

Giving back to the LORD the first and the best of what He has given us is an act of worship...

Some in this church do...

Most do not worship God this way

- have a misunderstanding of Who is the provider for their family
- express ingratitude to Him for His faithful provision
- distrust God with this aspect of temporary life on earth

What kind of a heart are you showing God?

- v22-29 Sins of ignorance...mistakes

Are you as forgiving of the mistakes of others as God is of yours?

When it comes to the sin of others, we often want justice

When it comes to our sin, we always want grace and mercy

Hypocrisy!

Remember John 8:1-11

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- v30-36 sins of presumption

Is rebellion seething in your heart?

- Lust
- Jealousy
- Bitter complaining and unbelief
- Contempt for the Word of God

Dare you defiantly stand before the Almighty Creator with insulting contempt of Him and His Word?!

Do you want to hear Ch 14:11, 27a spoken to you?

Do not trust your wicked heart or your lying eyes!

Repent!

Before you are

- destroyed in your sin (unbeliever)
- turned over to Satan (believer)

If you struggle with willful disobedience against the Almighty God, you must

- make a choice...don't "play" with God
He doesn't play around with sin or sinners
You are either for Him or against Him
Choose!
And live or die by your choice.
(Joshua 24:14)
- if you choose Jesus, guard your mind, the battleground
(Rom 12:1-2, James 1:8, 22)
- ask for the power of God to obey the Word of God
(Acts, the promise of the Father, Luke 4:14)

- v37-41 Remember and obey

Are you a good person?

Can you bear the burden of perfect, 100% obedience to 100% of the Law? (James 2:10)

There is no margin of error when it comes to holiness and righteousness

No ignorance, no mistakes, no presumption

Are you willing to stand before a perfect and holy God based on your holiness and righteousness?

Do you need your ignorance and mistakes and presumption to be forgiven?

Only God can do that for you...it's why Jesus came...

- God became a man
- with healing in His wings
- the Sin Sacrifice of God the Father for the sins of men
- to taste death for the forgiveness of sin...for whosoever would believe that God says what He means and means what He says
- The High Priest to mediate between man and God
- The Deliverer, The Prophet to mediate between God and man
- The Holy One of Israel thru Whom came grace and truth
- for Jew and Gentile

God does not play around with sin...Pay Day someday

Who is going to pay...you or Jesus?

Do you want Jesus' help?

Will you look to Him and by faith touch the hem of His garment and receive the healing you so desperately need?

Repent...stop and turn around to follow Him

If you desire to pray...thanks, repentance, to receive power of God to obey...
come forward

Prayer: mighty movement of the Holy Spirit in our hearts

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Numbers Chapter 16

Last time...

- Rebellion is seething in the hearts of the people delivered out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God...
 1. Lust
 2. Envy/jealousy
 3. Bitterness, obstinate complaining and unbelief
 4. Deliberate “In Your face” presumption
- Encouragement to remember the Word of God...
blue thread in the fringe/tassle/wing/hem

This time...a mind-bending chapter

- Depth of the rebellion in the heart of man...man’s heart on parade
- Breadth of the test for Moses the Intercessor

v1-2 Korah...Dathan...Abriam...On...princes:

“rose up before”: a coup is staged against Moses and Aaron
Moses and Aaron were appointed by Whom? servants
So the coup attempt is really aimed at Whom? Master
So much for the blue fringes!
The lesson of certain judgment for presumptuous sin is already
forgotten...or not believed!

The coup is staged by whom?

- Korah:
 - a Levite...
 - **chosen** by God instead of all the firstborn of Israel, which are His (Num 3:41)
 - **not** numbered among the 603,550 men ages 20 yrs +...all of whom but 2 will die in the wilderness
 - a Kohathite...
 - furniture mover to assist the sons of Aaron... ark, table of showbread, candlestick, the 2 altars, vessels of service (Num 3:31)
 - closer than anyone but the sons of Aaron to the holy things of God
 - a cousin of Moses and Aaron (Uncle Izhar per Ex 6)...
 - whose name means “ice” (flowing through his veins)

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- Dathan and Abiram and On:
 - tribe of Reuben...
 - who lost the inheritance of the firstborn via presumptuous sin
- All of whom “live together” on the southside (of the Tabernacle per Num 2:10 and Num 3:29)

These men divided a people unto themselves to boldly and publicly challenge the national leadership of Moses and the religious leadership of Aaron

Their followers were 250 tribal and family leaders...
 men of position and influence, not the dregs of Jewish society
 But they were not Godly men...because leaders follow the LORD,
 rebels don't

In talking to other senior pastors, almost all church splits come at the hands of church leaders...
 assistant pastors, elders, youth pastors...
 men of position and influence...
 drawing disciples after themselves
 Acts 20:28-31

v3 they gathered themselves together against Moses:
 The 4 “leaders” and their 250 followers came as one against Moses and Aaron.

Their actions and words must be understood...marveled at...in context...

- Challenging the LORD...like the 10 cowardly spies who brought an evil report against God's land... and died suddenly by the plague before the LORD (Ch 14:36-38)
- Challenging the leadership of Moses...as did the entire nation in Ch 14:1-4...who would have been struck with pestilence and disinherited by God had Moses not interceded for them
- Proclaiming the entire nation as holy...this rabble of murmurers in whom is seething rebellion against the LORD...to whom the LORD has asked Moses
 - “How long will this people provoke Me?” (Ch 14:11)
 - “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation?” (Ch 14:27)

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- Charging Moses with over-stepping his place...
who the LORD has declared
 - the most meek of all men (Num 12:3)
 - faithful in His house (Num 12:7)
 - My servant (Num 12:8)

This is a shameless grab for power and glory by proud ambitious men...
an “in your face” affront to the LORD

v4 fell upon his face:

Notice: Moses does NOT defend himself...
he does fall on his face before the LORD.

Why?

With a humble, shepherd’s heart, he intercedes for his people...
their rebellion and wickedness
“Here we go again!”

v5-7 he spoke unto Korah:

While on his face before the LORD, Moses received a word from the
LORD to confront this challenge and he faithfully gives it.
You see, Moses is a leader: the LORD leads and he follows

Given a word of knowledge/wisdom, who does Moses primarily address?
Korah

Why? He is the ringleader, this is his plot

- The LORD will show beyond a shadow of a doubt whom He
has chosen (His choice, not mine)
 - To come near Him and serve Him in His house
 - To be priests...all others being usurpers...
who seize by force that which is not rightfully theirs
- Via a little test involving the censers of incense (prayer)
- Tomorrow...judgment delayed (grace) to give the rebels time
and an opportunity to
 - remember Nadab and Abihu, Aaron’s sons (Lev 10:1)
 - re-consider
 - repent
- You are the ones who have over-stepped your place!
(setting the record straight)

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v8-11 Hear...ye sons of Levi:

Moses exposes the heart of Korah the chief conspirator...
and the other Levites among the 250 rebels:
they are coveting a better position/title and the praises of men

We need to remember that not all the Levites are priests...
only the sons of Aaron are

“Why were you not satisfied...discontent and unthankful...
with the special favor our God has laid upon you?

Was another tribe chosen to be the firstborn of all Israel?
Can other tribes serve Him and His house?

Who is honored with the ministry of carrying His furniture?
Why do you despise your God-given calling?

Why do you covet the priesthood that God by His sovereign will gave to
Aaron and his sons? (the heart of the matter)
What did Aaron ever do to you to warrant this attempt to steal his
ministry?

Why are you trying to overturn God’s order?
Why are you opposing the LORD?”

Korah and the other Levites are not content to serve the priests
(Aaron and his sons), they want to be priests

Politicking and power plays like Korah’s happen all the time in
governments of man and in corporate America...
but they have no place in the Church

The Church is an organism with one Head...it is not an organization with
competing hierarchical departments

God is sovereign.

Do not complain about His purpose for your life...

the Potter always gets His way, the clay never does.

Don’t seek a “higher calling” because of an inflated opinion of yourself.

See yourself in the Light of Truth...and submit to God’s will.

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v12 call Dathan and Abiram:

Now, Moses turns his attention to the junior co-conspirators.
He summons Dathan and Amiran front and center, to the door of the
Tabernacle, to answer for their insurrection

Q: Why not On (v1)?

Perhaps he remembered, re-considered, repented
during the time of grace before judgment

The response of Dathan and Amiram (via messengers):

“You aren’t the boss of us!”

A complete rejection of the God-given authority of Moses

v13-14 out of a land...into a land:

Their insolence is staggering as they proceed to slander God’s servant!

“Are we to overlook your self-serving actions, as if they were nothing?”

Taking us out of a land flowing with milk and honey (Egypt)...
into this wilderness in order to kill us.

Why would you do those things except you want to lord over us?
(At least Pharaoh never did that.)

Besides, you have not been able to lead us into a land flowing with
milk and honey (Canaan) and give us the inheritance we
were promised.

(You are incompetent, you don’t know what you’re doing!)

Are we to ‘turn a blind eye’ to these things?

Will you blind us physically just as you have blinded all the others by
pulling the wool over their eyes about who you really are?

We ain’t coming to you just because you ‘commanded’ us!”

Wow! VERY strong words...fightin’ words

- equating the land God calls His own with Egypt
- equating Moses with Pharaoh...malicious despots
- talking as if Moses did them some terrible injustice by
delivering them from slavery and oppression
- living in Egypt in bondage is preferable to living in the
wilderness with the LORD
- faulting Moses for their fear and unbelief that “closed the door”
to Canaan
- complete dismissal of the LORD’s leading and involvement in
their lives (Red Sea, Amalekites for example)
- absolute determination to disobey

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v15 Moses was very wroth:

Moses hears the fightin' words and is red hot!

“These ingrates do not respect You, LORD.
Do not respect their offerings.
I have not stolen anything from anyone.
I have not bullied or intimidated anyone.
I have not abused my calling.
(All I have done is intercede on their behalf and follow You!)”

Samuel, Nehemiah, and Paul also cried out to the LORD during rough times in their ministries.

v16-17 before the LORD...tomorrow:

To the ringleader, Moses again does not respond by defending himself, he repeats what the LORD told him to tell them

“Show down tomorrow...you vs Aaron.
Report back here...to the LORD (not me).
Come prepared...all of you.”

The odds...253:2...are perfect!

To the would-be-High-Priest and all his would-be-priests,
judgment is delayed by a gracious, longsuffering God
Judgment is not delayed because man refuses to cooperate...
judgment is delayed because God takes no pleasure in the death of
the wicked (Ezk 18:33)

v18-19a Korah gathered all the congregation:

The next day, showdown at the door of the Tabernacle

But...the odds are not 253:2...

Korah has the entire congregation of Israel rooting for him!

So the odds are more like 2.5M:2...even better!

Why does man think he can join forces and oppose God?!

(Gen 10, Rev 6-18...2 Cor 4:4)

v19b the glory of the LORD appeared:

The LORD makes His presence known to all

Because the LORD fights for His servants (Ch 14:10),
who is the marked underdog in this fight?

v20-21 Separate yourselves:

The Maker of heaven and earth tells His servants:

“Stand back!

I’ve got some trash to burn.

This won’t take but an instant.

I’ll wait until you put some distance between them and you.”

Q: Is this consistent with Ch 15:1-2? (When...because I am faithful)

No...so what is the LORD doing?

Testing the heart of Moses – is it a heart after His own heart?

Parents of rebellious children, what is one of the things the LORD is
doing?

Testing your heart – is it like His heart?

v22 fell upon their faces:

Test Results: Yes, Moses’ heart is after God’s own heart...

a broken hearted shepherd, interceding on behalf of his straying
sheep

Moses pleads with the Giver and Sustainer of life to not judge the whole
nation because of the wickedness of one man, Korah.

He lays all the guilt on the ringleader, an ambitious and malicious soul.

He excuses the multitudes who are ignorant and weak in their faith,
easily led astray.

While on his face before the LORD, Moses receives what to say and do
next...the LORD tells His servant what He is going to do next

v23-24 Get you up from...Korah, Dathan, Abiram:

The LORD hears a prayer that starts in His heart, is impressed upon the
heart of His servant, and offered back to him by that servant

“Tell the people to move back from the tents of the co-conspirators.”

v25-26 Depart...touch nothing of theirs lest:

Armed with the Word of God, Moses goes to the south side, to those who were determined to not obey God's order and authority

The elders of Israel giving witness to his God-given authority, Moses tells the people to give Korah, Dathan and Abiram a lot of room!

“Disassociate yourselves from them...have nothing to do with them or from them.

Otherwise you will share their guilt and punishment.”

v27 came out and stood in the door:

Following their leader who is following the LORD, the great sea of people parted from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

And, listening to Moses and watching the “parting of the sea”, the 3 co-conspirators stand defiantly in the doorway of their tents. They are undaunted by what they hear and see...not fearing God or man.

v28-30 ye shall know:

“Know that the LORD is leading and I am following.
Know that it is His will that is always done, not mine.

If Korah, Dathan, and Abiram die of natural causes or some other common way (disease, accident), I am a fraud.

But if the LORD does something new...
these men and their families die in some unnatural way no man has ever died before...
like the earth opens up and swallows them and their families and they are buried alive...
and they go to hell without experiencing physical death...
know these men challenged the LORD...not me.”

v31-33 And it came to pass:

Suddenly...immediately after Moses said these things...
the LORD did what He said He was going to do.

The multitude has no time to forget...the guilty have no time to escape.

Refusing to remember and obey the Word of God...

Scoffing at the blue fringes on their garments (healing wings)...

Rejecting the LORD's leading in their lives...

they are suddenly judged and engulfed in hell.

Installment 2 of God's judgment of all rebels die in the wilderness

Put yourself there...terrifying!

This is given for our example...that we follow the LORD and not
false teachers, deceivers, usurpers...

ambitious, malicious souls looking to draw disciples unto
themselves

Jude 3-5, 11, 16-19

v34 fled at the cry of them:

As the false priests and hard core rebels shrieked in horror while being
swallowed up by the earth...

the unjudged multitude flees with holy fear.

The Church should flee false teachers and deceivers this way...
instead of embracing them, not fearing God or man.

v35 fire...consumed:

Now, Installment 3 of dying in the wilderness:

The holy fire of the LORD consumes the other 250 men who followed the
usurpers rather than following the LORD and Moses

The camp of Israel is cleansed

Judgment starts at the house of the LORD

The Church is going to be cleansed in a similar fashion...fire

Get prepared...follow the LORD wherever He goes

And remember: the Church is people, not a building

v36-40 Eleazar...take up the censers:

The LORD sends Eleazar, the next true High Priest, to

- collect the censers used by the would-be-priests who condemned themselves to destruction
- scatter the fire/incense/prayers rejected by the LORD
- have the censers hammered into a 2nd “coat” for the altar of burnt offering
- give the children of Israel another object lesson, another reminder to obey the Word of God

The reminder is to

- all Gentiles
 - all Jews, including all Levites not of the line of Aaron
- to not stage a coup like Korah did

v41 But:

But...something heart-stopping and mind-bending is about to happen

on the morrow:

The very next day...mere hours later...the entire congregation,
who the day before saw

- the earth open up and swallow those who conspired against Moses/the LORD...
- fire come out from the LORD and consume those who followed them

murmured against Moses and Aaron!

C'mon, man! Now what?

“You killed the people of the LORD!”

Moses and Aaron opened up the earth and swallowed up rebels...

sent the consuming fire upon rebels?!

How deep is rebellion in the heart of man?

How depraved is fallen, sinful man?

How worthy of death are all men?

I can only imagine what the LORD is feeling and thinking...

“Is living with Me so arduous, so terrible, that you would continually feel this way?

Have I not abundantly exceedingly demonstrated My love, provision, and protection for you?

What does it take to learn the simple lesson of submission and obedience...which are for your good?

How hard can it be?

How hard **must** it be?”

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v42-43 they looked toward the tabernacle:

Rendered speechless by the stubbornness and rebellion of the people,
Moses and Aaron look to the LORD for help.

And, quite predictably by this point, the LORD appears...displeased

Moses and Aaron go to the LORD to seek His will and protection...
the get help in this time of need

Another test for Moses and Aaron...my heart breaks for them...
Its like living with 603,285 teenagers

v44-45 Get up from among this congregation:

Again, hours later,

“Stand back!

I’ve got trash to burn.”

In other words...to the congregation

“You cannot wear me out, I will not back down.

Why do you really insist on learning the hardest way possible?

Have it your way...here comes a hard lesson.”

Hearing that, Moses and Aaron fall on their faces...to intercede for those
who continually contend with them, loving those who hate them

Being murmuring against, falling on their faces before the LORD...
it’s getting to be an everyday occurrence.

Reminds me of being a parent of a teenager!

Reminds me of being a pastor!

Every shepherd/pastor gets bitten and beat up by sheep
infected with “mad sheep’s disease” but no pastor ever had
a more difficult flock than Moses!

v46 the plague has begun:

The LORD tells His servant Moses what He is doing.

“Enough is enough.

I am in fact sending a plague this time.”

The LORD’s words and tone of voice must be different than in v21...
and there is no delay of judgment this time.

Moses, quite the intercessor after God’s own heart (picture of Jesus),
immediately instructs Aaron to go “pray” for the people.

There is no time for a sacrifice because the wrath of God is falling

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v47-48 Aaron...ran...made atonement...stood between:

Aaron the High Priest is also a picture of Jesus Christ

Aaron did not

- return evil for evil
- curse those who persecuted him
- get impatient in tribulation

His obedience was without question and his love without hypocrisy...
he overcame evil with good

- ran: very unbecoming of a man of his age and office...
an act of selfless humility
- made atonement: covered their sins with his prayer
- stood between the dead and the living: to stop the advance of
the plague/death, to save the lost

Result: As suddenly as it began, the plague of the wrath of God was
stopped

Sounds like the ministry of Jesus Christ! Can you see Jesus?

- standing in the place of intercession and atonement
- the bridge between death and life

v49 14,700:

But before the plague stopped, 14,700 people died

It's only by the grace and faithfulness of God that the entire nation
wasn't vaporized!

Installment 4 of dying in the wilderness

For those who are keeping track, that means only 588, 585
teenagers still living in the house

v50 Aaron returned unto Moses:

"Bro...it's going to be a very long 40 years with these people!"

But notice...where are they?

At the door of the tabernacle.

They can't do what God has called them to do...
without the LORD. (John 15:5)

They need Him and they know it...casting their cares upon Him
because He cares for them

He is their strength when they are weak (Ps 28:7-8, 2 Cor 12:10)

What would we do without the grace, faithfulness, and strength of God?!

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In this mind-bending chapter about the heart of man and the grace of God...see

In the Congregation of Israel:

1. a reflection of the depth of depravity in our own hearts
2. we live in a time of delayed judgment...grace to remember, re-consider, and repent before “Enough is enough”
3. a clarion call to the Church...
a body of people, not an organization or a building...
to examine its “leaders” by the Word of God
(Acts 17:11)...

Are they

- leaders following Jesus
- rebels drawing disciples after themselves in order to gain position, power, praises of men

In Moses and Aaron:

4. encouragement for parent raising teenagers today (2 Tim 3:1-4)...
 - to never stop contending for them against the flesh, world, and devil
 - to stand firm on the Word of God
 - to pray without ceasing
 - to know Jesus Christ and time are on your side
5. our utter dependence upon the LORD: grace, faithfulness, strength
And we are to serve Him with holiness, with reverence and holy fear,
for our God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:28-29)
6. Jesus Christ
 - In Moses:
 - interceding for those who persecute him
 - suffering...thru which the glory of the LORD becomes apparent
 - In Aaron:
 - humbling himself
 - making atonement
 - standing between the living and the dead

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Numbers Chapter 17

Last time...

- Man's heart on parade...absolutely depraved
- The LORD was contending with usurpers
- LORD established Moses as the national leader of Israel

This time...

- LORD will establish Aaron as the spiritual leader of Israel
- Responsibilities of and provision for the priests...a covenant of salt
- I am very excited about this study and about the Word of God!

v1-5 take every one of them a rod:

With no break in the action, the LORD moves to establish the spiritual leadership of His chosen High Priest, Aaron

Via another little test...

- Each of the tribes of the 12 sons of Jacob are to
 - get a staff, a big wooden stick
 - NOT a shepherd's staff
 - dead wood
 - write the name of their tribe (Jacob's son) on it
- On Levi's stick, Moses will write Aaron's name, the great-grandson
- Moses will lay all 12 sticks in the Most Holy Place before Ark
 - containing the tables of stone given to Moses...
 - where he alone can go meet with the LORD any time he so chooses (Ex 25:21-22)...
 - other proofs of his relationship and national leadership
- the LORD will chose the stick of His High Priest and make this dead stick blossom
- and "put to bed" all this rebellious grumbling over authority, positions, power, and praises of men

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v6-8 behold, the rod of Aaron:

Test results:

- 11 dead sticks
- 1 “resurrected” stick...Aaron’s
 - buds
 - blossoms
 - fruit

No mere man, including Moses, could be responsible for the test results
Only the living God, the God of the spirits of all men, can give life to the dead

Aaron’s rod...signifying his spiritual leadership...is

- resurrected from the dead
- “Spirit-filled” (breath of life)
- bearing fruit

A picture of Jesus Christ, the Messiah/Spiritual Leader to come

- the Rod out of the stem of Jesse (Is 11)
- the rod that shall come out of Zion (Ps 110)

- Who will suffer, die, be buried/”hidden”, and rise again on the 3rd day

- Position: LORD of all
- Power: given all power in heaven and in earth
- Praise: worthy of all praise, and He alone

v9 brought out all the rods:

The difference is obvious to even the dullest person.

The LORD’s choice for the spiritual leader of His people is more than clear.

v10-11 Bring Aaron's rod again:

Having made His irrefutable statement to the entire nation, the LORD speaks to the national leader

"I'm fed up with the whining and complaining against Me.
Put Aaron's rod back before the Ark.
It will be a perpetual sign for this rebellious people of My will."

Meaning...Aaron's rod would continue to have buds, blossoms, fruit...
i.e. will never wilt and die but have everlasting life

LORD's statement: "My High Priest shall never die."

