

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Numbers 1:1-16 - God's people are at war. For Israel under the Old Covenant, it was important to have duly appointed leaders to work with their appointed head. The same is true under the New Covenant. We are in a spiritual war with Satan and his hosts (Eph. 6:10-12). Their appointed head was Moses while the Lord Jesus Christ is our appointed head (Heb. 3:5-6; Eph. 1:22-23). These men served as under-shepherds for Moses while pastors/overseers/elders (same office) serve as under-shepherds for Christ the chief-shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1-4). It is important that such leaders be duly appointed (Titus 1:5). In the situation in Num. 1:1-16, there was a need to count the men 20 and older who were able to go to war. There have been Christians who state that it is not spiritual to count numbers. However, there is clear evidence that the early church did so in Acts 2:41 and 4:4. Counting was a necessary step in preparing the people for warfare. In the same way, leaders in the church are to equip or prepare believers for service which includes service as a soldier of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:3). Organization was part of the nation of Israel, and it is to be part of the church. God wants everything to be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40).

Numbers 1:17-47 - It is interesting to note how God multiplied His people, Israel. There were 70 who went down to Egypt and now totaled 603,550. God had promised that his people who would be as numerous as the dust of the earth (Gen. 13:16), the sand on the seashore (Gen. 22:17) and the stars in the sky (Gen. 15:5). God certainly kept his promises. As a result, Abraham by faith in God and His promises was counted righteous by God and therefore saved (Gen. 15:6). As we look back over the various crises that were faced by Abraham's lineage through