Heb 4:14 we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens (inhabits eternity), Jesus the Son of God

Heb 6:20 Jesus, made a High Priest forever after order of Mel

Heb 8:1 we have a High Priest who is set on right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens

v12-13 we die, we perish, we all perish:

What do the children of Israel see?

11 dead sticks or the 1 resurrected, eternal rod?

Did they see the giants or the grapes in Ch 13?

Are they repenting of their wickedness...or are they still murmuring?

Did the miracles of God establishing the leadership of Moses and Aaron yield a profession of faith from them?

Is their fear...fright or holy reverence?

God's judgment does not draw men into Himself...His grace does

God's miracles do not produce saving faith in unbelievers...

miracles confirm the faith of believers

Heb 11:1, 6 substance hoped for...evidence of things not seen
Without faith is impossible to please God, for he that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him

Luke 16:19-31 If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Miracles are evidence seen...faith in the unseen is required

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Numbers Chapter 18

After He quashing all challengers to Aaron's priesthood, God speaks to Aaron...
to re-establish (Ex, Lev) the responsibilities of and the provision for the priests

- v1 the iniquity of the sanctuary...the iniquity of your priesthood:
"You are responsible to keep a clean house...My house
- the priests and the Levites with you will be responsible for the holiness of the Tabernacle
 - the priests will be responsible for the holiness of the priesthood."

The LORD is speaking to Aaron about these things that pertain to his ministry

When the LORD has something to say about the ministry He has given me, He will tell me...not someone else
And He will tell you about yours.

- v2-7 the Levites...given as a gift:
After the confusion caused by pride in Ch 16,
the LORD re-establishes His order, which is based on submission

The priests (Aaron and his sons) are to serve the LORD in His house
and to lead worship (sacrificial system)

The Levites (non-sons of Aaron) are to serve the LORD by serving the priests

- tear down/transport/set up of the Tabernacle complex
- no less...certainly no more (Korah's covetousness)

The Levites are the LORD's gift to His priests...not competition for them
As it relates to the service of the priests, the Levites are strangers
just like everyone else
All will be well if they keep God's order and do things His way
There will be hell to pay...as it were...if they don't

The duties now clearly delineated, the LORD again (Lev) tells Aaron, the leader of the Levites, about His provision for the priests and the Levites

- They have no inheritance in the land...no land to grow crops/produce food
- Their entire lives are given to spiritual work...serving the LORD
- They are totally dependent upon Him...The LORD takes care of His servants

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v8-13 every oblation...offering...firstfruits:

First, the priests

The priests are responsible for worship...
the offerings of the children of Israel.

In that service, the LORD provides food for the priests

- all the various offerings
- first and best of oil and wine and grain
- firstfruits of the land

v14-19a Every thing devoted...opens the matrix:

Also given to the priests by the LORD are

- all things devoted to the LORD by the children of Israel
- the firstborn...men or animal
 - clean animals are sacrificed (Ex 13:13)...
food for the priests
 - unclean animals are redeemed...
cash for clothes, shoes, etc
 - children are redeemed...
ditto
- the thank offerings...food

v19b covenant of salt:

The LORD makes a contract with His chosen priests

- cannot be undone
- cannot be dissolved
- secure...unchangeable...trustworthy

v20 I am thy part and thine inheritance:

The LORD by His sovereign choice gave Aaron and his sons, the priests,
the very best inheritance...

Not merely a piece of land...but Himself!

He is bigger than their needs and wants...

He is better than anything on earth!

v21-24 children of Levi all the tenth:

Now the provision and inheritance for the Levites for their service:
the tithe ("tenth") of the other 11 tribes

But...on the heels of the Korah fiasco...an oft repeated warning to not
covet the ministry of Aaron and his sons (v3, 4, 5, 7, 22)

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v25-32 to Moses...unto the Levites:

The LORD now speaks of His provision for the High Priest,
so He speaks to Moses

- the responsibility to see to it lies with Moses
- no false accusation could be leveled against Aaron and subsequent High Priests

The Levites live on the tithes of the other tribes...
they in turn tithe and support Aaron

Everybody gives thanks for God's provision

Serving the LORD (time) is no excuse to not give the first and the
best of what the LORD has provided you materially

Everybody is to be grateful...and show it by giving to the LORD the
first and the best He has given them

And in so doing, the LORD provides for everybody...
a flow of blessings where none are neglected and
for which He is glorified

Requires: faith and obedience/submission (Heb 11:6)

Aaron is now established as the spiritual leader and God's order has been re-established...
The LORD is King and the priesthood and Levites are His servants,
each with their responsibilities and provision

This is the LORD's covenant of salt...

- to keep a clean house...His house
- to keep holy the Aaronic priesthood
- secure...unchanging...cannot be dissolved

God's contract...that begs several questions...

- How clean of a house did the priesthood and Levites keep?
- How holy did the sons of Aaron keep the priesthood?

The Bible is a faithful account of the Truth...

I long that you would fall in love with the Word of God...

So let's take a survey...get the flow of the Biblical account

I will give you a lot of Scripture to Acts 17:11...

Download, get a CD, or listen on the Internet and study this

It's a message of hope...even though it won't seem like it

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From this point forward in time...

- 40 years of wandering until the last rebel (non- Levite) dies and their children enter the Promised Land
- Moses' "last words" to the entire nation: Deut 30:19-20
- Joshua takes over as national leader from Moses
- At the end of his watch, his "last words"...Joshua 24:14-15
- The time of the Judges...7 downward cycles of apostate Israel

- During which time...85 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - Judges 17:6-10
No king?! Because the nation has rejected LORD as their king
Why is the priest Jonathan roaming away from the Tabernacle?
Now is a hireling of man vs a servant of God
 - Judges 18:1-4, 13-20
Jonathan gets a better paying job/position with more power and praises of men

- 235 years later...320 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - 1 Sam 1
The last judge, Samuel, is dedicated to the LORD (Num 18:15)
 - 1 Sam 2:12-17, 22-35
sons of Eli mock duties, line is cursed, faithful priest is promised
 - 1 Sam 3:10-14
 - 1 Sam 4
Ark is captured, Eli's sons are killed, Eli dies, Ichabod is born (Phineas)
 - 1 Sam 8:7
Israel "officially" rejected the LORD as King in favor of Saul.

- 130 years later...450 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - 2 Sam 8:15-17
David reigns, Zadok/Ahitub/Eleazar/Aaron and Ahimelech/Abiathar/Ithamar/Aaron are priests (1 Chron 6, 1 Chron 24)
HP = Levi...King = Judah...never to be combined

- 25 years later...475 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - 1 Kings 1:1a, 5-8
David is embattled in a coup attempt by his usurping son Adonijah/Joab/Abiathar.
His faithful include Zadok
 - 1 Kings 2:23-27
the rightful king (Solomon) disposes of the usurpers (king and priest) when "parole is violated".
End of line of Eli, promised 155 years earlier

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- 200 years later...680 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - 2 Chron 26:16-21 trespassing by King Uzziah...offices are still separated
- 220 years later...895 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - Ezk 34:1-16 a “pregnant” chapter...unfaithful kings/shepherds from captivity...by a priest/prophet (Ch 1:3) thru whom came “I will rule over you!” (Ch 20:32-38) and thru whom came specs for Mil temple (Ch 40-48)
- 430 years later...1325 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - during 400 years of silence between Malachi and John the Baptist
 - Maccabean Revolt, in response to desecration of Temple by the Syrian Antiochus Epiphanes
 - Maccabees were priests (Ithamar, not Zadok)...aka Hasmoneans
 - combined offices of king and priest...position, power, praises of men
- 60 years later...1385 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - Hasmonean rule over Israel continued by sect of Judaism called the Pharisees
 - opposed hereditary Temple aristocracy i.e. sons of Aaron (Sadducees...corrupted by humanism, Greek philosophy)
 - coveted position, power, and praises of men
 - ruled Judaism (national and spiritual leadership) via Torah + oral traditions (of men) + intimidation/oppression
 - usurpers: took by force that which was not rightfully theirs
- 130 years later...1515 years from now in Num 18 and covenant of salt...
 - Luke 1
 - 400 years of silence is broken...John the Baptist.
 - Born of “son and daughter of Aaron”, the rightful line of priests (Zadok...2 Chron 24:1-10)
 - Matt 3:1-8
 - John to the Pharisees: brood of vipers (sons of serpents).
 - Rightful, faithful priest heralding in rightful King, The Messiah, The Good Shepherd that came to seek and save the lost, etc from Ezk 34.
 - King and Priest...the only acceptable combination of those offices.
 - Matt 12:24 and Matt 23:33
 - Jesus: ditto brood of vipers
 - Contending usurpers: Pharisees (false priests), Herod (false king)
 - Both threatened (position, power, praises of men) by Jesus, seek to kill Him
 - Luke 19:11-27 and Matt 21:33-41
 - “We will not have this man rule over us!” (opposing Ezk 20)

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The priests did not keep the LORD's house clean, they did not keep themselves holy

- Became hirelings of man vs servants of God
- Abused and oppressed the people they were called to serve
- Self-serving shepherds, coveted position, power, and the praises of men
- Added the traditions and philosophies of men to the Word of God
- Usurpers
- Rejected Jesus as their Messiah and LORD

Sounds just like Church history, doesn't it?!

The failure of the Church is paralleled in the failure of Israel

But... a covenant of salt... a faithful line of priests was promised... and another parallel

1. to herald in the Messiah, who would establish a royal priesthood (combo king and priest)... order of Mel
 - the faithful royal priesthood... the church... heralds the Rightful King and High Priest
 - the faithful church will rule with Him as kings and priests (Rev 1:5-6 with Num 18:20)
 - no inheritance in the land (Israel)
 - the LORD Himself will be our inheritance
2. who will serve in the Mil Temple (Ezk 43:18-19, Ezk 44:15-16, 28)
 - Cohen and derivatives
 - DNA... proof of a covenant of salt made by the LORD
 - (unfaithful Levites will not come near the LORD or His holy things but will be the "grounds crew"... Ezk 44:10-14)

In the covenant of salt with Aaron and his sons we find great comfort in **The LORD's** faithfulness to the promises given to us!

A message of hope... in our faithful High Priest and King, Jesus Christ... that inspires us to please Him (Heb 11:6) by keeping

- a clean house
- ourselves holy

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The LORD will clean house...judgment starts in the house of God

a. Israel

The LORD will

- contend with them
- “rule over them” (Ezk 20:32-38)
- make a new covenant with them
Ezk 34:17-31
Jer 31:31-33

Want to understand what is going on in the world?

Consider the history of the nation of Israel...Dan 2, 7, 9 in particular

- The times of the Gentiles and the judgment of Israel...because
- Their rebellion continues...
- Until the 70th Week of Daniel
Dan 9
Ezk 24:13-14

b. Church

Rev 2-3

- Some will be refined in the fire of the 70th Week of Daniel
- Some will be vomited
- Few will faithfully serve Him

Replacement Theology is a lie...calls the LORD a liar

The LORD is serious about His Word.

Are you?

Are you serious about your walk with Jesus?

He is!

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Numbers Chapter 19

Last time...

- Spiritual leadership of Aaron is established
- Covenant of salt
 - Certainty of God's contracts/promises
 - Parallels between Israel and Church
 - (Replacement Theology is a blasphemous lie, calls God a liar)
 - History of failure
 - Faithful priesthood (1 Peter 2:5-10)
 - holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices
 - royal priesthood, chosen generation, peculiar people

This time...purification for sin

v1-2 red heifer:

If you have been around this fellowship for any period of time

- in person
- via Internet
- via the radio

you already know:

- Scripture interprets Scripture
- Context, context, context
- "Where is Jesus in this?" (John 5:39, Heb 10:4)
 - Many shadows, Jesus is the substance, the Greater Truth (Col 2)

Certainly true of the red heifer

Context:

- Rebellion has been seething in the heart of the children of Israel and it has been made manifest in a mind-bending string of presumptuous sin and insurrection against the LORD
- The LORD has quieted the latest rebellion...as evidenced by $250 + 14,700 = 14,950$ dead bodies
- Spiritually and physically, the camp of Israel is filthy....
 - in dire need of cleansing

For that purpose, the sacrifice of a red heifer is commanded...
to Moses and Aaron

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The Shadow: the red heifer

- rare animal...at the other end of the spectrum from “common”
- young cow (3-4 yrs old female) that has not had a calf...
bearer of life BEFORE bearing life
- must be perfect...
 - no white or black hairs
 - no deformities or flaws
- never under the yoke/bondage

The Substance, the Greater Truth

- 100% man, 100% God...God that became a man, not man that became a god...nothing is more rare than Jesus!
- Giver of Life...out of His physical death (at 33 yrs young) came spiritual life...to whomsoever would believe in Him
- Perfect and sinless...1 Peter 1:18-19
- Not under the curse of the Law...Seed of the Woman, not seed of Adam...the Law/Word become flesh by virgin birth

v3-6 slay her:

The Shadow: the sacrifice of the red heifer

- officiated by Eleazar (“God our helper”)
- slaughtered in the sight of Eleazar by another
- outside the camp
- blood sprinkled before the LORD’s house seven times
- completely burned to ashes
- consumed along with cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet (wool)

The Substance, the Greater Truth

- sacrificed/slaughtered in the sight of the Father
Luke 23:34, Matt 27:46, Luke 23:46
Is 53:10-11, Acts 2:22-24, 1 Cor 2:6-8
- He (another) came to do the will of the Father (John 10:17-18)
- outside the city of Jerusalem (Heb 13:11-13)
- suffered, died, and was buried...
- for the cleansing of sin...Lev 14:1-4
 - cedar wood: strong, hard wood/life cut off...
Cross made of cedar from Lebanon?
 - hyssop: lowliest of plants (humility)...
an ingredient of wormwood (bitter judgment)...
Ps 51:7
 - scarlet (wool): dyed blood-red from crushed maggot...
Ps 22:1, 6, John 1:29

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Never under the curse of the Law, Jesus Christ

- humbled Himself as a servant
- was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross
- laid down His sinless life in order
 - to break the bondage of those under the curse of the Law and dead in their sin
 - to give them eternal life

Gal 3:10-14

2 Cor 5:21

v7-8 wash...bathe...unclean until even:

The Shadow: Post-sacrifice work

- involving both the officiator and the burner of the red heifer
- wash their clothes
- bathe in fresh water
- cleansed at evening

The Substance, the Greater Truth:

- The One Who officiated the sacrifice...God the Father
- The ones who shed the blood and burned the sacrifice...
Jews and Romans...Jew and Gentile...all men
- the post-sacrifice work of the Officiator and the burner
(whosoever believes)
 - a. Regeneration– made new and clean, dead made alive
 - Titus 3:3-7
 - Eph 2:8-10
 - 1 Cor 6:9-11
 - b. Sanctification – conformed into image of Jesus Christ
 - 2 Cor 4:16 inward man renewed day by day
 - Eph 5:25-27
 - Phil 1:6
 - Phil 2:12-13
- timing of being clean/regeneration/renewal:
new day...new beginning
2 Cor 5:17

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v9 gather up the ashes:
A “complete” sacrifice...nothing is left of the red heifer but ashes

The Shadow:

A clean man

- gathers the ashes
- lays them outside the camp in a clean place

The ashes are kept for

- water of separation...holiness
- purification for sin

The Substance, the Greater Truth

- a clean man and a clean place: [John 19:38-42](#)
 - Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus...
believers, clean by faith
 - tomb outside the city of Jerusalem
 - never used...not defiled by a dead body
- Separation/Holiness and purification for sin:
 - [Heb 9:11-14](#)
 - [1 Cor 1:18 – 2:5](#)
- Kept:
 - Jude 24-25, 1 John 1:9
 - the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is sufficient
 - for all men
 - for all time
 - for all sin...except unbelief

v10 a statute forever:

The Shadow:

The sacrifice of the red heifer for the purification of sin is for

- Jew and Gentile
- forever

The Substance, the Greater Truth

All men are sinners in need of cleansing (Rom 3:10, 23),
even those who handled the red heifer (1 John 1:1)

1 John 2:2 propitiation for ours sins, sins of whole world
John 3:16 whosoever would believe (trust)
Rom 1:16-17 not a partial or social gospel
John 14:6 only One Way
Heb 10:26 if sin willfully after knowledge of truth,
remains no more sacrifice for sins

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Now...Purification from the wages of sin (death)

v11-13 purify himself...purifieth not himself:

Remember the context:

14,950 dead bodies that have to be buried...

dead because the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23a)

a big job involving a lot of men who will now be ceremonially unclean for 7 days

vs until evening for touching a dead animal (Lev 11:24)

Man is not an animal, not a highly evolved primate

Man is created in the image of God

Which means

- man is body, soul, and spirit
- man has a sovereign, free will

And the Jewish men on the burial crew are given a choice:

- to purify themselves
 - on the 3rd day (resurrection of Jesus Christ)
 - on the 7th day (complete and eternal...on the last day)
- to not purify themselves
 - to neglect or ignore God's provision for purity
 - whether intentional or out of ignorance, there is no excuse (Rom 1:18-20)

VoM #327...or the humanist intellectual you know

Consequences of the free will choice regarding the witness of Jesus Christ

- humble oneself...to purify: to be made clean and live
- pride...to not purify: to remain unclean and pay price – death

v14-16 when a man dieth in a tent:

Defiled by “airborne disease” (Eph 2:2)

- every person who comes in the tent, the place of death
- every open earthen pot...no covering fastened (Jesus)

Or defiled by “hands-on”

- battlefield clean-up
- burying someone who died of natural causes
- touching human remains
- touching a grave

The uncleanness of death pollutes...uncleanness is contagious.

For which there is only one way to get clean

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v17-20 ashes...running water...vessel:

The Shadow: Ceremonial cleanness was restored via

- ashes of the red heifer
- living water
- put in a clay pot
- clean person sprinkling the unclean person
- washing...bathing
- a choice

The Substance, the Greater Truth

- John 7:37-39 out of belly rivers of living water: H.S.
- 2 Cor 4:7 we have this treasure in earthen vessels
- 1 John 1:9
- A choice must be made, to be clean or unclean
No choice is a choice
“Later” is a choice

v21-22 toucheth shall be unclean:

Sin is highly contagious...the most contagious and deadly of diseases

Our greatest need: the forgiveness of sin...the sacrifice of the red heifer

The red heifer: What does it mean today?

- for Israel (in unbelief)
According to Jewish tradition, there have been 8 or 9 red heifers in their history...none for about 2000 years
Since the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, no ability to offer a sin offering or to be purified for sin via red heifer offering
Thus, they long for another Temple...yet the site has been defiled by an abomination, Dome of the Rock
How cleanse the site in order to build without ashes of a red heifer?

In March 1997, the first red heifer born in Israel since the Dispersion of 70 AD (!)...but it was not perfect

In March 2002, another red heifer is born (!)...also not perfect

“A four-legged atom bomb” that will start WW III

Is there another one?

Note: Who will build the next Temple? The Messiah

i.e. the counterfeit Messiah (John 5:43)

That Temple will also be an abomination and will be destroyed by the Messiah

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- for whosoever believes

The Cross of Jesus Christ...the price of purification for sin

All men are sinners – by nature (Adam) and by choice

Every man needs to be purified of his sin if he is to live in harmony with
and in the presence of his Creator

Only by the blood of Jesus Christ can a man be purified of his sin

Consider the price He paid for our purification!

His grace and His suffering

Matt 11:28-30

Matt 16:24-25

What does that mean for us...what is our price?

His grace

Eph 4:32 be as forgiving as have been forgiven

1 Cor 12:9-10 whatever the circumstances

Gal 5:1 Stand fast in the liberty with which Christ
has made us free, and be not entangled again
with the yoke of bondage

His suffering

Rom 12:1-2 living sacrifice, transformed by renewing

James 4:4 friend of world is enemy of God

1 John 2:15 love not world or love of Father not in

Matt 10:32-39

- “broken” families
- new friends
- new hang outs
- new lifestyles
- new vocabulary
- loss of possessions
- surrender of will
- persecution and suffering

Phil 3:7-11

We are

- strangers here in this sensual society...
- missionaries, right here in this post-Christian society
- children of Abraham by faith, who was a stranger on earth
- children of God by grace thru faith, Who was the Ultimate Stranger

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Where there is no Cross/suffering, there is

- no crown
- no conforming into the image of Jesus Christ

Intimacy with Jesus Christ does not exist in creature comforts but in suffering

1 Peter 4:12-19, 5:6-10

Phil 2:14-15

VoM #325, 322

Brother Yun and others in China...Pastors/Family in India

In an increasingly hostile society...Rom 1:16-17

We will not compromise the power of God unto salvation with a social gospel that

- entertains goats but does not feed sheep
- emphasizes man (self-esteem, self-improvement, interfaith unity)
- de-emphasizes the Word of God

Compromise leads to surprise (unpreparedness)

Millions of “Christians” are unprepared for the purification for sin that is coming!

To move forward tomorrow, next week/month/year being

- fat and sassy
- comfortable and complacent
- convenience-oriented
- self-righteous

is a huge mistake

As a family and as individuals, we must take advantage of the grace given to us...time for preparation

Heb 10:21-25

Numbers Chapter 20

Last time...

- red heifer
- the purification of sin

This time...

- Fast Forward about 38 years...almost time to enter into the Land
According to Ch 33, there are 18 moves between Ch 19 and Ch 20
- a tough chapter for Moses and the “First Family”

v1a the whole congregation...first month:

That is, the congregation that will enter into the Promised Land

By this time almost all the 588,585 remaining “teenagers” have perished in the wilderness, as promised in Ch 14:28-33
Their children...all grown up now...are back at Kadesh in the first month of the 40th year since the exodus from Egypt

v1b Miriam died:

Back on the southern border of the land of Canaan where they were turned away about 38 years ago and nearing the time to enter into the Promised Land...Miriam dies.
Bummer.

She is about 127 years old.
Her death is communicated via a simple announcement...
no record of the children of Israel mourning her death
(as is recorded when her brothers die)

v2a there was no water:

We must hearken back to the first “no water” test in Ex 17:1-7
at Rephidim

Ex 17 was the generation that perished in the wilderness,
this test at Kadesh is for the new generation, their children.
Each generation must be tested.

How does the new generation do?

v2b-5 gathered against...chided...made us:
About as well as their fathers.

The new generation:

- gathered against Moses and Aaron...rebellion against LORD
- complained...faithless discontent and disrespect
- “took Moses to task” for their being out of Egypt...as if he
 - is leading vs following the LORD Who is leading...visibly in the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire
 - forced them against their wills to leave Egypt...where their lives were bitter (Ex 1:13-14)
 - is trying to kill them (for what purpose?)
 - is the reason for their wandering in the wilderness these past 38 years

They are thirsty, there is no water...so Moses is the world’s biggest loser

They are no different than the previous generation that were eyewitnesses to and benefactors of the mighty works of God.

This generation, like the previous generation, has missed the whole point
Later explained to them by Moses in [Deut 29:1-6](#)

v6 fell upon their faces...glory of the LORD appeared:
The whole nation against them, again, Moses and Aaron, as in times past,
flee to their refuge, the LORD.

In keeping with the other times, the LORD appears to Moses and Aaron
when they are on their faces before Him.

He is their comfort.

I would also think that Moses and Aaron are interceding on behalf of the
children of Israel for their murmuring

“Here we go again!

Will this mean an extended time of wandering?

LORD, have mercy!”

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v7-8 Take the rod...speak:

The LORD knows Moses' and Aaron's need...and meets it
The LORD knows the people's need...and meets it
He does not withhold the things we His children need

This is Moses' rod, not Aaron's rod that budded, blossomed, and bore fruit

Ex 14:14-16	parting Red Sea
Ex 17:5	striking the rock for water
Ex 17:8-13	defeat of the Amalekites

He gives Moses very clear instruction whereby He will meet the need of the people:

“Speak to the rock and water will come forth, sufficient for all.”

3 observations:

1. “No water” test 1 vs 2: Strike (Ex 17:6) vs speak
2. Deeper truth: Water is life
3. Required: faith...belief in action

v9-11 must we fetch...smote the rock twice:

Moses disobeyed...he “fleshed out” in his anger

- speaking NOT as he had been spoken to
- doing NOT as he was told to do

Perhaps in 40 years he had become sensitive to the sheep bites...

Perhaps he was sick and tired of the unending outbreaks of “mad sheep disease”

But that is no excuse for disobedience

- the LORD didn't say anything about “those rebels”/unworthy ingrates
- the LORD was not “put out” by the terrible inconvenience of thirsty children
- the LORD did not “get in their face” with a “Must I do everything for you?!”... because a Shepherd in fact MUST do everything for His sheep
- the LORD did NOT tell Moses to strike/beat/punish the rock once, let alone twice

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Even though Moses disobeyed, the LORD was faithful.
A river of living water flowed out of the rock, sufficient for several
million people and untold number of livestock.

Need met, complainers satisfied.

Do the ends justify the means?

I mean, what's the big deal... "speak" vs "strike"

Speak to the Rock, for it had already been smitten

- Water is life
- Water/life comes from the rock
- The Rock is Jesus ([1 Cor 10:1-4](#), [John 4:13-14](#))
- Water/life came from Jesus when He was struck/beaten/punished...once, never again
- Water/spiritual thirst henceforth comes merely by asking for a drink...whenever you "speak"/ask [Luke 11:9-13](#)

v12 Because ye believed me not:

Do the ends justify the means?

No...we must do God's will, God's way...always
Not God's will, our way...ever

Moses misrepresented God to the people...
he "fleshed out" all over the children of Israel

"You did not believe Me when I spoke (words and tone of voice) to you.
You believed I was angry...you were angry.
I am merciful...you were merciless.
You showed My people your heart, not My heart.
You did not honor and respect Me, you did not treat Me holy."

They "witnessed" that their God was furious with them...
when in fact He was not

Ps 106:32-33 ...at the waters of strife, it went ill with Moses...
Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spoke
unadvisedly with his lips

Gulp!

- Moses
- us

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Moses

As a result, Moses gets a “smack down”

Moses will see the Promised Land (Deut 27:12-14) but
he will not see “Mission Accomplished”...
enter the Land with the flock he has been shepherding
for the past 40 years

Is Moses washed up, his ministry over?

Deut 34:5-7 died, buried, no man knows where, vigor
Jude 9 body the object of an angelic wrestling
match
Matt 17:3 Transfiguration
Rev 11 2 Witnesses (L&P) in 1st half 70th Week?

Luke 9:30-31	2 W (L&P): Transfigur., 2 men, in glory
Luke 24:1-7	2 W (L&P): Resurrection...2 men, in glory?
Acts 1:9-11	2 W (L&P): Ascension...2 men, in glory?

Entering the inheritance...John 1:17 (Ex 3:8 vs Ex 3:10)

What the Law cannot do, Grace can
Joshua (Heb) = Jesus (Gr)

Us

Attention all masters/teachers/married/parents: James 3:1
We are His ambassadors to His children
We misrepresent God when we flesh out at our kids/spouse
James 1:20, Lam 3:22-23
We misrepresent God when we speak in the flesh,
just like Moses did
Forgive us, Lord

Attention all self-righteous/religious persons: Gal 3:11, Eph 2:8-9

v13 water of Meribah”:

Meribah = “strife”...”waters of strife”

A memorial site...where

the children of Israel, including Moses and Aaron, complained
against the LORD...
but He showed Himself holy, glorious, mighty, faithful, merciful,
compassionate

As He did at the Cross

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Last time...a rough time for Moses

- Big sister dies
- People are thirsty...he is smacked down for misrepresenting God

This time...

- Moses' big brother dies
- Discouragement and snake bites
- Victory and healing

v14-17 messengers...king of Edom...Let us pass:

With the people and the livestock well watered and himself and Aaron humbled,

Moses dispatches ambassadors to seek the king of Edom's permission to pass through their land...the most direct route to their land

Who are these people to the children of Israel?

Cousins...Edom = Esau, Jacob's fraternal twin

Moses, from modern-day Saudi Arabia

- succinctly debriefs the king of Edom as to
 - Jacob's/Israel's last 470 years
 - their current 10-20 (location)...his border
- makes a request to
 - pass thru Edom's land...
 - directly, not straying or meandering
 - being respectful of property
 - taking no (well) water
 - on the King's Highway
 - military and commercial road east of Dead Sea
 - from Red Sea/Gulf of Aqaba (vs Suez finger) to Damascus

v18 Thou shalt not:

Edom's crisp, immediate answer: Not on your life!

Esau/Edom is still bitter towards Jacob/Israel and is holding a grudge

Unforgiveness yields bitterness, which is:

- a cancer that kills relationships
- a self-inflicted wound...other person make never even know
- a very heavy burden that saps energy and life out of a person
- a device of the enemy of our souls (2 Cor 2:10-11)

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v19 go through on my feet:

Speaking as one, Israel responds to his brother's rebuff,

"Perhaps I did not make myself clear.

We want no special treatment, just a path upon which to walk.

We won't stop, we will go as fast as we can.

If it is money you want for the water we will need, we are more than
happy to pay for it...cash."

v20-21 Thou shalt not go through:

"Perhaps I did not make myself clear!

What part of 'No' did you not understand?

Do you need me to speak slower?

Step one foot on my land and you will in fact pay for it!"

Israel's reaction to the hostility of his "family"?

- did not fight against or argue with their brother
- turned away...to take an out-of-the-way detour thru very rugged terrain

In this "interaction" between brothers we see 2 realities

1. Spiritual (inward)

Esau was carnal, despising his birthright for a bowl of soup

Jacob was a scoundrel that became "governed by God"

after wrestling with the LORD and being disabled

A picture of our two natures, who are contrary one against
the other

- Esau: flesh – our nature, natural tendencies
- Israel: Spirit – God's nature and ways

There is no peace between these brothers,

there is no peace between our flesh and our spirit

2. Relational (outward)

We should respond toward those who are bitter toward us

and simply cannot forgive us as Israel did to Edom,

Don't fight or argue...just let the LORD work in our hearts

and in theirs, as He will in Israel's and Edom's

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v22-29 mount Hor...Aaron died:

The children of Israel are led to Mount Hor
(Josephus said was near Petra)

There, the LORD tells Moses and Aaron that Aaron is going to die then
and there (at about 123 years old) and the new High Priest will be
“God our helper”

With the rebellion of v10-12 in mind, the dispositions of Moses and Aaron
in Ch 20 cast shadows of the substance to come:

- What Moses/Law cannot do, Jesus/Grace can (John 1:17)...
lead God’s children into their inheritance
- The Aaronic/Levitical priesthood fails, is insufficient for
spiritual leadership into their inheritance...
another High Priest is needed...
Jesus, Son of God, of the order of Mel

The priesthood that does not fail is the order led by
God Himself

Numbers Chapter 21

v1-3 king Arad the Canaanite...I will utterly destroy:

Israel was not allowed by their brother Edom to take the most direct route to the land God promised to AI&J

They have to take a very rugged detour instead.

And...resistance to their journey continues, awaiting them at every turn.

Going south, they encounter Canaanites ruled by Arad and he was more contrary and more hostile toward Israel than was Edom.

Arad attacks Israel and takes some POWs

Israel...with one voice...cries out to the LORD Who is leading them:

“If You will fight for us (as you have before...Ex 14:14) and give us a complete victory over the Canaanites...

I will destroy their cities...

houses, schools, workplaces, markets...

all the places of presence and influence.”

The LORD heard their cry...and the LORD and His people acting as one “ruled” the Canaanites

Result: Victory...the destruction of God’s enemies...
in a place called “devoted”

A historic battle...with a very long shadow.

Calvary...the Cross of Jesus Christ

Victory...the destruction of God’s enemies...in a devoted place

Heb 2:9-15

1 Cor 2:7-8 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

And like the “interaction” between Israel and Edom, the battle between Israel and the Canaanites speaks of a harsh reality for all of God’s children

The daily lives for born-again Christians are conflicts like this.
Canaan (cursed) is a type of the flesh
Israel (“governed by God”) is a type of the spirit
Battle: flesh vs Spirit

Rom 7 vs Rom 8 flesh vs Spirit – struggle for every saint

Rom 7:14-19, 24-25

Rom 8:1-6

Gal 3:1-3

Gal 5:16-25

To chose to live according to the flesh (works fueled by pride) is:

- To take advantage of the nature of God,
Who is merciful, gracious, of great kindness, and slow to anger
- To serve self vs serve the LORD,
Who is the purpose of our lives
- To indulge and please self vs deny self and please the LORD,
Who has purchased our lives with His blood
- To wade around in the “basement” of an outhouse vs in glory of the LORD,
Who is the Light of the World
- To live in defeat vs victory of the LORD,
Who is our strength and refuge

To chose to live governed by the Spirit (faith fueled by humility) requires the complete destruction of the influence of the flesh and the world upon our lives...
the destruction of all places, things, and relationships where lust and pride of the flesh live, learn, work, trade

1 John 2:15-17

The LORD is faithful to do His part...to fight for us

The victory is His...for us

We have our part...to surrender unconditionally to His

LORDship and walk in the victory we already have

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Following Him, we are empowered by Him to fight against
the enemy and to rescue POWs...set the captives free

Now...for those who are not born-again by grace thru faith in Jesus Christ
and insist on living life on their terms,
this “complete victory” is a foreign concept because life is just one
irritating hassle, frustration, and disappointment after another

An honest assessment of your life shows that you have
no peace, no joy, no contentment...
for the flesh (sinful nature of natural man) knows none of those
things since they are spiritual realities,
not fleeting emotions based in circumstances

Wrestling against the LORD God your Creator...like Jacob did...
you are fighting to not drown...just hanging on/in there
And it seems like you are losing.
Because you are!

Rom 8:8	those in the flesh cannot please God
Heb 9:27	death, then the judgment
Heb 10:31	fearful thing, a consuming fire
Amos 4:12	Are you ready?

Where can you meet God today and know complete victory?
At the Cross of Jesus Christ
Today, surrender to Jesus at the foot of the Cross and make it your
place called “devoted”

v4 the soul of the people was much discouraged:
Given a complete victory, Israel continues its journey, unable to take the
most direct route to their promised inheritance.
The way they must take is difficult, inconvenient, arduous...
one battle after another.
They get frustrated, weary, impatient.
And discouraged.

We experience the same in our journey, do we not?
The daily conflict between flesh and spirit can be very discouraging...
because the flesh and the world and the devil never stop...
and we do not continually surrender unconditionally to the
LORDship of Jesus Christ,

We forget John 16:33 with 1 John 5:4-5

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No one ever said following Jesus would be easy...
In fact, in the short-term, it may not seem like it.
But march on! Someday we will see just how worth it it is.

v5 the people spoke against God and Moses:

Israel: Victorious yet discouraged....spirit vs flesh
They give in to the flesh and spew the unending complaint and ingratitude
against the LORD and His Deliverer/Prophet

What is at the heart of the matter?

Their heart

Amos 5:25-26

The LORD is devoted to them...but they are not devoted to Him

Are we born-again believers any different?

Do we get discouraged and murmur?

What part of our flesh or the world are we still clinging to?

What part of our life is still a POW to the flesh and world?

Are we 100% devoted to Jesus Christ, willing to follow Him on the very
difficult path to our inheritance...
a path of suffering and unending battles?

What is it we are worried about that is bigger than our God?

Are we tired of the Word of God or are we hungry for it and thankful to
have it?

Our appetite for the Bread of Life should be like our appetite for
material food

We eat when we are hungry...we eat when we are not hungry
(blessing much of world does not have)

We have abundant access to the Word of God...
we should all be

- joyful, spiritual gorditas
- mighty warriors
- more than conquerors

v6-7 LORD sent fiery serpents:

When people are discouraged, they murmur.
Murmuring is unbelief.

The LORD takes umbrage to unbelief and will do whatever it takes to get our attention in order to

- secure our faith in Him
- bring us to unconditional surrender

It's not pleasant to have a displeased LORD.

Here...He sends poisonous snakes to get their attention...
to bite the people and they died.

He is all-knowing, He is fair.

No doubt that the snakes bit stubbornly unrepentant ones (Prov 29:1)

Well, it worked.

The people rush to Moses, singing a different tune.
A simple, humble tune of confession and repentance.

And Moses, the faithful intercessor who returns good for evil, carries their message of confession and repentance to the LORD

Hopefully, the lesson for us is clear

1 Cor 10:9-11 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also
tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.
Neither murmur ye, as some of them also
murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Will we learn the easy way or the hard way?

If we stubbornly insist on learning the hard way, the LORD loves us enough to do whatever is needed to get our attention.

v8-9 fiery serpent...pole...looketh upon it shall live:

The LORD Who heals gives a most unusual remedy for snake bite:

- an image of the poisonous snake
- mounted on a pole
- lifted up for all to see
- healing for any who would but look at it

Absurd! Foolish!

Who ever heard of such a ridiculous thing!

It's just a crutch for the weak, right!

But...it worked!

A miracle for whosoever believed...with eyes on the brass serpent
instead of the poisonous serpents.

A matter of the heart...healing required faith in the LORD!

And the shadow is among the most profound in all of Scripture

- poisonous snake: the embodiment of sin and death
(snake bite: sin and death)
- pole: Cross
- looking up at it: faith
- healing: forgiveness and eternal life

John 3:3-6, 14-18

John 12:30-33

2 Cor 5:21 became sin

Luke 23:34 Father, forgive

Eph 2:8-9 saved by grace thru faith, not by works

1 Cor 1:18-25 foolishness to natural man

Rom 1:16-17 Gospel, the power of God unto salvation

Acts 2:14-47 subject of the 1st sermon in church history

Ps 130:3-5

Warning of Amos 4:12 Prepare to meet your God

Invitation of Amos 5:6 Seek the LORD and you shall live

Life or death...every person must make that choice

Make it now!

Before it's too late – and complete destruction for which there is
no remedy comes

It's Why He came!

Therein lies the Christmas message

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Christmas...The miracle of the incarnation...God becoming a man

- The Captain of our salvation made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death...in our place
- By a virgin birth
- The King coming in the most humble way imaginable
- With a birth announcement of peace and good will...for the wicked
- With a ministry of reconciliation...for the estranged

- To reveal God to man...Creator to creature
- To keep God's holy Law...for the lawless
- To be the sin sacrifice...for the sinner (of whom He was not!)
- To become a curse...on behalf of the cursed

- To forgive...the lawbreakers
- To set free...the captives
- To pay the debt...of the debtors
- To comfort...the hurting

- To bring Light...into the darkness
- To bring peace...to the fearful
- To love...the unlovely
- To seek and to save...the lost, His wandering sheep (Is 53:6a)
 - lost fellowship with the Father in heaven
 - lost their purpose for living

- To give us victory over the cursed flesh, sin, death, and hell

To the wandering sheep, the lost sinners...

Look at the manger in a cave...and then at the brazen serpent!

Can you see your sin as I can see mine?

Can you see Jesus as I can, the most glorious sight I ever beheld?

His wounds are my healing...His death is my life.

Look at Jesus as I looked at Him...and He will save you from eternal death and hell as He saved me!

Look at Jesus and see how much He loves you...willing to die for you.

Can you look Jesus in the eye and say "No!" to such love?

Will you accept His gift and in return give Him your entire life?

Your life in His life...in exchange for your life apart from Him

Meditate on this passage

- Battles and discouragement and snake bites...flesh
- Victory and healing...spirit
- How the victory and healing

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Last time...

- a lesson in the flesh vs the Spirit (carry forward in OT)
- God's cure for snake bite

This time...

- enemies, seen and unseen
- a lesson in leadership

v10-13 the children of Israel set forth:

Healed and purified of unbelief, Israel keeps moving, on the march to their inheritance.

v14-15 the book of the wars of the LORD:

The Books of the LORD

- Book of the Law
- Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel
- Book of Remembrance (Mal)
- Book of Life
- Book of the wars of the LORD

His "war record"...His compilations as a war correspondent

Has the LORD fought a battle for you?

It is recorded in this book!

v16-18a to Beer:

They've been here before...their murmuring/unbelief brought them back to ground they have already covered.

Old sites get re-visited until lessons are learned and the influence of Egypt/the world is removed

How many times in our Christian walk do we find ourselves in a familiar place, a place we've been before...

going thru the same trial time and time again?

led to a place of God's victory and provision so we remember?

We must learn the lesson we need to learn in that place/trial so that the influence of the flesh and the world would decrease and Jesus would increase.

Another observation that will come into perspective in the next chapter:

The song of the well speaks of who dug it for the people:

The princes/nobles...

- servant leaders
- following/directed by the Lawgiver...a servant leader

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v18b-22 country of Moab...of the Amorites:

The journey continues...in the land inhabited by

- Moabites: descendents of Lot
- Amorites: the sinful people living on the land promised to Abraham, among whom he lived as a stranger

To the Amorites, Israel, with one voice, sends messengers with the same message sent to their brother Edom in Ch 20

v23 Sihon would not suffer...gathered...went out...fought:

The Amorites

- think like the Edomites: “No way!”
- act like the Canaanites: “Attack!”

When their brother Edom responded this way, the LORD had Israel back away and turn around.

Not this time.

Israel does not back down, turn away...they fight back

Israel has no friends in the world...world will be in uproar over Gaza now.
Retaliation for over 200 missiles fired at them from enemy who seeks their annihilation
Cursed by the world...blessed by God.

v24-25 Israel smote...possessed...took...dwelt:

Israel fights, led by the Lawgiver.

Result: Israel rocked the Amorites...a great victory

- military wipeout...the sin of the Amorites is now full (Gen 15:16) and the judgment of God begins with Israel as the LORD's instrument of judgment
- took possession of the land between those two rivers on east side of Jordan River...
- captured and dwelt in all the cities (post-conquer of Canaan)

Speaks to our journey as well

Matt 16:18 fight, advance

Eph 6:10-18 armor, weapons

John 15:5

Phil 4:13

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v26-32 we have laid them waste:

Those who speak poetically,
“The Amorites defeated the Moabites and their god Chemosh.
But we defeated the Amorites!
Our God reigns!”

In Gen 3, the LORD God declared war against Lucifer and all in league with him.

In Gen 15, the God of Abraham declared war against the Amorites

This is a battle in those wars
Therefore, another reason why

- Israel could not take the direct route thru Edom in Ch 20 – there was business to take care of
- We are still on earth vs in heaven – there is business to take care of (2 Cor 10:3-5)

v33-35 Og, king of Bashan:

The battle moves on to a new front, another wicked people

Remember, “Our God reigns!”

Victory is assured...another wipeout...because God fights for His people

How is it the meek shall inherit the earth?
Because God fights for His people.
It's all recorded in His book of wars

And the stage is set for

- another showdown...indirectly involving Israel
- one of the Bible's more unusual characters...Balaam

Numbers Chapter 22

v1-3 Balak...Moab was sore afraid...distressed:

The Moabites are...the descendents of Lot, Abraham's nephew

Israel's "beef" is with the Amorites, not the Moabites (Deut 2:9)

So Balak and the Moabites have no reason to fear...but their false god
(Chemosh/Satan)

- is all about fear
- wants to annihilate the Jews

The LORD's longsuffering and then sudden judgment of the Amorites was not hidden...done "in a corner"...but openly for all men to see His power and glory

With the LORD going before them, Israel's victories have been wipeouts...the sudden and complete destruction of God's enemies

The word has gone forth, God's reputation precedes His army... and those who do not want to worship Him are terrified, beside themselves with fear.

So unbeknownst to the people of God, they become the object of a struggle.
All behind the scenes.

v4 Moab...elders of Midian:

Moab seeks help from and enters into a league with the neighbors the Midianites

Inspiring them with "Israel will destroy us all one at a time unless we band together," Balak convinces the elders of Midian to jump into the fight.

Note: a different tribe of the same nation of Moses' father-in-law

v5-6 Balaam to son of Beor to Pethor:

The Moabites and the Midianites know they are at a distinct disadvantage against Israel and their God...so they resort to magic, witchcraft, sorcery...calling on Balaam for help

Balaam...a marked contrast to Moses, the servant leader of Israel/"governed by God"

- a Gentile
- living in Mesopotamia...Babylon
- by the Euphrates River
- "not of the people" or "destroyer"

And whoever he blesses is blessed and whoever is cursed is cursed.

Apparently Balaam has quite a track record!

He has the shiniest, most polished veneer of spirituality around.

He is the best tradesman in the professional spiritist union.

He is the best diviner money can buy.

If he were a baseball player, he'd be a NY Yankee.

In Ch 22-25 we will examine this man of contradictions named Balaam

- seems to have a relationship with the LORD...but he practices divination (demonic, speaking lies and delusion)
- influenced by the eastern religions of Babylon
- double-minded and unstable in all his ways (James 1:8)
- a mercenary...a prophet-for-hire ala Simon in Acts 8:13-21
- blinded by sinful desires
- does not speak the whole truth
- yet...given the revelation of God and used by God

In Ch 25 we will see the impact of Balaam upon Israel

In Ch 31 we will see the end of his story

v7 with the rewards of divination:

So off goes a contingent of elders from Moab and Midian...with

- Balak's job offer
- the wages/honorarium for an unauthorized entrance into the spiritual realm (from God's perspective)

Scripture interprets Scripture

2 Peter 2:1-3, 12-15

Context : false prophets and false teachers

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- v8 Lodge here this night:
 A true prophet of God would have summarily dismissed these fools.
 But Balaam loved the wages they brought.
- “Stay here tonight.
 Let me see if the LORD (God of AI&J) will let me go with you
 (and I do want the job!).
- v9 What men are these:
 Did the all-knowing God not know?
 He is initiating the conversation with Balaam.
- v10-11 Balaam said unto God:
 Correct.
 His desire to go with them is unspoken...but the LORD knows.
- v12 God said unto Balaam:
 God answers the unasked question in Balaam’s heart.
 A. You shall not go with them
 B. You shall not curse Israel because they are blessed (by Me)
 In spite of murmuring etc, are still blessed!
- v13 LORD refuses to give me leave:
 Balaam reports back to the emissaries in the morning: “No go.”
- But, notice, Balaam does not speak the whole truth
v12A...but not v12B
 Why not?
 It would cost him all hope of getting this job! He has an agenda.
- v14-15 Balak sent yet again:
 The ambassadors and buyers of curses return home empty-handed.
 But Balak isn’t about to take “No “ for an answer.
- “Balaam is the best there is.
 Therefore he is very shrewd and cunning.
 He is negotiating, playing hard-to-get in order to get more.”
- So Balak, who is terrified and desperate, ups the ante and sends more –
 money and honor – via higher ranking emissaries.

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v16-17 nothing...hinder...promote thee...whatsoever:
The A Team comes to Balaam with...a blank check.

“Name your price.
Name your honor.
No job is more important than this job.”

v18 house full of silver and gold:
Whether Balaam is still negotiating his deal and working his hidden
agenda...or is sincere...remains to be seen.
But his words are very interesting

- “my” God
 - Balaam claims and has knowledge of God AI&J but does he have a “Family” relationship with God?
 - Raised a Roman Catholic, I claimed and knew about God for 34 years before I knew Him personally when I surrendered and became a child of His by spiritual birth
 - Do you claim and know about God or is He your Father thru faith in His Son Jesus?
- “I can neither deny nor overstep my God, no matter what you give me...(or take away from me).”

Absolutely true. [repeat]

- In a Chinese prison, prisoners were forced to shout, “Food is good, prison is good.”
But an elderly believer would always shout, “Jesus is better!”
“Do you want more push-ups today?”
”I want you to know how much Jesus loves you!”
- In a North Korean prison, the pastor proclaimed, “You may destroy my body, but not my soul. I do not care what you do to my body.”
“Then think of your family. They will be killed also.”
“I would rather have my wife and my babies die by your gun, knowing that they and I stood faithful, than to betray my Lord and save them.”

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- In Egypt, as we speak, a Muslim woman who converted to Christianity is being coerced by Muslim authorities to renounce Jesus Christ by having her watch her children starved right in front of her.
- Is this absolute truth yours?

v19 tarry ye also here this night:

Again, a true prophet would have immediately sent these fools home.
But Balaam wants to see if this time the LORD will give him
“the desires of his heart” and let him go with them.

v20 go with them, but:

Another translation of the Hebrew word under “If” is “since”,
which makes more sense. “Since the men come to call...”

The LORD, Who is going to use Balaam for His sovereign purposes,
allows the mercenary to take the high-dollar job...
but Balaam can only do what the LORD says he can do.

Balaam is permitted to go, but he is on a leash.

v21 rose up...saddled...went:

“Yahoo!” resonates in Balaam’s heart.

He loves...is mesmerized by...the honor and the wealth.

v22 God’s anger was kindled:

God knows the heart of Balaam, knows his thoughts and motives.

Balaam did not speak the whole truth of v12
(do not curse because they are blessed)
because he lusted for the honor and the wealth of this job.

Balaam seemingly heard v20A but not v20B...
shrugging off God’s leash...going to serve himself vs serve God

So, the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ became Balaam’s adversary and came to
stop him.

And now a naturally bizarre (supernatural) sequence of events to stop
Balaam

v23 the ass saw...went into the field:

Balaam's donkey can see the Angel of the LORD and that He means business.

Why did Balaam not see the Angel of the LORD?
He is blinded by sin.

So the donkey takes evasive action with an abrupt turn off the road into the field.

The money-motivated Balaam insists his will be done and whips his donkey into submission.

v24-25 path of the vineyards:

Graciously, the Angel of the LORD moves to a more restricted place...
a path between 2 walled vineyards.

Again, Balaam's donkey is the only spiritually sighted creature and,
between a rock and a hard place,
tries to become part of one of the walls.

Thinking his donkey is stubborn and rebellious, Balaam again whips her into submission.

v26-27 no way to turn:

Again, being gracious with Balaam even though he is blind to it,
the Angel of the LORD moves to a narrow place of no escape.
His will is to stop Balaam...and Balaam will be stopped!

With nowhere to go, the only evasive action left for the donkey is
straight down...on her knees before her Creator.
Blind Balaam blows a gasket and beats his donkey.

v28 LORD opened the mouth of the ass:

The LORD is going to use Balaam on behalf of His people.
But Balaam's heart is not right.
So the LORD is going to stop him.

The all-powerful God, for Whom nothing is impossible, breeches a
boundary between man and beast – language

Notice which is rational and which is not.

In response to the physical, and no doubt verbal, assault by its master,
the donkey asks a very good question.

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v29 Balaam said unto the ass:

And Balaam responds to his donkey!

We should hear the needle-scratching-the-record sound right here!

Why is Balaam not dumbfounded and speechless...even terrified...
that his donkey is speaking to him?!

He is so enraged, so blind, and so eager to get to Balak...having a
conversation with his donkey seems lost on him.

“You have caused me pain.

If I had a sword right now, you’d be dead!”

v30 ass said to Balaam:

“Have I not faithfully served you as long as you have owned me?

Have I ever treated you ill?

Balaam had no choice but to acknowledge the truth of the donkey’s
defense.

v31 LORD opened the eyes of Balaam:

The rational creature established, the faithful servant identified,
the LORD illuminates the irrational and unfaithful...Balaam.

Finally seeing what his donkey has been seeing...

the Angel of the LORD ready to take care of business...

Balaam falls in abject humility before the LORD as did his donkey.

v32-33 way is perverse before me:

“Why, what is in your heart to cause you to beat your faithful donkey
these three times?

I came here to stop you because you are mad, out of your mind.

(2 Peter 2:16)

This donkey was not blinded by lust of the flesh like you and was able to
see Me...and took evasive actions three times to protect you!

If she had not, I would have killed you and spared her!”

In this conversation with Balaam, the identity of the Angel of the LORD is
revealed

- perverse against Me (v32, Psalm 51:4, Luke 5:21)
- His will done (v34)
- the word I shall speak...God puts (v35, 38)

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v34 I have sinned:

“I have sinned” spoken by

1. Job
2. Pharaoh
3. Achan
4. Balaam
5. King Saul
6. King David
7. Prodigal son (parable)
8. Judas

But only Job, King David, and the Prodigal son really meant it...
repented and were forgiven

“Since I displease You, I will go home.”
Again...self willed vs “What do you want LORD?”

v35 Go with the men:

Balaam’s heart was displeasing to the LORD, the mission was not.

“No, you will go with them.
I am going to use you to accomplish My purposes.
But...obey My every Word!”

The LORD repeats v20...making sure Balaam is listening to the entire
message, not just the part he wanted to hear.

v36-37 Balak...went out to meet him:

Balak gets word that Balaam accepted his job offer and went out to meet
him.

But he has something to get off his chest, venting his frustration and fear.

“I am the king!
I don’t play games.
I called for you, why did you not come?
Did you doubt my ability to deliver on my offer?”

v38 Lo, I am come:

“What are you talking about?

Here I am!

But like I told your boys, I can only say what God puts in my mouth to say.”

Still not speaking the whole truth...still not sharing v12B.

Balaam is managing expectations, setting the boundaries of his performance right up front.

v39-40 Balak offered oxen and sheep:

On the eve of the Great Cursing, why did Balak offer oxen and sheep?

- To his god, the counterfeiter?
- To “lure” the God of Israel (“Balaam’s God”) over to his side?

v41 see the utmost of the people:

In the morning, Balak takes Balaam to one of his high places of worship to get a bird’s eye view of the children of Israel

Next time we will see how Balaam performs.

But let’s consider the person of Balaam...a lesson in leadership, an application I am to consider as your pastor

How many pastors, Christian leaders

- Are self-willed, self-serving hirelings/religious professionals vs bondservants of the LORD and His people (murmuring etc but still blessed)?
- Have polished veneers of spirituality but are spiritually bankrupt with their social gospel or prosperity gospel?
- Are blinded by honor and wealth of the world...and lusting for more?
- Double-minded and unstable...unbeknownst to their people, struggling with God behind the scenes?
- Do not speak the whole truth because they covet the honor and wealth of their job?
- Influenced and deceived by the eastern religions of Babylon?
e.g. yoga
- Would wilt in the heat of a Chinese or North Korean prison, where being a pastor carries a high cost and not a high wage?
- But are still used by God?

The Word of God has something to say about and to those pastors and Christian leaders

[Rev 17:17](#)

about spiritual Babylon...then Rev 18:4

[Rev 2:12-16](#)

[Jude 11](#)

[Matt 7:21-27](#)

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Numbers Chapter 23

Last time...the person of Balaam

This time...the performance of Balaam

v1-2 seven altars...seven oxen and seven bulls:

Balak has called Balaam to come curse Israel

The LORD has allowed Balaam to go...but on a leash

Balak greeted Balaam and showed him the full extent of Israel

Now...it's time to get down to business

Round 1 in the battle of contrary wills

Balaam instructs Balak to build 7 altars and to offer a bull and a ram on each one.

Why?

- A common pagan spiritual practice originating in Babylon was to offer sacrifices before sorcery/divination – a sacrifice to a demon before inquiring of it
- A work of the flesh, an attempt to appease/please the God of Israel

Note: Put yourself among the children of Israel, unaware of Balak or Balaam, seeing 7 plumes of smoke on the horizon
“Who are those guys?”

v3 peradventure the LORD will come meet me:

“Stand by your sacrifice while I go away to seek the LORD.

Maybe He will say something to me, give me a revelation.

Maybe He will help us because of our sacrifices.

I'll let you know when I come back.”

How well does Balaam know the God he claims as his?

The LORD is not drawn to us by our sacrifices or anything we do.
The only thing we have that is of any interest to Him is our heart.

Ps 51:16-17

Is 1:2-4, 11, 16-20

The issue is the heart; how are the hearts of Balaam and Barak?

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v4-5 God met Balaam:

First of all, why did God meet with Balaam?

Balaam has a major heart problem – coveting the honor and wealth of the world

And, divination is expressly prohibited, intensely displeasing to the LORD

Lev 19:26b not use enchantments

Ex 22:18 suffer not a witch to live

So why does God meet with Balaam?

He is using Balaam to accomplish his sovereign purposes

Secondly, Who met with Balaam?

The Angel of the LORD, pre-incarnate Jesus Christ
(John 1:18...from our Reading Schedule)

Thirdly, what happened...how did the meeting go?

“Look what I did for You.

(Are you pleased with me?

Will You hear Balak’s request?”)

“(Did I ask you to do that?

Why would I be pleased with man’s sacrifice?)

Go say this to Balak.”

The sacrifices of man are completely ignored by the LORD,
of no value to Him.

v6 stood by his burnt sacrifice:

Balaam returns with the message from the LORD and there is Balak,

- obediently...to the tradition/philosophy of man (Balaam)
- standing by...depending on...his sacrifice
- with his band of witnesses

v7-10 he took up his parable:

The first of 7 times in Ch 23 and Ch 24 we will read this, indicating that Balaam is about to speak the Word given him by God

Parable:

- NOT “an earthly story with a heavenly message”
- revelation of truth to those who believe the Word of God but a hidden truth to those who do not believe

Let’s look at the Word God put in Balaam’s mouth

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- v7 brought me from Aram:
 Mesopotamia, Babylon, home of religions...
 sacrifices of man to appease a false god
- curse Jacob, defy Israel:
 to curse/defy is to be contrary to God's will (Ch 22:12b)
- both Jacob/flesh and Israel/spirit...
 a people transformed after being disabled
- v8 How shall I...God has not:
 Balaam finally speaks, Balak now hears, the whole truth
 (Ch 22:12b)
- It is impossible for man to
- undo what God has done
 - do what God says won't be done
 - thwart the plan/will of God
- v9 I see him (Israel):
 Where are the great ancient civilizations of 4000+ yrs ago?
 Yet we still see Israel...to this day
- the people shall dwell alone:
 shall: they **will** live, regardless of all opposition
- alone: holy, separate from all other nations, different than
 all other nations
 (now, cursed by all nations; soon, blessed by all nations...
 Mal 3:12)
- v10 Who can count the dust of Jacob:
Gen 13:14-16
- the fourth part:
 hold that thought
- Let me...let my:
 "Let me...a Gentile...be grafted into them!
 Let me cast my lot with them!"
- Balaam faithfully gives what is given him.
 His encounter with the Angel of the LORD in a narrow place...
 on his face...is still very fresh in his mind, Balaam obeys.

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- v11 What hast thou done unto me:
 “What!?
 What are you doing?!
 You betrayed me!
 This is not why I hired you!”
- v12 Must I not take heed to speak:
 “Whoa there, big fella!
 Remember yesterday...[Ch 22:38](#)?
 If you’ve got an issue with what I said, take it up with the LORD.”
- v13 to another place:
 Round 2 in the battle of wills
- Balak’s desperation and fear is only intensified after Round 1
 “Let’s try again in another place.
 Perhaps the LORD didn’t like this place.
 Let’s get a closer look at the outermost part vs the whole.”
- Obviously, Balak wants
- his will done
 - the LORD to “bless” his will (to curse Israel)
- v14 to the top of Pisgah:
 Balak takes Balaam to a place Israel had just been
 (Ch 21:20)
- There, Balaam instructs Balak to repeat the pre-divination ritual...
 man’s sacrifice
- (Again, imagine Israel wondering, “Who are those guys?”)
- v15 Stand here...while I meet:
 Again, “Stand here with...depend upon...your sacrifice.”
- But this time, no “perhaps God will meet me” as in Round 1 (v3)
 Balaam knows he will meet the LORD.
- v16 LORD met...put a word:
 Like Round 1, the LORD met Balaam and gave him a Word to give Balak

v17 What hath the LORD spoken:

Balaam returns to Balak to again find him obediently standing by...
depending on...his sacrifice.

Doing the same thing but hoping for a radically different result,
Balak quickly quizzes Balaam

What was his tone of voice?

- Eager anticipation?
- Mocking sarcasm?

Does he want to hear the truth of God's Word?

No, he wants to hear what he wants to hear...
he wants his ears tickled.

So many "Christians" are like Balak, wanting

- their will done
- the LORD to bless their plans
- their ears tickled

Many pastors are like Balaam

- double-minded
- divided heart
- religious professionals going thru the motions

v18-24 he took up his parable:

In Round 2, the revelation of God thru Balaam is awesome:

v18 hearken unto me:

Listen up, you two! (both have heart problems)

v19 God is not a man...cannot lie:

Titus 1:2

Heb 6:18 impossible

Rom 3:4 God be true, but every man a liar

God cannot repent

- do wickedly...sin against Himself
- then "think better" and change His mind
1 Sam 15:29 Samuel to Saul
Ps 110:4 priest after order of Mel
Heb 7:21 quoting Ps 110:4

God is immutable...unchangeable

(He can, however, be grieved...Gen 6:6-7)

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said...do...make it good:

God says what He means and means what He says
God is able to do what He says He will do

v20 I cannot reverse it:

And what He has said He will do is to bless Israel.
I am powerless to curse them.
Gen 12:3 will happen, my will and yours won't.

v21 not beheld iniquity of Jacob:

What?! They have done nothing wrong?!

Ps 103:8-14

True for another reason...but hold that thought

God is with him:

The LORD Himself is their King...their king is no mere
man, like you Balak
Your fight is against the LORD, not His people

shout of a king is among:

The trumpet of God their King is among them

v22 God brought them out of Egypt:

God their King humbled Pharaoh and delivered Israel...
(Are you strong enough to go up against Him?)

v23 no enchantment against Jacob:

Sorcery, magic, witchcraft, divination (demonic activity) is
futile against Jacob...because God is their King
My "skill" is powerless against Israel

hath God wrought:

We cannot oppose God and win.
God has worked and that is that.

v24 the people shall rise up:

Israel wins!
Their King wins!

v25 Neither curse...nor bless:

"Shut up, Balaam!

If you don't have something bad to say, don't say anything!"

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v26 Told not I thee:
“Excuse me?
I am performing according to the Ts & Cs I laid out when I got here.”

v27 unto another place:
Round 3

Irrationally, stubbornly self-willed, Balak still thinks a different place
would be more pleasing to God so that the LORD will bless his
plans

He categorically rejects the parables...
he hates the Word of God...
he does not believe so the revelation of the truth is hidden from
him...
because it is not what he wants to hear

Attention all Balaks:
Don't bother coming to this little church.
You will not get your ears tickled here.
The only thing we preach and teach here is the Word of God.

v28-30 unto the top of Peor:
A very significant place in the history of Israel...in a tragic way...
as we will see next week.

Seven altars...seven bullocks and seven rams:
Balaam for the 3rd time instructs Balak to perform the pre-divination ritual.
Man's sacrifices are not working...the place is irrelevant.
So why do it again?
Insanity

The LORD is not pleased with the sacrifices of man...unless it is

our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is*
our reasonable service.

And that we are not conformed to this world: but we are
transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what
is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Rom 12:1-2

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Numbers Chapter 24

v1 went not...to seek for enchantments:
 After Rounds 1 and 2, Balaam got it...
 he knew how this alluring, high-paying job was going down –
 the LORD was going to bless Israel. Period.
 he now knows that God means what He says and says what He
 means.

So...unlike Rounds 1 and 2, he does not even bother with the
sorcery/magic/witchcraft/divination...
which reveals his heart up to this point!

Balaam wanted what Balak wanted because he wanted Balak's
wealth and honor

Like a pastor who is a hireling doing what the Elder Board
and flock want in order to keep his job...
sheep leading the shepherd

And he stares out into the desert...
"What's the use?
It is futile to work my divination."

v2a saw Israel...according to their tribes:
 Then, defeated, Balaam looks up...and sees the camp of Israel.
 What does he see?

The Cross (Ch 2)...

- as did in Ch 22:41
- hence, the fourth part in Ch 23:10
- why Ch 23:21a
- God's sacrifice...pleasing, acceptable...
not man's sacrifice...displeasing, unacceptable
 - John 1:29 Lamb of God
 - John 3:14 healing (Num 21:9)
 - John 14:6 the only Way
 - 1 Cor 2:2 we preach
 - Rom 1:16-17 power of God unto salvation for
everyone that believes,
Jew and Gentile

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Balak lives to this day

- Obedient to the traditions and philosophies and religions of man
- Standing by...depending on...their sacrifices and rituals...
salvation by works
- Self-willed...wanting God to bless their plans/wills
- Loathing the Word of God, wanting their ears tickled...
to hear what makes them feel good
- By their unbelief, the revelation of God is hidden from them

Balak lives today in

- RCC...Thyatira
 - ritual/sacrifice of the Mass
 - salvation by works (sacrifices of man)
 - penance
 - "holy" days of obligation
 - Tradition of men as authoritative as Word of God
- Christian religions...Sardis
- Evangelical Church...Laodicea
- Islam
- Mormonism
- Hinduism
- Humanism
- Agnosticism
- Atheism
- Judaism

Balaam lives to this day

- Self-serving...
- Double-minded...
- Divided heart...
- Religious professionals and hirelings with agendas contrary to the LORD's

Israel ("governed by God") lives to this day

- Nationally (Ch 23:9)
- The promises of God given to Abraham are unconditional

Another body lives to this day...a mystery revealed 2000 yrs ago...the faithful Church

- Birthed on the Cross...blood and water from Jesus' side ala Eve from Adam's
- Those saved by grace thru faith in the Lamb of God, God's sacrifice
 - Jew and Gentile
 - Male and female
 - Bond and free
- Born of the Spirit, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led...empowered to Go

[Communion]

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Last time

- the performance of Balaam
- man's sacrifices vs God's sacrifice

This time

- prophecies of Balaam (Ch 24)
- the impact of Balaam (Ch 25)

v2b the spirit of God came upon him:

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth

(John 14:17, John 15:26, John 16:13)

came upon Balaam when he looked upon the Cross of the camp of Israel.

Balaam receives revelations of the truth...prophecies...

and is going to share them with Balak, king of the Moabites.

v3-4 took up his parable:

What is a parable? (2x in Ch 23, 5x in Ch 24)

Revelation of truth for those who believe the Word of God
but a hidden truth for those who do not believe

Balaam's first prophesy is about Israel

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Balaam describes himself as the man:

1. whose eyes are open
2. who has heard the Words of God
3. who saw a vision of the Almighty God
4. who had his eyes opened

Balaam says, "I was blind but now I see."

He has interacted with the Angel of the LORD, pre-incarnate

Jesus Christ...he has "seen and heard" Him

He was blinded by sin – pride, ambition, covetousness

Now, the Spirit of God has come upon him...

and he sees things he did not see before.

Balaam is like the man born blind in John 9

(our Reading Schedule),

who was given sight even though he had no faith in Jesus Christ...

didn't even know Who Jesus was but was given sight so the
work of God would be made evident

The man born blind in John 9 came to a saving faith in Jesus;
has Balaam?

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v5 goodly are thy tents:

Balaam looked up and saw Israel abiding according to the tribes...
he saw the Cross

How good is the Cross!

What happened on the Cross?

2 Cor 5:19 God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto
Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them

2 Cor 5:21 For he has made Him *to be* sin for us, who knew no
sin; that we might be made the righteousness of
God in Him.

Good News!

v6 the valleys:

The camp of Israel is as good as

- wide valleys: low places with fertile soil
- well watered gardens: producing much fruit in those valleys
- aloe trees: fragrant trees planted by the LORD in His garden
- well watered cedar trees: strong and mighty, dominant,
protective windbreakers (prince of the power of the air)

Balaam sees Israel's inheritance, their Promised Land...

"My land" (Ezk 38:16)

v7 the water...his seed...his king...his kingdom:

A. The Almighty, thru Israel, will pour out Living Water...
the Holy Spirit, Who will be sent to testify of the Son, Jesus...
upon the nations

Rev 17:1 whore sitting on many waters

Is 17:13a The nations shall rush like the rushing of
many waters...

B. The Almighty's King

- David, Israel's greatest king...will be greater than the king of the Amalekites (ala Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech of the Philistines)
- The Son of David..."My King" (Ps 2:6)...will be greater than the flesh (Amalek)

C. The Almighty's King's kingdom will be exalted and will never fall

Is 9:6-7 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and
his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The
mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of
Peace.
Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there*
shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon
his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with
judgment and with justice from henceforth even
forever.

Luke 1:31-33 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and
bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.
He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the
Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the
throne of his father David:
And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever;
and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Dan 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of
heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be
destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other
people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all
these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

v8-9a God brought him forth...eat up the nations:

The God of AI&J brought this multitude out of Egypt

- humiliating Pharaoh and all the gods of Egypt
- parting the Red Sea to deliver His people and to destroy Pharaoh's army
- providing water and food in the harsh wilderness for 40 years to plant them in His garden

The God of Israel is also their king...

easily destroying/consuming His other enemies as well.

Their King rules!

What god is like the God of Israel?!

Who would dare stand against Him?!

Who would be so foolish?!

Heb 10:31

Heb 12:29

v9b blesses...curses:

Gen 12:3 applies to his descendents

An unconditional promise of the God Who cannot

- lie
- repent/change His mind
- fail

Based on the faithfulness of God, not on the faithfulness of man, who continually

- lies
- changes his mind
- fails

And that promise stands today

The history of the nations is wrapped up in the history of Israel

- Babylon...conquered by
- Persia...conquered by
- Greece...conquered by
- Rome...until collapsed internally under weight of immorality

- Islam and the Crusades...defeated by the Church in W. Europe
- Spain...until Spanish Inquisition and defeat of Spanish Armada by British
- England and Christian missionaries..."sun never set" until betrayed Israel over Arabs
- USA and WWII, support for Israel...85% of money for world missions...dividing God's garden, removing God
- "revived Roman Empire"...

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v10-11 Balak's anger was kindled:

True to his nature that is opposed to the God of Israel, Balak reacts to
Balaam's prophesy about Israel with a violent rage.
He has heard enough from this "great man of divination."
And he is not applauding!

"Flee from me before I kill you!
Get out of my sight!
Imagine what I thought to give you and do for you...but too bad!
You can thank the LORD for losing this job and all the perks that would
have gone with it."

v12-13 Balaam said unto Balak:

"Why are you so upset?
You accepted my terms when I got here.
And even before I got here, I told your boys that all your money could
not buy/bribe the LORD.
I told you I would tell you what the LORD told me.
I have done just what I said I would.
If anyone has failed here it is you, for not listening."

In practice, Balaam was trying to influence/direct what the LORD said via
his divinations but was unsuccessful. (v1)
So he is now trying to justify himself before Balak.

Notice also in v13 Balaam repeats Ch 22:18...but he omits "my God"...
Is Balaam as righteous as he thinks himself to be?
Is he justified before God as he thinks he is before man?
Does he have saving faith in God...a personal relationship with the
LORD?
Is sin...pride/self-righteousness, ambition/self will, and
covetousness...still an issue in Balaam's heart?
Is he a servant of God or a servant of sin?

v14 I go unto my people:

"You can't fire me; I quit!
But before I go, let me tell you what Israel will do to your people in the
future."

The next prophesy of Balaam...still inspired by the Holy Spirit...
is about the King of Israel, the Jewish Messiah

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v15-16 took up his parable:

To the description of himself in v3-4 Balaam adds
“knew the knowledge of the most High”

Does knowledge of God and/or of the Word of God translate into
saving faith and a personal relationship?

1 Cor 8:1-3

James 2:19

Does any man know Scripture better than Satan?

But what is Satan’s problem?

Pride...puffed up

Saving faith: James 1:22-25

Being humbled/broken/crushed

Confession of sin...

Repentance...

Unconditional surrender, regardless of circumstance...

Losing your life/will and gaining His...

So what knowledge of the most High, the King of Israel, the Jewish
Messiah, was Balaam given?

v17-19 but not now...Star...Scepter:

The revelation of the Jewish Messiah

- yet future...the distant future (approx 1700 years and then another ?2000?): not an immediate concern of Balak
- the Morning Star:
Matt 2:1-2, Rev 22:16
- Scepter/King:
Gen 49:8-10, John 18:33-37, Rev 19:16
- smite and destroy:
2 Sam 8:1-2, 14; Rev 16:16-17, Rev 19:21
- at the end of the Day: Israel will stand, nations destroyed
- set up His kingdom and rule (with a rod of iron..Ps 2)

v20 looked on Amalek:

Balaam is on a roll...the prophesies keep coming.
Now about Israel's enemies

Amalek was the first nation to attack the nation of Israel

Ex 17:8-16

Amalek was a chief enemy of the nation of Israel

Deut 25:17-19, 1 Sam 15:1-3, Esther

Amalek is a type of the flesh; we must count it nailed to the Cross of Christ (Rom 6)...destroyed forever when all things made new

v21-22 Kenites:

The Kenites lived among the Amalekites.

They had a false sense of security because of where they lived and their fortifications.

But no stronghold or fort is strong enough to stand against the LORD.

The Kenites stood against the LORD...He sent the Assyrians as His instrument of judgment

v23-24 who shall live when God does this:

Balaam's final prophesy scans all the world empires that will be crushed by the Kingdom of God

God used Babylon as His instrument of judgment on Israel...

used the Persians (Asshur) to take it down (Dan 5)

He used Greece (Chittim per Gen 10) to take down the Persians (Dan 11)

He raised Rome next...and they severely afflicted Eber/Hebrews

Then He took down Rome...will raise it up again (Dan 9)...

and then Dan 2:44

v25 rose up and went:

With Israel duly blessed by the LORD, Balak and Balaam part company...
both of them seemingly empty-handed

But...

Numbers Chapter 25

v1-3 the people began to commit whoredom:

Up to this point, Israel was unaware of Balak and Balaam and their “business.”

They were the object of

- Balak’s desire to curse
- Balaam’s lust for wealth and honor
- The LORD’s blessing

but they were not active participants in any of this

Now the scene shifts to Israel, the very people of whom Ch 23:21 was spoken...and they are given over to adultery...

the worship (“did eat”) of Baal, the god of the Moabites via

- drunkenness
- sexual immorality
- human sacrifice, usually of the firstborn

How did this happen?!

Num 31:7, 15-16 women of Midian, in league with Moab
Balaam counseled Midian/Moab/Balak on how to get God Himself
to do what Balaam was unable to do...
as we shall see next week

But first, we must understand and learn from Balaam before he
“disappears” in Scripture

The Spirit of God fell upon Balaam and his eyes were opened...
was he saved?

Acts 26:16-18

Balaam’s eyes were opened...the truth was revealed to him
But did he surrender to it?
Did the truth change his heart?
Was he turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan
unto God to receive the forgiveness of sin by faith?

Balaam was not saved.

In spite of the revelation given him, he did not have a saving faith
He wanted what he wanted – wealth and honor of the world
Balaam did not want what God wanted –
a heart turned toward Him and
the forgiveness of sin by faith/trust in Him vs self
He had a veneer of spirituality and a corrupt heart

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But wait a minute...what about Ch 24:2b when the Spirit came upon him?

We must understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit

Before incarnation of the Word of God: Saul and David

- 1 Sam 10:6, 10 with 1 Sam 16:13-14
- Ps 51:11

Gospels and letters of Paul and the mystery of the Church

- Luke 11:9-13
- John 14:16-18, 26
- John 15:26
- John 16:7-14
- Luke 24:49
- Acts 1:4-8 (*para, en, epi*)
- Acts 2:1-4
- Eph 1:13-14

So...living before the incarnation of the Word of God, Balaam experienced the Spirit of God coming upon him with a revelation of God's truth...but not coming upon unto salvation (sealed)

His heart as corrupt after the Holy Spirit left him as it was before, Balaam gives wicked, subtle and seductive counsel that was obviously accepted and effective

Balaam was used by God to accomplish His sovereign purposes.

God used a donkey, can He not use Balaam?

Or me? Or you?

If I am unfaithful and disobey, He could use a donkey instead of me.

Balaam is a very odd character in the Bible, given to teach us... causing us to examine ourselves and our salvation

2 Cor 13:5

Salvation is not a matter of outward spirituality and open eyes but of a changed heart turned toward God for the forgiveness of sin

- crushed...humbled
- confession...agreement
- repentance/turning from...genuine change
- receiving by faith...not earning it

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Are your eyes blinded by sin?
Have your eyes been opened?
Have you heard, do you know the truth?

More importantly, are you saved?
Has the truth of the Word of God changed your heart?
Is that change obvious to those who love and know you?
Is your heart turned toward God?
Or is it turned inward or to the world?
Have you received by faith God's forgiveness of sin?
Are you both a hearer of the Word and a doer of the Word?

The forgiveness of sin by the Living Creator is our greatest need!
His forgiveness, by grace thru faith in His Son, is so sweet!

If you cannot honestly say you are saved from the wrath of God you so
richly deserve...
the only rational thing to do is to accept God's terms for peace:
Unconditional Surrender

If you are saved but feel "powerless" in the world, receive by faith the
baptism of the Holy Spirit

If you are forgiven and empowered, go tell someone who is not forgiven!
The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News!

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Last time:

- the prophecies of Balaam (incl. Amalek, son of Esau...Reading Schedule)
- the heart of Balaam who had his eyes opened

This time:

- The impact of Balaam
- The fairness of God

v1-5 the anger of the LORD was kindled:

v1-3a the counsel of Balaam (Ch 31:16)

v3b-5 the impact of Balaam upon Israel

the target of Balaam's counsel: "heads of the people"...leaders
as the leaders go, so will go the people

The LORD Who is jealous and Whose Name is Jealous (Ex 34:14) is
filled with holy wrath and moves immediately to clean house,
to destroy the corrupted leadership before the whole nation is
corrupted

Peor (Ch 23:28)...a tragic place in the history of Israel

Israel was to be the light to the Gentiles...to take the revelation of
the One True Living God to the nations.

They failed...given over to idolatry/spiritual adultery

They would fail repeatedly, choosing not to hear the call of God
to return to Him

Thus, another people, the Body of Christ/the Church

- both Jew and Gentile
- indwelt, sealed, and baptized by the Holy Spirit

is commissioned to

- be the salt of the earth
- be the light of the world
- let that Light so shine before men that they may see Jesus'
good works and glorify the Father in heaven
- go into the world and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- go and teach the nations to do all the things we have been
commanded to do

The purpose of our lives is total devotion to the One True Living God that
revealed Himself to us

God's purpose for our lives is to

1. Evangelize the lost unto salvation
2. Disciple the believer unto Christ-likeness
3. Multiply – send others out to other places to also do 1-2

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The impact of Balaam: the leaven of wealth and honor and pleasures of the world introduced into the people of God...infecting Balaam had a huge impact on Israel...has he had any impact on the Church?

Has Balaam's god used a similar strategy in his attack on the Church?

Rev 2:12-17

Rev 3:14-17

[Barna Group]

The history of the Church is as tragic as the history of Israel

Israel did not hear the call of God...
she heard only the call of her natural desires

The Church does not hear the call of God...
she hears only the call of her natural desires

Yet in Israel and in the Church...a faithful remnant on the narrow path that leads to life

v6 Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses:

A plague from their jealous God falls upon Israel.
Yet the spiritual adultery among the children of Israel continues to ferment.

In a particularly brazen and shameless act of defiance and disrespect, one man "brought home" a Midianite woman...in full view of

- Moses
- the God-fearing Jews, reduced to tears before the LORD's house because of the sin of their leaders and the resulting plague of God on His people

Note: From our Reading Schedule this week (Joseph, Gen 37)...
Midianites = sons of Abraham/Katurah that sold Joseph into slavery
Their descendents are doing the same thing to his brethren

The Midianites were with Ishmaelites
Isaac vs Ishmael still raging in Numbers...
to this very day
Son of Promise vs son of the flesh

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v7-9 Phinehas...took a javelin:

Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the High Priest could not tolerate this
“in your face” sexual sin against the LORD their God.

With uncompromising zealousness, Phinehas doesn't wait for the plague
of God to catch up to this man and woman...he catches them in the
very act of adultery and runs them thru with a javelin.

A very radical thing for the High Priest's son to do.
Was he in the flesh or in the Spirit?

Clue: As a result, the LORD stopped the plague that had consumed
24,000 guilty adulterers

The guilty were judged...[Deut 4:2-4](#)
Justice.
God is fair.

The God of mercy is the God of judgment...our choice

The zealousness of Phinehas speaks to us today:
Our God is jealous for us...He calls us closer
We respond with obedience and devotion or
with rebellion and defiance
The holy God of mercy is the God of judgment
He will “clean house”
It starts with our own lives, our own heart...
when our spirit catches our flesh in the very act of adultery

Note: A contradiction in 1 Cor 10:8...23,000?

Hanged	1,000	v4-5
Plague	23,000	“in one day”
Total	24,000	

v10-13 zealous for my sake...my jealousy:

Was Phinehas acting in the flesh or in the spirit?

The LORD tells Moses that Phinehas

- was zealous for My sake
- was zealous for his God
- atoned for the sin of the children of Israel

so that He consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy/fierce anger

zeal = heated jealousy, as in a husband's jealousy

Phinehas was zealous as Jesus was when He cleansed the Temple both at the beginning and at the end of His public ministry, when

- the zeal for the LORD's house consumed Him (Ps 69:9)
- zeal consumed Him because His enemies had forgotten His words (Ps 119:139)

the zeal **of** the LORD...of His Spirit, His nature

zealous **for** the LORD...He is the object of our zeal vs self/flesh (James 1:20)

The “zeal of the LORD in Phinehas” stopped

the “jealousy of the LORD”...the wrath of a husband betrayed... upon the people

The LORD honored His uncompromising, sold-out, on-fire servant with

- a covenant of peace
- an everlasting priesthood

Remember the “covenant of salt” (Num 18:19)

The everlasting, rightful priesthood was given to Eleazar thru Phinehas.

During the time of Eli (1 Sam), the High Priest, for unknown reasons, was switched to Ithamar, the other son of Aaron

The LORD re-established His choice during the reign of David (Zadok)

The LORD still honors His uncompromising, sold-out, on-fire servants

1 Cor 11:31

If we would judge ourselves...

zealous for the LORD...with the zeal of the LORD... with His nature...Spirit and Truth

We should not be judged...

with the jealousy of the LORD... for our nature...flesh and deception

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v14-15 Zimri...Cozbi:

As Phinehas is honored eternally in the pages of Scripture for his zeal for the LORD, Zimri and Cozbi are dishonored eternally for their “in your face” defiance and disrespect of the LORD

Remember the strategy of the Midianites and Moabites (Num 31:16)
Inspired by Balaam, to corrupt the national leadership of Israel,
toppling the entire nation (v4)

Cozbi: the daughter of a “national leader”, a strategic man implementing a thoughtful strategy, was sent by her father toward a target...

Zimri: the son of a tribal leader (Simeon)

The Midianites were not randomly firing rockets into Israel, they were aiming with precision at strategic targets

v16-18 Vex the Midianites:

The LORD declares war against the Midianites who seduced His people

Ch 31:1-8

God is fair...the judgment of God is fair

- the national leaders of Israel (via public hanging, v4-5)
- the guilty (via plague, Deut 4:2-3)
- Balaam (via sword, Num 31:8)
- Zur, father of Cozbi (Num 31:8)
- The Midianites (Num 31:1-8)

Notice: judgment starts at the house of God

Know John 5:22 For the Father judges no man, but has committed **all judgment** unto the Son:

As we finally leave Balaam, we can see

- Balaam – a servant of satan, had huge impact on Israel, Church
- Midianites and Moabites – worshipped satan (false gods)
- The snares and compromise that leads to apostasy that tripped Israel also trip churches and individual Christians
- satan is cunning and subtle...even uses Scripture to tempt our flesh vs nurture our spirit
- we must wage war against the enemies of God’s people

We need the zeal of the LORD...the zeal David had

Ps 139:19-22

2 Cor 10:3-5

Eph 6:10-18

2 Cor 4:3-4

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The same demons that attacked Israel are having a heyday in our nation

- Sexual immorality
 - Shameless, public, pervasive...Zimri/Cozbi multiplied
 - Homosexual marriage: nothing new under the sun
 - Midrash – Rabbinical commentary on the Torah

The following teaching can be found twice in the Midrash:

"The generation of the Flood was not wiped out until they wrote marriage documents for the union of a man to a male or to an animal."

- Rome...Nero...decline/ruin

“Same sex marriage” is not a new “enlightened” idea...(Tom Hanks: “un-American”)
it is an old, debased aberration that led to judgment

Will the results be any different this time?

- Shedding of innocent blood
 - Ps 106:38
 - 1 Kings 24:3-4
 - Rome: orgies produced children, which were tossed into the street to die
- Wickedness is established
 - Mal 3:14-16

The history of the nations wrapped up in history of Israel...

Israel prospered before it fell

Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome all prospered before they fell

In Greece and Rome, homosexuality and sexual immorality

(things morally bankrupt and things false...Prov 30:8a)
were “normal”

And all true today of USA...a nation standing on borrowed time

And the Church prospers...before it is vomited by Jesus

1 Cor 11:31 ***if*** we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged

When the Jesus judges the USA and Church, His judgment will be fair

We’ve got work to do until then!

Acts 1:8 radiating from our heart first

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Numbers Chapter 26

Last time...

- The impact of Balaam
- The jealousy of God, Who is the God of mercy and the God of judgment
 Lesson: We need to jealousy guard our relationship with Jesus as
 jealously as He is for us
- The fairness of God

This time...the fairness of God continues

- Inheritance
- Womanhood
- Moses

v1-4 after the plague...take the sum:

After

- the unbelievers who perished in the wilderness because they believed the evil report of 10 cowardly spies
 - the plague to cleanse His camp of adulterous filth
- the LORD commands Moses and the High Priest Eleazar to count how many soldiers in His armies (Ex 6-7 in Reading Schedule/RS)
ala Ch 1 by Moses and Aaron

Purpose for the counting: fair distribution of their inheritance

v5-11 Reuben: (Ex 6, RS, along with Simeon and Levi)

Several noteworthy observations

- down 2,770 from Ch 1
- Dishonorable Mentions: Dathan and Abiram, who sided with Korah in his rebellion against the LORD and Moses
- Levitical news: children of Korah did not die
 The guilty die by the hand of the LORD, the innocent do not.
 The LORD does not shed innocent blood...hates it
 (god of this world thrives on it...US Gov't)

v12-14 Simeon:

Down 37,100 from Ch 1...largest drop of all the tribes
Because of Ch 25:4-5, 14

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v15-18 Gad

Down 5,150

Have you noticed the “drumbeat” of the chapter?

“the family of”/“the families of”...51x in Ch 26

We have placed deep inside us by our Creator a sense of family...
the basic unit of His social order and growth

The Church is the family of God...Matt 12:47-50, John 1:12

This church is a family...one of many families in The Church

The Family of Calvary Chapel Ahwatukee

Not a physical age/seniority system thing, but a metaphor of the
collection of hearts, spiritual maturities, and callings
of God

- Leaders among the children: me and Monica
- Rest of the Children: all of you
 - Newborns...utterly dependent, need milk
 - Terrible twos...making their selfish voice heard
 - Formative years...growing, innocent, sweet

 - Teenagers...”something” happens!
 - Maturing, but not mature
 - Impatient
 - Self-centered
 - Can be rude and disrespectful
 - Rebel against the authority in their lives...thinking they know more than they do & what is best
 - Often do not listen very well...too inward-focused
 - Friends are more important than family

 - 20s/30s/40s...return to their senses
 - Settled down...Family builders
 - Fruitful...multiply
 - Help take care of the “younger” children
 - 50s/60s/70s...family treasures
 - Abounding fruit
 - Pillars of support, wisdom, and counsel

Families are messy...church families are messy

- Nurturing...and conflicts
- Energetic, productive activity...and illnesses and injuries
- Times of peace and quiet...and times of tension and disorder

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In a functioning household, every child has at least one chore
In this Family, every child has at least one gift from the Father

Health of the Family depends on:

- Worship...individual and corporate – in
 - Song...lifting our voices to the Father Who desires to hear His children sing...not lip syncing or silent because self-absorbed with the excuse “I can’t sing”
 - Prayer...Prayer Meetings on Sat should be as full as the services
 - The Word...communion around the Bread of Life
 - Giving...our gifts and offerings...
every child has at least one gift,
every working child receives wages,
which gets into...
- Trust...the Father in heaven and each other...
without which there are no relationships, no growth
- Commitment...to the LORD, to the Word, and to each other
Being consistent and involved...working together
- Grace...humility, having the mind of Christ
Result of grace: peace
- Unity...based on the Truth of the Word of God
Division/conflict is caused by pride and self-centeredness

As the leader, it is my responsibility to preach and teach the Word, and to lead with words and deeds...to teach others how to

- love
- live (Phil 3:7-11)
- trust...walk by faith
- grow (2 Peter 3:18)
- die...to self and to this world
- go (Matt 28:19-20, Acts 1:8)
- hear and follow Jesus

CCA as a Family begs some questions for you and me:

- Am I a good leader...following Jesus, fostering a healthy environment and effectively teaching you?
- What kind of a child are you (spiritual maturity)?
(Are you even part of this Family...or just visiting?)
- Are we both growing/maturing? (I have so much to learn)
If not, why not? Inconsistency? “Pew potato”?
- Is your walk healthy and nurturing...or sickly and in need of
“medical attention”?

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Do you view CCA as a Family...or as

- Child Care Center...a place to put the kids while you rest
- Social Club...a place to hang out with your friends
- Fitness Center..."join" and easily neglect
- Religious Visitor's Center...come to get your checkmark
- Welfare Office...a place to get but not to give

We are a Family and in this Family there are many different

- personalities
- perspectives
- personal issues in walks with Jesus
- lessons that need to be learned
(Absolutely me too! Monica too!)

As a Family, we sojourn in this strange land together...
with worship, trust, commitment, grace, and unity

Monica and I love you all equally...as we love our kids equally.
We desire the very best for you and work hard toward the end
We want for all of you: love, trust, live, die, grow, go...follow
Just as we want that for ourselves.
We have the same Father....this is all about Him.

The Bulletin is filled with "family reunions" for the purpose of
making and keeping the Family healthy and strong

God's Model for the Church is found in the Book of Acts
Much of Christianity has lost its bearings, its focus
In these times, we must be focused
On Wed, will study Book of Acts

Back to the families of the children of Israel...

v19-22 Judah: up 2,100

v23-25 Issachar: up 9,900

v26-27 Zebulun: up 3,100

v28 Joseph:
to whom belongs the double share of inheritance of the firstborn

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v29-34 Manasseh:

- The LORD's care for womanhood (v33, Ch 27:1-11)
- up 20,500...largest increase

v35-37 Ephraim: down 8,000
Joseph net up 12, 500

v38-41 Benjamin: up 10,200

v42-43 Dan: up 1,700

v44-47 Asher: up 11,900

v48-50 Naphtali: down 8,000

v51 the numbered of the children of Israel:
601,730...down 1,820 from the first census 40 years earlier

v52-53 the land shall be divided:
The only One who can divide the land is the Landowner.

Joel 3:2-3a

Since the Bush Sr. Administration, our nation has aggressively pursued the
dividing of the land of Israel

Who are the main operatives in the Obama Administration?

Those from previous Administrations, Clinton in particular

Is our policy toward Israel likely to change?

Is the judgment of God fair?

v54-56 the land shall be divided by lot according to the names:

The division of the land (Israel's inheritance) will be fair

- proportional: larger get large, smaller get small
- not preferential: by lot

Prov 16:33...by God Who is fair

Reading Schedule: Gen 49, Jacob prophesying over sons
Blessings upon Simeon, Levi, Zebulon, Asher refer
to inheritance in the land

No such thing as luck or coincidence

The Church also has an inheritance – the Kingdom of God

Believers will be rewarded for their investment in the kingdom...

“what they did with Jesus”...whether large or small (1 Cor 3)

- Souls/People investments: relationships, not possessions
- Financial investments: treasures on earth or in heaven
- Time investments: for self vs for the LORD (Mal 3:16)
- Prayer investments

Those things translate into a crown...

which we will cast at the LORD's feet

I love the LORD Who first loved me

I am not my own...am I purchased for His pleasure

I want to be pleasing to the LORD

I want to serve my LORD

I want to throw a very nice crown at His feet

Time is short...of the essence

Changes in investment strategies must be implemented: time and money

v57-62 Levites:

- up 1,000 from Ch 3:39
- Dishonorable Mentions: Nadab and Abihu

v63-65 they that were numbered:

Those who will fairly share in the inheritance of the Promised Land

603,548 men + women died in the wilderness because of their unbelief

Others died by the plague of the LORD for their adultery

They were replaced by the birth of 601,730 men + women

The next generation

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Numbers Chapter 27

v1-3 came the daughters of Zelophehad:
(ideas of names for you pregnant moms)

Problem: Sin Sans Sons...no inheritance for his daughters
Not fair

v4-5 Give unto us...Moses brought their cause:
Request: Be fair.

Moses does not give his opinion, he seeks the will of God Who is fair
and is leading all these families

v6-11 daughters of Zelophehad speak right:
“They are right. Do what is right.”

Order of inheritance

1. son
2. **daughter**
3. brother
4. uncle
5. closest family member

The LORD is concerned about womanhood...unlike the god of this world
who is

- at war against the Seed of the Woman
- the author of Islam, Mormonism and all other pagan religions
who view woman as an object to be used by man

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands are to live with the wives

- according to knowledge...essential to know her
- giving her honor...she is worthy of it
- being heirs together of the grace of life

v12-14 unto Moses...shalt be gathered unto thy people:

On the subject of inheritance in the land, the LORD now speaks to Moses

Moses is commanded to go up and look at the land upon which he will not set foot...because of his disobedience at Meribah, where he misrepresented God before His children by striking twice the rock in his anger rather than speaking to the rock in God's grace.
(Ch 20)

Moses and Aaron were told then that they would not lead the people into the Promised Land.

Aaron is already gone, Moses gets to see the land before he goes.

But go he must

James 3:1...for the head of the family...is fair

Luke 12:48...is fair

Moses must go...where?

“gathered to his people”:

physical death, separation of soul from body...

taken away to where his people are...

other believers in the Seed of the Woman...

in Paradise/Abraham's bosom

No one ascended into the presence of the Father until Jesus did –

Jesus is always first

When He did, He led the captives free and now...

2 Cor 5:6-8

A glorious Homecoming – the children coming to dwell
with the Father

Ps 116:15

Those who have gone before us, each in their own order (1 Cor 15)

are a great cloud of witnesses to us (Heb 12:1)...

are waiting for us. (my hope for my parents, Mom 3ys Fri)

Moses does not actually get gathered to his people until Deut 34.

In the meantime, he has some people to disciple.

v15-17 set a man over the congregation:

Moses responds...with humility to the Father of Life who has given every man breath

Moses' concern is

- Not for himself
He has no fear of death, he has faith in his God
Like Paul (Phil 1:21-24)
- for the people
In this time of war, they need
 - an *ish* (husband), not an *adam*...to love them like a husband loves his wife
 - a captain to lead them into war...and back safely again
 - a shepherd to care for, tend, feed, protect them

v18-21 Take thee Joshua:

The “charge”/watch of Moses was to bring the people out of Egypt
Ex 6:13, RS

The “charge”/watch of Joshua is to take the people into the Promised Land

Joshua

- in whom is God's Spirit
- whose name in Greek is Jesus
- a picture of Jesus
 - John 1:17
What the Law could not do, Grace can
Law cannot save, we are saved by grace
Law can lead you to within eyesight of God's kingdom but cannot lead you into it.
Law condemns, it does not save.
Grace saves.
 - Husband...Eph 5:32 (Church is Bride)
 - Captain...Heb 2:10
 - Good Shepherd...John 10:11

The calling of Joshua:

- LORD's
 - pleasure
 - timing
 - nature (grace)
- suited to Joshua
 - military leader
 - uncompromising devotion to the LORD

Moses is commanded to

- lay hands on Joshua...transfer authority
ala sin upon the sin sacrifice
- present Joshua to Eleazar (“God is helper”)...who will counsel
him in the Word of God...and to the families
- command/commission Joshua in the sight of the people
(Joshua 1?)

Which means, at this juncture, the leadership of Israel is

- Moses/Joshua
- Eleazar

A picture of

- Father/Son (John 10:30)
- Holy Spirit (“Comforter”, “helper”)
- The Baptism of Jesus Christ (Matt 4)

The Leadership model is servanthood – husband/captain/shepherd

John 13

Matt 20:26-28

And the families?

Are to be obedient/follow Joshua

John 5:23

v22-23 Moses did as the LORD commanded:

Moses is a faithful and obedient servant of the LORD...

a role model for the people

He obeys without reluctance or reservation

CCA is a Family...following Jesus

Do you want to grow? Be consistent and get involved

Do you want to become a part? Welcome!

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Numbers Chapter 28

After

- the numbering of the families for inheritance purposes
- transfer of authority to Joshua

we have a re-statement of the sacrificial system of worship the LORD has given to Israel.

Why?

The system of worship commanded under Moses is to be continued under Joshua

John 1:17, but “Grace” in no way invalidates/removes the holiness of the Law and its requirements

The Law must be kept for righteousness...by Jesus or by man

The Law does not vanish, it endures forever (Romans 6-7)

The appointed times of the sacrificial system of worship led by the priests

- Daily (Ch 28:1-8)
- Sabbath (Ch 28:9-10)
- New Moon/month (Ch 28:11-15)
- Spring Feasts
 - Passover (Ch 28:16)
 - Unleavened Bread (Ch 28:17-25)
 - Firstfruits (Ch 28:26-31)
- Fall feasts
 - Trumpets (Ch 29:1-6)
 - Day of Atonement (Ch 29:7-11)
 - Booths/Tabernacles (Ch 29:12-38)

For a detailed review of these feasts, I recommend the study on Ex 29, Lev 23

But at a high level...

- The Spring and the Fall feasts are rife with shadows of the Substance to come, Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, the Son of David, Seed of the Woman...in fact...
- They are the Appointment Calendar for their Messiah, Jesus Christ... His 1st and 2nd visitations
- These two chapters have specific quantities stated not found in other descriptions of the feast...except the millennial account in Ezekiel
- The 7th feast...Weeks/Pentecost between the visitations...fulfilled in Acts 2... not mentioned in these two chapters...is the time when the Church is the witness for Jesus Christ on earth

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v1-2 My offering...bread...sacrifices...in due season:

The command to Israel is to keep the LORD's system of worship...
to not be lax, forgetful, or nonchalant about:

- My offering: "gift"...*corban* (Mark 7:1-13)
- My bread/food
- My sacrifices made by fire: burnt offerings...
100% consecrated unto the LORD, no portion for man
- Due season: set times, "appointment"...
specific offerings/sacrifices at specific times

v3-8 a continual burnt offering:

The first appointed time of consecrated worship...daily/every day

Two lambs offered as a burnt offering every day...
one in the morning and one in the evening

Along with other elements of the worship:

- Grain (fine flour) mixed with olive oil...
in specific quantities/recipe – burnt
- Drink (wine) – poured out

Bread and wine...the elements of communion

As we will see, the daily burnt offering is the basis for the discussion in
Ch 28-29

As this applies to us Bible-believing Christians, every day is a day of
worship unto/communion with Jesus Christ our LORD

v9-10 on the Sabbath day:

The next appointed time of worship: the Sabbath...weekly

Another burnt offering/worship...

in addition to the daily, continual burnt offering/worship
100% consecration unto the LORD on the Sabbath...
in addition to 100% consecration unto the LORD every day

We worship our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ not just on Sunday...
but every day

Jew...last day of the week is a day of rest and communion

Church...first day of the week

The LORD Jesus Christ...the Alpha and Omega of the week

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v11-15 in the beginning of your months:

Gen 1:14-19

One of those seasons was the month...the Lunar Calendar

In addition to worship every day and on the Sabbath, Israel is commanded to worship the LORD at the beginning of every new month aka New Moon

The burnt offering/worship/consecration every New Moon was larger... and in addition to... the continual daily burnt offering and the Sabbath offering

And, a sin offering was also offered.
(transfer of sin, forgiveness...a fresh start)

Phases of the moon show us the phases of our walk in time with Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2) and the bright and Morning Star (Rev 22:16), having been given a fresh start by the forgiveness of our sin...

- New moon: dark, no reflection of sunlight on the earth, "moon has its back to the sun"
- Crescent moon: "thumbnail" of reflection slicing into the dark
- Half moon: half dark, half reflection
- Gibbous moon: "bulging" reflection overtaking the dark
- Full moon" 100% reflection, no darkness...a bright light
- "Backslide" to New moon...and the cycle repeats

The phases from New Moon to Full moon are a visual aid in the sky for us to examine our walk with Jesus

v16 the Passover of the LORD:

In addition to daily, weekly, and monthly worship/sacrifices,
annual sacrifices/offerings/worship – both Spring and Fall

The balance of Ch 28 is the Spring Feasts...Jesus' 1st visitation...
prophetically called the Former Rain
and Ch 29 is the Fall Feasts...Jesus' 2nd visitation
prophetically called the Latter Rain

The First of the Spring Feasts – the Passover
Much is said about it in Exodus and Leviticus but here, a one-liner

The Passover lamb was to be eaten by the children of Israel
(believed...John 6:29 ff)...
it was not a burnt offering unto the LORD (“My” in v2)

The basis for this worship discussion is the daily burnt offering,
a sweet savor unto the LORD...hence, a one-liner for Passover

v17-25 the feast: seven days:

The second and the big festival of worship in the Spring for Israel was the
Feast of Unleavened Bread

- on the heels of Passover
- 1st and 7th days were “holy days”...holidays
- every day was a much larger sacrifice/burnt offering than...
and in addition to...the daily continual burnt offering
- included a sin offering

v26-31 firstfruits:

The 3rd Spring Feast for Israel was Firstfruits (of the Harvest)

- holiday
- larger than the daily continual burnt offering...
and in addition to
- also included a sin offering

The LORD's burnt offerings...100% consecrated unto Him...worship:

- daily...plus
- weekly Sabbath...plus
- monthly New Moon...plus
- seasonal...spring and fall feasts

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Numbers Chapter 29

v1-6 a day of blowing the trumpets:

The first of the Fall Feasts...

Jesus' appointment calendar for his 2nd visitation...
is the Feast of Trumpets

Like the spring feasts, the burnt offering

- is larger than the daily burnt offering
- is in addition to the daily/weekly/monthly burnt offerings
- included a sin offering

v7-11 tenth day of the seventh month:

Although not called as such here, we know from other places in Scripture
that this is the Day of Atonement

- a holiday
- not a celebration...a day of mourning and fasting
- a burnt offering...larger than and in addition to the daily...
- with a sin offering

[v12-38] fifteenth day of the seventh month:

The largest feast of the year is the 3rd of the Fall Feasts –
Booths/Tabernacles...thanksgiving

An 8-day time of rejoicing...an outpouring of worship unto the LORD –
5x bulls and 2x rams and lambs the other feasts

v12-16 offer a burnt offering:

On the 1st day of the feast...13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs...

- plus a sin offering
- in addition to the daily, continual burnt offering

v17-19 second day: [do not read]

On the 2nd day...one less bull (12) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering

v20-22 third day: [do not read]

On the 3rd day...one less bull (11) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering

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- v23-25 fourth day: [do not read]
On the 4th day...one less bull (10) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering
- v26-28 fifth day: [do not read]
On the 5th day...one less bull (9) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering
- v29-31 sixth day: [do not read]
On the 6th day...one less bull (8) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering
- v32-34 seventh day: [do not read]
On the 7th day...one less bull (7) but all the rest is the same...
in addition to the daily burnt offering
- v35-38 eighth day:
On the 8th day...a “normal” feast day burnt offering...
in addition to the daily burnt offering
- v39-40 ye shall do...besides:
Ch 28-29...burnt offerings unto the LORD...100% consecrated worship...
 - daily...plus
 - weekly Sabbath...plus
 - monthly New Moon...plus
 - season Spring and Fall Feasts...plusother ways of worship
 - vows
 - freewill offerings
 - meat/food offerings
 - drink offerings
 - peace offerings

The cornerstone of all worship is the daily, continual burnt offering

What is Ch 28-29 saying to us?

What is the LORD commanding...what is the desire of His heart?

Our devotion and worship of Him...as expressed in the burnt offering

What is our burnt offering...the cornerstone of our worship of Jesus Christ?

Our daily lives

Rom 12:1-2

We worship our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ not just on Sunday...
but every day

Worship...is ALL about Jesus...

His LORDship of every aspect of our daily lives

Abiding in Him (John 15:1-5)

And bearing fruit (Gal 5:22-25)

to the glory of the Father (John 15:8)

Don't expect to get something when you devote yourself to Jesus...
expect to give something...to give everything

The spirit of antichrist is rising in our nation and throughout the world...
the governments of the world are anti-Christian...

including ours via the deception of "separation of Church and State"

Bible-believing Christians are the favored target of the world and the god of this world.

Why do we buy clothes and cars and...?

To use them.

Why did Jesus buy us with His own blood (Acts 20:28)?

To use us.

The times that lie before us will not be easy and we must be prepared.

Jesus wants to use us as His witnesses...to shine our lights in the darkness.

We must be prepared to make sacrifices in order to be His witnesses.

Now is the time for radical makeovers in our minds and lives...in our families, Family

[Bonnie "Questions" email 1/30/09]

The world is turning up the heat on Bible-believing, born-again Christians

Several weeks ago it was cold

Then it was warm

Then it got cold again

When "the heat was on", my front and back yards erupted with weeds

Will our hearts like my front yard and erupt with weeds when the heat is on?

When difficult, painful circumstances press in upon us, we must remain faithful in our
devotion to the LORD Jesus Christ...at the expense of all else.

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Every day...our lives are to be 100% consecrated, a

- daily, continual burnt offering unto the LORD...
completely poured out for Jesus
- with its grain/bread offering...
the Word of God, the Bread of Life...John 6
- with its drink offering...
the New Wine of the Holy Spirit, Living Water...John 7
- clinging to, dependent upon our sin offering...John 1:29

We worship the LORD by holding loosely all things in favor of clinging to Him

- our hearts: bitterness, unforgiveness, self-righteousness
- our things: houses, cars, jobs, creature comforts
- people: Matt 10:32-39
- our very lives

The expression of our devotion/worship

- is not dependent upon financial security or family stability...
pleasant circumstances
- is to be a daily constant, irrespective of circumstances...
even times of suffering

Suffering is not the worst thing in the world...
unfaithfulness to God and denying Jesus Christ are

God is marvelously at work in all of our circumstances...
pleasant and unpleasant...
for us and/or people around us

Will we be faithful to finish our course...will we endure to the end?

Israel did not

Mal 1:6-14...complacency brought on by prosperity...
before 400 years of silence

To be found faithful, we need to walk in the Spirit every day...

being doers of the Word of God by the power of the Spirit of God

Wed night study: Acts of the Apostles, God's intention for the Church
To be His witnesses...from a heart devoted to Him

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Let us be faithful to not let anything interfere with our devotion to Jesus

- fear of man, the devil, or the world
- the blessings He showers upon us...
and our usual spoiled brat ingratitude toward His blessings
- our service for Him (Matt 7:21-23)
- cares for the world and the deceit of material riches (Matt 13)
- the heat of trials, tribulations, and persecution

May we be careful of only one thing – our relationship with Jesus Christ

Worship Him...every day

Be in the Word of God...every day

If you don't love being in the Word...

how can you say you love Jesus, the Living Word?

Ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to be Jesus' witness...every day

1 Cor 2:2-5

Let us be like the only modern-day church that was not rebuked by Jesus

- Presented with an open door...
- To be kept from the holy wrath of God that falls on the world...
- Because they were devoted to Him
 - relied on His strength
 - kept His Word
 - did not deny His name
 - presented their bodies as a living sacrifice, not conformed to this world

A great cloud of witnesses has gone before us to encourage us to be faithful to run the race set before us...every day

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Numbers Chapter 30

Last time...continual, daily burnt offering, a sweet savor unto the LORD...

We are to diligently keep our daily devotion to the LORD

- our lives a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1-2)
- we are unto God a sweet savor (2 Cor 2:15...RS)

by

- daily revival in our personal relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- feeding our spirit with the Word of God (RS) and prayer/communion
- cultivating the soil of our heart to root out weeds and thorns
- exercising our faith to strengthen our walk, that it not atrophy

This time...being good to our word

v1-2 If a man vow a vow:

If a man...

- not a boy
- ish (also translated "husband") vs adam

"promises a promise" to the LORD or makes a binding verbal obligation, he must

- not break his word
- do all/everything..."fulfill to the letter" his spoken word

Mean what you say and say what you mean...just like God does

Our word is to be as good as God's Word

Deut 23:21-23

Ecc1 5:1-5

Matt 5:33-37

Very clearly, true in our relationship with the LORD...

but also with each other

In days long gone in our society, business was conducted with a man's word and a handshake.

Because a good man's word was good...a man was as good as his word.

Not any more.

You need a team of lawyers now to conduct business.

Greed and pride rule instead of integrity and honesty.

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e.g. professional athletes...role models and heroes

- demanding new and bigger contracts while in the midst of existing contracts..esp. after a good season and never after a bad season
- lying and cheating for money and fame

Integrity and Commitment...what does it mean these days?

“Binding” means little in a litigious society

The rest of the chapter deals with the vows and binding oaths made by women

v3-5 If a woman vow a vow...in her father’s house in her youth:

First case, a young single woman living at home in the care of her father and under his authority. (btw...turning 18 means nothing)

If her father hears her vow/promise to the LORD and keeps silent, he is expressing his agreement/approval and the woman is bound by her word

But...if her father hears her vows and for any reason disagrees... knows she will be unable to keep her vow and in not doing so, sin against the LORD...

he has the authority to countermand/revoke/cancel her word.

All her vows and oaths...her word...become null and void by his word.

And the LORD forgives/pardons her sin....

excuses/relieves her of her vow,
she is not bound by her word

The father knows best.

The father is responsible/accountable for her so he gets the last word.

The father’s will is done, not his daughter’s.

And all the fathers here say, “Amen ! Hallelujah!”

Do I hear some daughters grumbling?

v6-8 if she at all have a husband:

Second case, a married woman who makes a vow or an oath...
either a rational or a rash promise to the LORD.

If her husband hears her vow and keeps silent, he expresses his approval
and she is bound by her word....and her sin if she fails to keep her
word.

If her husband hears and disapproves for any reason, he can revoke her
promise and make her word null and void....
on the day he hears it, even if that day is the day she sins by
breaking her word

And the LORD forgives/pardons her....excuses/relieves her of her vow,
she is not bound by her word.

The woman is the weaker vessel, more rash, more emotional, and
more susceptible to deception.

In the relationship where the two become one, the husband is the
covering for the wife.

So the husband's will is done, not the wife's.

Do I hear some wives grumbling...because this flies in the face of
the feminist agenda?

Do I hear some husbands grumbling, either for the same reason or
because they do not want to be accountable?

Before anyone storms out of here...let's finish the chapter

v9-12 every vow of a widow...divorced:

Third case, a widow or a divorced woman.

If a widow or a divorced woman "promises a promise" to the LORD,
she is bound by her word.

She does not have the covering of a husband to protect her if her vow is
rash and she is not able to keep it.

However, if the vow/oath was made while she was still married or her
husband still alive, it is treated just like the vow of a
married woman.

If her husband heard it and kept silent, she is bound by her word...
even after his death or the divorce.

If her husband disagreed and disallowed her vow, she is not bound by it
now either.

The death of the husband does not change his word or
remove the covering for his wife.

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v13-14 husband may establish...make it void:

Bottom line, for a married woman...what her husband says goes.

“I agree” (by saying nothing): the woman is bound by her word.

“I disagree”: the woman is pardoned by the LORD, not bound by her word

The husband can confirm or nullify the word of his wife.

Do I hear some grumbling from the wives...

”I knew we should have slept in this morning!”

Do I hear some muttering from the husbands...

”Preach it, brother!”

Well, husbands, here’s the rest of the deal...

v15 he shall bear her iniquity:

The husband does not have the luxury of knowing and then sitting on his wife’s vows...

and nullifying them if he so chooses when he so chooses...

when she fails to keep her promise, for example.

(“I knew she wouldn’t be able to do it!”)

The time to decide and act is...the day when he hears it.

If you hesitate or forget or purposely delay, her sin of breaking her word... and God expects our word to be as good as His...is yours, not hers!

What was that you said, husbands? “That’s not fair!”

What was that you said, wives? “PTL!”

v16 the statutes, which the LORD commanded:

So what does all this mean to us today?

Why should we rejoice this is in the written Word of God?

1. We need to know the “power” of our word in the ears of God...
say what we mean and mean what we say...
make our word as good as God makes His
2. God has established His order to prevent chaos and confusion in the family...order is based on submission

Gen 2:24

1 Cor 11:3,8-9...11-12

Eph 5:22, 32

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3. As the children of God and the Bride of Christ, we have an awesome covering!

the father (v3-5) = God the Father

The Father knows best.

The Father gets the last word.

The Father's will is done, not his children's.

And all the children here say, "Amen ! Hallelujah!"

the husband (v6-15) = Jesus

the woman = the Church

We are the weaker vessel...

heirs together of the grace of life...but

rash, emotional, and susceptible to deception

Our Bridegroom has "veto power" over our binding obligations...

for His glory and our benefit

Luke 4:18

Jesus has the last Word and is able to make our rash vows null and void...to break the bonds of:

- Religion

John 8:32, 36

Matt 23:1-4

Mark 7:6-13

Gal 2:4

Gal 5:1

- The curse

Luke 13:10-17

- Sin

Mark 5:1-15

Num 15:30-31 with Rom 10:4

Eph 2:1-10

- Death

John 11:23-26, 39-44

Heb 2:14-15

Col 2:8-14

Rom 6:22-23

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Because He countermanded our rash, emotional, deceived, binding vows, we are forgiven/pardoned

When did Jesus do this for us?

Eph 1:3-7...

But after the exercise of our free will...

After the statute of limitations, as it were, in v15...

He bore our iniquity

Rom 5:8

Rom 7:24 – 8:4

2 Cor 3:17b

2 Cor 5:21

Luke 23:34

But wait...do you not believe in Jesus Christ?

Is Jesus not your covering, your Bridegroom?

Are you like the divorced woman?

You are bound by your word...and will not be forgiven.

Do you want to change that right now?

Is everybody calmed down now?

Can you see the wisdom of God's order?

Will you submit to it?

Is it so bad to be the wife, under the authority and covering of our Husband?

How good is the man Christ Jesus Who mediates between God the Father and us?

How good is His Word (v2)?

Mal 3:6

Heb 6:18

The Father does know best, doesn't He?

We want the Father's will be done, don't we?

Aren't you glad you didn't sleep in after all?

Can we all say,

- "Amen! Hallelujah!
- "Preach it, brother!"
- "PTL!"

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Numbers Chapter 31

Last time...

- Saying what we mean and meaning what we say
- Father knows best
- What the Husband says goes
- The covering of Jesus Christ

This time...

- The vengeance of the LORD on the Midianites
- The wrath of a Husband

v1-2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites:

The LORD has quite a word for Moses:

1. Exact revenge on the Midianites for My people
2. Then you will die.

Why is the LORD telling Moses to take vengeance upon the Midianites?

They led the children of Israel into idolatry in Ch 25...

they seduced Israel into vile spiritual adultery

24,000 Jews defiled themselves and died in the resulting plague

(Ch 25:9)

Note: Judgment begins at the house of the LORD

The LORD passionately says, “Vengeance is mine...and now that I have made things right with Israel (Ch 25-30), I want vengeance on this wicked people.”

So Moses must tend to this piece of unfinished business...

Then...and not until then...Moses will die on this side of the

Promised Land as he has already been told. (RS yesterday)

His “reunion” will happen only after his work is complete.

Not one moment sooner

We will all do what our Father has planned to do in, thru and with us...

Eph 2:10

Phil 2:12-13 (make cookies...Jay Dangers)

then our “reunion”

No business will be left unfinished...Phil 1:6 and Rom 8:28-29

When our work is done, then 1 John 3:2...

and not one moment sooner

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v3-4 Arm some of yourselves:

Knowing that this is his last assignment before dying, does Moses delay his obedience?

Not at all...he gets right to it.

He instructs each of the 12 tribes (Levi excluded) to arm 1,000 men to “take vengeance upon the Midianites for the LORD.”

The LORD said, “Take vengeance for the children of Israel.”...
Moses says, “Take vengeance for the LORD.”

It was the LORD Who was offended/wronged...
The Midianites sinned against the LORD

v5-6 there were delivered:

Moses, knowing he will die...depart in his own exodus...
upon the completion of this task, does not hesitate

Being “gathered unto your people” is a glorious thing for the
humble (Num 12:3) who will be exalted...
a horrific thing for the proud who will be abased

Moses does not lead and Joshua is not mentioned...
but Phinehas is sent to blow the silver trumpet (Ch 10:9)

12,000 soldiers of the 601,730 in Israel (Ch 26:51) are deployed to war

What might be said of these 12,000?

- Up against an entire nation, they are vastly outnumbered
- Methinks they were volunteers...selected for their...
- Bravery and zealously...
 - like-minded, “in one accord” with Phinehas
(Ch 25:7-8)
 - NOT lukewarm

v7 they slew all the males:

The 12,000 brave and zealous soldiers rocked the Midianites!

An overwhelming victory!

Not even a fair fight...the Midianites didn't have a chance.

Because the LORD, a man of war (Ex 15:3), fights for Israel.

In fact, the Word says they killed all the males (adult because of v17)

Thoughts on that:

1. Some must have escaped because Gideon is lifted up to fight the Midianites in Judges 6-7

2. This might be shocking and seem to many like "unloving" and cruel and a use of "excessive force" by God... but I am totally fine with it

- God is holy and just, the Righteous Judge of the whole earth...who are we in the peanut gallery to say anything?

- God is not mocked (Gal 6:7-8)

- God is merciful, gracious, longsuffering, kind, slow to anger...so the sin of the Midianites must be about full, like the Amorites (Gen 15:16)

- The Husband of Israel is furious!

Is 54:5

Prov 6:29-35

Prov 27:4

v8 they slew the kings...Balaam also:

The five "generals"/chief conspirators against His wife were violently killed

Noteworthy is Zur, father of Cozbi (Ch 25:15), who was run through by Phinehas

And...that mercenary prophet turned military advisor Balaam also dies violently at the hands of those he intended to destroy for money and fame

Test of wills: Balaam vs the LORD – Who won the battle?

Every man will be justly rewarded by the Judge of the whole earth

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v9-11 the children of Israel took...burnt...took:

The 12,000 zealous volunteer soldiers also leveled their cities and fortresses and took captive every breathing thing..

The spoils of war taken by them:

- women: “all” is in italics, meaning not in the original manuscript (due to Judges 6-7, some women also escaped)
- children
- herds of livestock
- flocks of sheep and goats
- anything of value

Question: Did the LORD in any way qualify His command in v2?
Did Moses in v3?

Answer: No. The commands mean all the Midianites...every life.

So why did the 12,000 soldiers take women and children as booty?

Chivalry before its time?

God is not a respecter of persons

Carnality getting the better of them?

God is the enemy of the flesh (Eph 2)

v12-13 brought the captives...unto Moses...without the camp:

Their war won, the soldiers return home with all the booty and plunder.

Moses and the High Priest and the national leaders meet them...
outside the camp.

Why outside the camp?

- The camp is holy and clean.
- The soldiers are now unclean
- The Midianite people and their things are unholy

v14-16 Moses was wroth:

And when Moses sees the spoils of war...the women in particular...
he blows a gasket!

He passionately...as passionately as the LORD in v2...rebukes the army commanders for sparing the lives of the women.

“The women are the ‘cutting edge’ of the seduction and sexual immorality, the reason for the plague that took the lives of 24,000 of your brothers!

These are the very instruments of the enemy seeking our destruction!

These are the WMD!

Why did you not destroy them?!

Why are you bringing them into our midst...where our holy God lives?”

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v17-18 Now therefore:

“So this is what you are going to do:

1. Obey...avenge the LORD of the Midianites...
exterminate the enemy so Israel will not again be attacked
and contaminated by them
 - kill every male child
 - a future soldier and destroyer of God’s people
 - kill every woman who has had sexual relations
 - defiled with idolatry and vile, sexual worship practices...perhaps even with a Jewish man
 - a great offense to the LORD and a lethal threat to His people
 - keep the young maidens/virgins for yourselves
 - preserving the chaste and the pure
 - kept as servants
 - “brought into the fold”...grafted in

v19-20 abide without...purify:

2. Purify
 - yourselves (per Ch 19:11-20...RS yesterday)
 - the remaining captives (young virgins)
 - the garments...yours, the captives, and the plunder
 - all things made of leather, goat hair, and wood

v21-24 Eleazar the priest:

The High Priest adds:

3. Purify
 - the “building materials” with fire and water of separation (Ch 19:7-9)
 - the “consumables” with water

Then you will be clean and can re-enter the camp.

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v25-27 divide the prey into two parts:

Once everything is clean and purified, the LORD commands that all the spoils of war be divided into halves:

1. the soldiers that volunteered...
“took the war upon them, who went out to battle”
2. the rest of the congregation of Israel...the 601,730 - 12,000 able-bodied men who were not selected or were unqualified, unprepared, fearful, weak, lukewarm...

Notice:

- Those who volunteered to face the risks, hardships, and dangers of war got a much bigger portion of the spoils of war than the ones who stayed behind
- Those that stayed behind...because not all were sent... shared in the spoils of war

1 Sam 30:1-2, 9-10, 18-25

The spoils go to both those who Go and those who Send them

v28-29 levy a tribute:

A two-tenths of 1% assessment on the soldiers' half would be a thank offering to the LORD...and given to Eleazar the High Priest

Note: Nothing for Moses?

He's leaving!

He came into this world naked and empty-handed....
and he will leave naked and empty-handed

v30-31 children of Israel's half:

The assessment laid on the other half of the booty given to the congregation of Israel is 2%...and given to the Levites

Everybody shares in the spoils of war

v32-35 And the booty...was:

808,000 animals and 32,000 chaste virgins

v36-41 And the half:

Something all you green eyeshade types appreciate and everyone should appreciate...the LORD is an excellent Bookkeeper!
(even a Book of Wars...Num 21:14)

No detail is too small, nothing is overlooked.
Every hair is counted, every tear is captured in a bottle...

v42-47 children of Israel's half:

And God is precise and absolutely fair

v48 the officers...came near unto Moses:

Notice the order...God is a God of order

Why is God so big on order?

- so there is not chaos and confusion, the author of which is the devil
- 2 Cor 10:8, 15
 - edification...not destruction
 - faith is increased...learn to trust the LORD
 - sphere of influence is enlarged...the work of the LORD spreads

Notice the officers of the LORD's army came to Moses freely, voluntarily

v49 there lacketh not one man:

In this war that nearly wiped out the Midianites, the 12,000 volunteer soldiers of the children of Israel in harm's way suffered...

no casualties, no MIA,
no losses by friendly fire, no accidents

A miracle! Evidence of the LORD's protection

v50 brought an oblation:

Why did they come to Moses?

To give the LORD a present, a free will offering of gold jewelry to express their gratitude for His hand of protection...
and as an atonement...perhaps for their behaviors and attitudes on the battlefield

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v51-53 shekels:

The aggregate of the 12,000 personal gifts was an offering of:

- 16,750 shekels
- 6736 – 7780 ounces of gold
- \$6.6 M - \$7.6 M (today's prices)

v54 brought it into the tabernacle...a memorial:

Their offering was acceptable to the LORD and it became a memorial

- of the LORD's hand of protection
- of the LORD's miraculous victory
- of the thankful hearts of zealous volunteers

Lessons in Ch 31

1. I AM a jealous God, My Name is Jealous (Ex 34:14)

Who are we?

[2 Cor 11:2](#)

Do not commit adultery...Flee fornication

[1 Cor 6:15-20](#)

[1 Thes 4:3](#)

[Eph 5:2-5](#)

[Col 3:5-14](#)

Flee idolatry...spiritual adultery

[1 Cor 10:6-8, 14](#)

[Gal 5:19-21](#)

Church is so judged (Rev 2)

Babylon is so judged (Rev 14, 17)

Nations deceived by Babylon are so judged (Rev 18, 19)

The LORD wants our total devotion...He will not share us with any false god

He will destroy the false god/counterfeit to have us all to Himself

He is destroying Mammon now...

taking away things of the world so we will depend on Him alone

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2. Jesus is sending us out to war

John 17:17-18

Rom 10:13-15

The enemy: spiritual

2 Cor 10:3-5

Eph 6:12

Battlefields:

- our minds
- the world...starting at home and moving outward
 - Acts 1:8...all are Sent
 - UP: some Go, others Send...
all share in the spoils of war

Serving As Senders... all play a vital role, all share the spoils

- Prayer
- Moral
- Communications
- Financial

3. War is rigorous, requiring discipline and focus

2 Tim 2:3-4

1 Peter 1:3-7

1 Peter 4:12-19

But...The Captain of our salvation

- always wins
- loses none! (John 10:27-30)

The LORD, a man of war (Ex 15:3), fights for Israel.
And the LORD fights for us.

Numbers Chapter 32

Last time...

- The vengeance of the LORD on the Midianites
- The wrath of a Husband

This time...

- A lesson in the accountability for sin
- A lesson in inheritance

v1-5 Reuben...Gad...multitude of cattle:

The tribes of Reuben and Gad come forward to Moses, Eleazar, and the national leaders with a proposal.

Reuben and Gad

- from the “south side” of the Tabernacle, with Simeon (Ch 2)
 - march before Kohathites, the LORD’s house movers (Ch 10)
 - are VERY blessed with more livestock than the other tribes
- have their eyes on the well-watered, rolling hills of pastureland in...
- conquered territory (Ch 21) called Bashan and Gilead, N/NE of Sea of Galilee on east side of Jordan River
 - from which the LORD has driven His enemies the Amorites and that must now be possessed as the LORD sees fit...
 - a place perfectly suited for cattle

Their proposal, submitted with humility and respect to the leaders of a nation that has done everything together for the past 40 years:

We are content right here...leave us here

- Give us this land as our inheritance
- Don’t take us over the Jordan River into Canaan

Not knowing anything else at the moment, their proposal has some logic and merit on the surface...

but what is the motive of their hearts?

- covetousness – desiring what they see vs “taking their chances” (trusting the LORD) with the casting of lots (Ch 26:52-56)
- cowardice – fear vs faith
- secession – division vs unity

Is there a hidden agenda at play deep in their hearts?

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v6-7 Moses said:

What lies ahead for Israel?

The conquest of the land promised to AI&J...war.
And as another famous general said, "War is hell."

Moses has an immediate reaction to the proposal.

"We are Family...we are one people, not a loose confederation for the sake of convenience.
Shall everybody else march into the risks, hardships, and dangers of war.. while you settle down here in peace and safety?
The LORD used all of us, all 12 tribes, to clear this land of His enemies... should you not in turn help the other 10 tribes in that land?
What kind of a message will your idea send to the entire Family?
The others will be disheartened, discouraged, hesitant to attack... their 'fire' would be dampened.
Accepting this proposal would be a stumblingblock for their faith.
We are in this thing together...we bear each other's burdens, we don't add to them."

We are ALL at war, also, are we not?

Matt 28:19-20

Acts 1:8

Matt 10:22 and John 15:18 with 1 John 3:3

Eph 6:12

2 Cor 10:3-5

We are a Family....we are in this thing together.

We must be "in one accord"...in unity of heart and mind (Jesus')

Be a source of encouragement to the others in this Family, not a source of discouragement

Eph 4:29

Gal 6:2

Heb 10:22-25

v8-9 Thus did your fathers:

"This is *déjà vu* all over again!

I don't want a repeat of the 10 cowardly, unbelieving spies who discouraged the people with their report of 'We are grasshoppers against giants' (Ch 13).

When the people heard that cowardly, faithless report, their hearts failed...they were defeated before we even got started."

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v10-13 the LORD's anger was kindled:

“And I don't want a repeat of the righteous anger of God poured out on this people (Ch 14).

The LORD vowed a vow...

He meant what He said and He said what He meant.

Your fathers did not 100% believe, trust, and obey the LORD... and that generation is spent, having died in this wilderness.

And the rest of us...

along with the sold-out faithful witnesses Caleb and Joshua... have had to wander in this wilderness until they all died.

You have lived through it, for heaven's sake!

Have you already forgotten recent history... do you not understand current events?”

v14-15 ye are risen up:

“Now, here you are...

the next generation, the children of those sinful men...

proposing to add fuel to the burning anger of our LORD, Who is a consuming fire and a refining fire.

If you do not wholly follow the LORD...like your fathers... it will be *déjà vu* all over again.

You cannot make the same mistake as those who lived before you and expect a different result.

If you do make the same mistake, Israel's blood will be on your hands.

(I cannot agree with your proposal.

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”)

Most people in the world today

- do not learn from history
- do not understand history...it's about Jesus and Israel
- do not understand current events

Because they

- do not believe the Word of God
- do not follow Jesus Christ of the Bible

And people, families, and nations repeat history

because they think they can do as others before them did... but get a different result.

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v16-19 they came near:

The spokesmen for Gad and Reuben (the sequence might be an indication of “authorship” or “driving force”) come closer...

- an indication of a close relationship
- so that what is going to be said next would be heard clearly...

“We will repair (vs build new...RS in Deut 3) places for our livestock and our “little lambs”...but we are NOT

- cowards:
All $43,730 + 40,500 = 84,230$ (Ch 26) will be among the 601,720 soldiers in the LORD’s army
- seceding...being divisive:
The Jordan separates the land but not our hearts.
We will not return to our inheritance until all the children of Israel are in their inheritance.
We will fight until the job is done and everybody is settled and at rest
- covetous:
We’re not working a scheme to get a double portion of land one on the east side of Jordan and one in the land of Canaan

Strangers on earth and citizens of heaven, we the LORD’s army must

- draw close to the Captain of our salvation
- commit our hearts to
 - follow Him
 - help each other

We must declare...in word and in deed...that we are NOT

- cowards...driven by fear vs faith and love
2 Tim 1:7-10
James 1:22
2 Cor 5:14
- seceding/divisive...not in one accord
Acts 1-2...Acts 2:46-48
Eph 4:1-6
John 15:5
Col 1:27
- covetous...idolatrous
Col 3:5

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v20-22 If ye will do:

Moses gives the children of Gad and Reuben and emphatic “playback” of their vow, thereby giving them an opportunity to

- reconsider their words
- change their minds

Ch 30:2 and Eccl 5:1-5

“Actions speak louder than words.

If

1. ALL of you will go armed...
no exceptions...not just some contingent of you...
2. to war...
not sugar-coating the task...
3. before the LORD...
to Whom you are accountable...
4. until He has driven His enemies out of the land of Canaan...
as He did in Bashan in v3...
requires faith and not works, obedience and not self-will...
5. and you do not return to this land until the land of Canaan has
been conquered...
will not be an overnight expedition but a long operation...
6. make good your word and thereby be guiltless before the
LORD Who knows the thoughts and the intents of your
hearts...

this land will be your inheritance, per your proposal.”

As we hear the LORD “playback” our vow to follow and fight,
He reminds us that He goes before us, clearing the way,
fighting the battles

Eph 6:10

v23 But if ye will not do so:

“But, take note...if you do not make good your word, if you lie or are not faithful to do as you promise...

- you will have sinned against the LORD
- your sin will be revealed...by the Revealer of Truth.

I cannot see your heart...but the all-seeing God does.

If you have a hidden agenda, you can fool me....

but the LORD is nobody's fool.

I will not be around to keep you accountable to your word...

I'll just leave that to the LORD.”

God hates lying and manipulating...He hates sin.

Prov 6:16-19

The sin we strive to keep private will be made public.

The sin we hide in the darkness will be revealed in the light.

The sin we whisper in the closet will be shouted from the
housetops.

The broken vow of purity...the unfaithfulness to your spouse...
the theft at work...every lie...every idle word...
will be found out.

This is absolute truth...a guarantee from the Maker of heaven and earth
Who holds our breath in His hands and Who loves us too much to
let us continue to live in sin.

We might run, but we cannot hide.

We cannot make the same mistakes as those who went before us
and expect a different result

Be resolved:

1. all my sin is against my God
2. my sin will find me out (there is no escape!)
3. I will do what I have said – to follow Jesus Christ every day
until this war is over

Heb 4:13

Heb 10:26-31

God is not mocked

We repeatedly tell our kids...they know by teaching and by experience:

God is the Revealer of Truth.

If you are in sin, you will be busted.

The LORD will reveal it to us...because He loves you.

Do they learn...or do they repeat history? What about us?

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v24 Build...and do:

“On those conditions will I accept your proposal.

If your hearts are pure...and your tongues are tied to your hearts...
repair the structures and then do every word you have spoken.”

v25-27 will do as:

The two tribes affirm their spoken word to Moses.

v28-30 Moses commanded Eleazar...Joshua...chief fathers:

Receiving “private” affirmation from the children of Gad and Reuben,
Moses announces the contract to the national leadership,
those who will have to monitor their performance of it...

with one very important clause/caveat

“If Gad and Reuben do not go to war with everyone else as they have
promised...

- Gilead will NOT be their inheritance.
- They will get an inheritance in the land of Canaan.”

Their unfaithfulness will not result in the forfeiture of their inheritance...
it may not be what they want, but they will have an inheritance.

Inheritance is a function of the faithfulness of the Father, not the child.

NT says the same thing...our salvation is a function of God’s faithfulness.

[1 Cor 3:11-15](#)

[Jude 24-25](#)

[John 10:27-30](#)

Eternal security

v31-32 so will we do:

Now, the children of Gad and Reuben make a public vow to make good
their word...to keep their end of the bargain...

that they are NOT

- cowards
- seceding
- covetous

Historically, how did they perform?

[Joshua 22:1-6](#)

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v33 and unto the half tribe of Manasseh:

So far, this has only involved the children of Gad and the children of Reuben.

Where did “the half tribe of Manasseh” come from?

- As a result of v39-41?
- “Inspired” by Gad and Reuben and got into the act?
- Moses felt they were needed to protect the “eastern front”?

v34-38 Gad built...Reuben built:

The list of cities repaired by the two tribes

v39-42 Machir...Jair...Nobah:

Wasting no time,

- Machir – son of Manasseh by an Aramite concubine
(1 Chron 7:14)
- Jair – Machir’s great grandson
(1 Chron 2:21-22)
- Nobah – no info

conquered Gilead...humbly naming conquered villages after themselves

Exhortations from Num 32

- v7: Be a source of encouragement to the others in this Family who are in this thing with us, not a source of discouragement
- v12: wholly follow the LORD...100% given over to, sold-out witness
- v17-19: In the war raging all around us, do not be
 - cowards...have faith vs fear
 - seceding/divisive...be in one accord
 - covetous...idolatrous
- v23: Our sin will find us out
 - we cannot make the same mistake as those who went before us and expect a different result
- v21: the LORD goes before us, clearing the way, fighting the battles
- v30: Our salvation rests on God’s faithfulness
 - Inheritance is a function of the faithfulness of the Father, not the child
 - Eternal security

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Numbers Chapter 33

Last time...

- Your sin will find you out
- Inheritance is a function of the Father's faithfulness, not the child's

This time...

- The journey of God's people
- God's land

v1-2 journeys by the commandment of the LORD:

At this point, Moses, as commanded by the LORD, chronicles the travel itinerary of the children of Israel, from when they left Egypt to current stop, at the southern border of the land of Canaan.

Why did the LORD tell Moses to record the Travel Log?

v3-4 departed from Rameses:

Recapping the exodus from Egypt...the start of the journey... when the LORD executed judgment on the false gods of Egypt, the 10th plague being the death of the firstborn... Israel "pulled up tent pegs" and followed the LORD out of their bondage to cruel taskmasters.

With a mighty victory at the hand of their God, Israel left exalted in the eyes of the Egyptians.

v5 pitched in Succoth:

From Rameses, Egypt marched to and camped at Succoth.

According to Heinrich Bunting in his work, *The Travels of the holy Patriarchs* (London, 1619), they marched 8 miles that day.

Note: I cannot substantiate the scholarship, but Bunting's work serves a purpose.

v6-8 Etham...Migdol...Marah:

From Succoth they marched 8 miles to Etham...
then 16 miles to Migdol...
then 40 miles

- thru the Red Sea – the “benchmark” of victories!
- to Marah (“bitter”) – a test of faith (no water to drink)

From this point forward, it is unknown is how long Israel stayed in each spot before they “pulled up tent pegs” and went to the next stop

v9-14 from Marah:

v9 8 miles
v10 6 miles
v11 16 miles
v12 12 miles
v13 12 miles
v14 8 miles...and another test of faith

v15-29 from Rephidim:

v15 8 miles
v16 8 miles
v17 8 miles
v18 8 miles

v19 6 miles
v20 6 miles
v21 6 miles
v22 6 miles
v23 6 miles

v24 4 miles
v25 4 miles
v26 4 miles
v27 4 miles
v28 4 miles

v29 8 miles

Impressions as we read the Travel Log?

- dreary, uneventful slow-going...drudgery
- difficult terrain to navigate
- one mountain/barrier after another

v30-37 from Hashmonah:

v30 32 miles

v31 24 miles

v32 20 miles

v33 24 miles

v34 20 miles

v35 28 miles

v36 48 miles

v37 48 miles

Impressions from this portion of the Travel Log?

- picking up steam
- easier terrain
- more efficient in journeying

v38-39 Aaron the priest:

Captain's Log: the death of Aaron the High Priest in the 40th year since the exodus

v40 king Arad:

Captain's Log: The word is out about the children of Israel... they're coming

v41-49 from mount Hor:

The journey resumes...from mount Hor:

v41 28 miles

v42 20 miles

v43 24 miles

v44 16 miles

v45 16 miles

v46 16 miles

v47 16 miles

v48 16 miles

v49 12 miles

Impressions from this portion of the Travel Log:

- steady going
- takes us to their current location

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The entire Travel Log:

- 42 stops
- 40 years
- 632 miles
- At 12 miles per day...a 53 day journey that took 40 years

v50-53 When...into the land of Canaan:

Back in real time, the LORD has some very clear instructions for Israel, His people and His chosen instrument of judgment upon the idolatrous (devil worshipping) Canaanites:

- drive all the inhabitants from the land
 - dispossess them...cast them out of the land I have given you to possess
 - How? Deut 20:16-18...take no prisoners
- destroy all their carved stone figures/idols
- destroy all their molten idols
- destroy all their high places...place of worship to their false gods

v54 divide the land:

And once the land is “cleared”, it was to be divided as earlier specified

v55-56 But if you will not drive out:

Before they even get started, the LORD warns the children of Israel to finish the job of clearing the land of the idolaters and idols, Because if they do not:

- the evil Canaanites will be thorns in their sides and never let them rest in their inheritance
- the Canaanite idols and vile worship practices will cause them to stumble in their walk with Him, even turn from Him
Deut 18:9-14
- the LORD will cleanse His land...of the Canaanites and them!
Deut 11:8-17
Ezk 36:1-7, 33-38 God still feels this way...today
Ezk 38:16

The boundaries of that land are given in Ch 34

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Numbers Chapter 34

v1-2 this is the land...the coasts:

The borders of the land of Canaan...also described in

- Joshua 13-19 (initial possession, when divided by lots)
- Ezk 47:13-20 (Millennial Reign)

And most Bibles have maps in the back to show these borders

The God of heaven and earth sets the boundaries of man – for a reason

Deut 32:8-9 national borders based on number of His people

(Israel is the most important nation on earth...
and how we can understand all of history)

Acts 17:22-27 by His sovereign choice so that all men would
seek Him

v3-5 south quarter:

Going counter-clockwise, beginning with the Southern Border:

From the southern end of the Dead Sea to about the middle of the Negev,
North to Wadi el Arish and on to the Med Sea

“river of Egypt”:

- Nile River: unlikely
 - would have to
 - go back to a place they’ve been told not to go
 - capture and hold land taken from Egypt;
the land given them is the land of Canaan
 - “to revolve” redirects away from Egypt
- “brook”: Wadi el Arish fits the description

v6 western border:
Med Sea

v7-9 north border:
From Tyre/Lebanon to Mount Hermon (headwaters of Jordan River)
north of the Sea of Galilee,
east to near Damascus

v10-12 east border:

From that point east of Damascus south about 50 miles
Then west to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee...meaning

- the strategic high ground (Golan Heights)
- ALL shores of the Sea of Galilee, the only source of fresh water...water is life

South down the Jordan River to the Dead Sea

v13-15 nine tribes and half...two tribes and half:

The land of Canaan...
the land the Creator of the universe cares for and
always has His eyes on...
is the inheritance of the 9½ tribes,
not the 2½ tribes who were given land east of the Jordan River,
per the agreement made in Ch 32 with the tribes of
Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh.

So why did the Holy Spirit give us Num 33 and 34?

I am thankful that He did!
And that He did so today.

In this dry, difficult read, the LORD reveals to us:

1. The journey of His chosen, peculiar people to their inheritance

This people...the nation of Israel...exists to this day –
miraculously by His Word and His hand of protection

- uniquely not assimilated – language, culture, “blood”
- Sabbath
- Passover

This place...now known as the land of Israel...exists to this day
Inheritance is a function of the Father’s faithfulness, not the child’s
(Ch 32:28-30)

2. His jealousy (Ex 34:14)

His jealousy for His people we have already seen time and again
He is also jealous for His land
Any people who attempt to divide His land and take it away from His
people must be insane (Joel 3:1-8)...
playing with a “consuming” fire, they will get burned (Prov 6:27)

Our nation is insane...and watching Israel helps us understand current
events in our nation

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3. Our journey to our inheritance

1 Cor 10:6, 11

Our journey of faith started when we fell at the foot of the Cross in unconditional surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ and were freed from the bondage of our cruel taskmasters – sin and death.

With a mighty victory at the hand of our God, we left the world exalted and began a long journey to our inheritance...the kingdom of God.

This journey is

- often dreary, uneventful, slow going drudgery
- promised to be difficult in the face of much resistance
 - afflictions – illnesses, disease
 - persecution (2 Tim 3:12)
- overcoming one barrier after another...endless barriers
 - trials and tribulation – tests of faith

As the USA unravels,
("Does America deserve a Christian burial?")
how many are facing work furloughs, layoffs,
unemployment?

These times, these things...are bumps in the road.
Difficult terrain...but not the end of the road.

The children of Israel made it thru...
as a family led by LORD
We will make it thru...
as a family following Jesus

- other times, easier terrain, not as difficult...
 - a time to be strengthened for the next difficult time
 - a time to help others
- a lifetime...a long, hard road...a lifetime of difficulties

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But

- 1 Cor 10:13
- Ps 23:1
- Heb 13:8
- 2 Cor 11:2 Zero tolerance for idolatry
- [2 Cor 4:17](#)
- [Rom 8:18](#)...our worst day on this journey is still better than life “in Egypt”...our old life in the world
- A steady walk of faith in “difficult terrain” testifies of our God and His faithfulness...
with our eyes on Jesus the drudgery and difficulties and dangers in this life cannot discourage us...
and unbelievers take note!
- [2 Cor 7:4](#)...we know the joy of the LORD because of tribulations...in the midst, not in spite of them...[Rom 8:37](#)
- [Rom 8:38-39](#)...our Good Shepherd

4. His nature...The God we follow as revealed in the journeys of His people – Israel and the Church

As we consider the Travel Log of Israel, many of the stops were...awful!

- The people
 - had no faith
 - whined and complained
 - mutinied against Moses and the LORD
- Moses was run ragged by them...the people gave him fits!
- The LORD was repeatedly angered by their murmuring and mutinies

Failure after failure...but not one failure is mentioned by the LORD!

All those things are “behind us” and the LORD speaks only of the immediate future

The LORD does not beat us with our failures in the past...satan does
The past is gone...the LORD points us to the immediate future
We need forgiveness more than we need finances.

Ps 103:8-14

Lam 3:22-25

John 8:11 Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.

1 John 1:9

Rom 8:1 “Who said that?”

Luke 9:57-62 undivided devotion...not like Lot’s wife

Phil 3:12-14

No matter how big the barrier seems...keep moving forward...
without complaining, wholly following Jesus.

Be holy...uncompromising with evil

No matter the slander you hear in your ear for past failures...
don’t listen and don’t look back

Leave here encouraged...

- walk one more day in your journey...
our Good Shepherd is leading us on our journey.
Love and serve Him with all your heart and soul.
- keep your eyes up...on Jesus, He’s on the horizon
- fix your eyes on the Prize!

We are in this thing together. (Come to the Prayer Meeting!)

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Last time...encouragement to persevere in our difficult journey together

This time...our refuge during the journey

v16-18 the names of the men that shall divide the land:

The only Divinely sanctioned division of the land of Canaan is to be conducted by 12 men

- the High Priest and the “king”
- 10 tribal representatives
- no representatives from Reuben or Gad

- no one named Bush, Clinton, Obama, Blair, Olmert, or Sharon...their division is not sanctioned

Numbers Chapter 35

v1-3 give unto the Levites...cities to dwell in:

After the land is divided, cities must be provided in which the Levites will live.

They have no land inheritance, where else are they going to live?

The 12 “land-owning” tribes were commanded to give the Levites cities and surrounding pasture land for

- their livestock
- family gardens
- places for their children to romp around
- exercise
- a place for husbands and wives to take a stroll

These cities are identified in Joshua 21

Where are the Levitical cities, where will the Levites live?

In the midst of all the people.

The presence of the LORD will be seen and heard by all the tribes because of these “Levitical islands”

In 1 Peter 2...Peter describes us, the Church, as

- a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (v5)
- a royal priesthood...that we show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (v9)

Where do we live...and why?

- in the world, but we are not of the world
(we have no land inheritance...this is not our home)...
sanctified/set apart by the Truth and sent into the world
(John 17:15-18)
- in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...
among whom ye shine as lights in the world (Phil 2:15)

v4 the suburbs...a thousand cubits:

From the city wall to the outer border in all directions, the pastureland would extend 1000 cubits.

Notice that the amount of land given to the Levites is not up to the “goodness in man’s heart” but is commanded by the God Who is always fair

1000 cubits...1500 feet...is roughly a ½ Sabbath’s day journey.

Therefore, a Round Trip to the “border” and back would be a nice Sabbath’s day journey

v5 from without the city...two thousand cubits:

The outer borders of the pasturelands in all directions would measure 2000 cubits...3000 feet

Combining v4 and v5

- city is 1000 square cubits
- pastureland extended outward 1000 cubits in all directions... even from the corners of the city
- outer borders were 2000 cubits
- result is an irregular octagon
(will show all aspiring City Planners my drawing)

v6-7 six cities for refuge:

The Levites will be given 48 cities...
6 of which will be “cities of refuge”...
further explained starting in v9

v8 many ye shall give many:

Per the command of the God Who is always fair, the land given to the Levites will not be evenly divided by the number of tribes (which would yield 4 cities per tribe)

because the inheritance of the tribes is based on their populations, not their absolute value as a son of Jacob (12)

Some tribes have larger inheritances because they have larger populations
So the land for the Levitical cities will be given according to population
e.g. Judah will give more cities than Simeon because over 3x more people (Ch 26)

Now, a detailed explanation of cities appointed to be Cities of Refuge

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v9-15 cities of refuge:

The cities of refuge are

- places of “asylum”
- 6 cities...3 on either side of the Jordan River
 - 3 on this/east side picked by Moses in Deut 4:41-43
 - 3 on west side in land of Canaan in Joshua 20
- where a person may hastily flee if they accidentally kill a person
- protection for the innocent...innocent until proven guilty... justice vs mob rule
- safe places from the near kinsman of the dead while the facts are sorted out for
 - Jew
 - Gentile
 - “citizen”
 - “visitor”

v16-18 he is a murderer:

If the facts declare that the person died at the hands of the refugee who used

- an iron instrument...ax, hammer, knife, farm implement
- a stone
- a wooden instrument...shepherd's staff, club

the refugee is a murderer and capital punishment will be enforced (Gen 9:6)

Capital punishment: a Divine directive and a deterrent

v19 the revenger of blood:

And the one to execute capital punishment will be the near kinsman of the person murdered.

That near kinsman is obliged and empowered to be God's instrument of justice

Now, we get into “motive”

v20-21 he is a murderer:

Or if the person died by a malicious, premeditated act by the refugee

- pushed/shoved...off a cliff or a housetop
- ambushed
- beaten to death

the refugee is a murderer and he will get justice at the hands of the near kinsman of his victim

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v22-25 without enmity:

On the other hand, if the person was killed by accident...

the manslayer having no malicious, hostile motive or act

- playfully or accidentally pushed
- horsing around by throwing stones, not knowing anyone was over there

then the court shall protect the innocent refugee from an enraged near kinsman.

As promised by the LORD

Ex 21:12-14

Safely in a city of refuge, the refugee will stay until the high priest dies

- anointed with oil...Holy Spirit of God
- the Only Mediator on the Day of Atonement

When the High Priest died, the innocent refugee was free to return home.

And now, if the revenger of blood kills him, he is the murderer and he shall be killed.

v26-28 But...come without...should have remained:

The innocent refugee is safe in the city of refuge...

as long as he stays within its borders (city + pastureland)

If he wanders or purposefully leaves the city of refuge before the death of the High Priest, he is "fair game" for the near kinsman of the deceased.

The near kinsman will not be guilty of murder in such a circumstance

Clear message to the innocent refugee:

- Stay put...stay in the city of refuge!
- No doubt you want to go home to your wife and children or to your parents...but wait until the word of God "frees" you.
- Do not be cavalier with the mercy of God

Clear message to all:

- There are consequences to be borne (separation)
- Be considerate of others before self...think, look!

v29-32 one witness...no satisfaction:

The God Who is pure and always fair commands purity of justice.

- Capital Punishment is not based on one man's word against another (Deut 17:6, Deut 19:15)
- a murderer cannot buy a judgment of "Innocent" with a bribe
- the innocent refugee cannot buy his freedom before the death of the High Priest

v33-34 shall not pollute the land:

The LORD is very serious about Gen 9:6

Murder defiles the land...His land

Only His justice...the shedding of the blood of the murderer...
will cleanse the land

What is this Cities of Refuge thing all about?

John 5:39

Heb 10:7

Murder...the shedding of man's blood (life is in the blood)...defiles the land

When was the 1st murder?

Gen 3...Satan of Adam and Eve

A double murder...spiritual life was taken

John 8:44

What was God's response?

To promise a revenger of blood, a near kinsman...the Seed of the Woman

John 1:1, 14 God became a "survivor of the dead" since all were dead

John 3:16 Jew and Gentile, citizen and visitor

Matt 5:17 came to fulfill the Law

Matt 5:21-24 SoM dealt with spirit of the Law...motive vs action only

Jesus is the Revenger of our blood..."redeemer", God's instrument of justice

Job 19:25 For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

Is 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.

Is 54:5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

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And Jesus Christ bore God's justice

2 Cor 5:21 became a murderer...

John 19:30 His blood shed to cleanse the land

And He is our High Priest...

the death of which set the refugees free and restored Family relationships

Heb 2:14-17

Heb 9:11-28

1 Tim 2:5

1 Cor 2:6-10

Eph 2:8-9...and God's grace is just!

John 8:32, 36 freed by the death of our High Priest

Jesus is our City of Refuge (do own word study of "refuge")

Deut 33:27 The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee;

2 Sam 22:3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior;

Ps 9:9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

Ps 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble

Is 25:4 For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.

Heb 6:17-20

The physical layout of City of Refuge was an octagon...8-sided

8 = new beginning

2 Cor 5:17

The clear message to us who have been declared "Innocent", our personal responsibility:

"Abide in" Jesus Christ, our City of Refuge

Remain "in" Christ Jesus until the day of redemption...

If we wander, the murderer is always seeking to kill and destroy...

Our righteousness, worthiness is "in" Jesus Christ

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Going back to Matt 5:21-24...we as a fellowship, a family MUST do if our offering unto the LORD in Egypt will be pleasing

Assignment for everyone now...restoring Family relationships, requiring

- humility
- repentance
- forgiveness

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Numbers Chapter 36

A point of clarification for Ch 27

v1-4 inheritance of Zelophehad...daughters:

“What if the daughters of Zelophehad marry someone from another tribe?
Our tribe will lose some of our inheritance to another tribe.”

Repeated, reflecting some anxiety.

v5-9 according to the word of the LORD...said well:

Moses consulted the LORD, Who is always fair.

“These men raise a very good point.

So here is how the LORD has removed the hypothetical problem:

The daughters of Zelophehad can marry

- anyone they chose...
- as long as that anyone is from the tribe of their father.

And this precedent will apply for all such future situations as well.

The inheritance will be preserved.”

v10-12 so did:

The daughters of Zelophehad did as commanded by the LORD and the inheritance problem was averted.

v13 These are the commandments:

And so ends the Book of Numbers...a vivid reflection of our walk with
Jesus Christ here on earth.

This Book is sure a blessing to me!

“Final word” for our wilderness wandering:

Abide in our City of Refuge...Jesus Christ

Pastor Doug Warwick
Calvary Chapel Ahwatukee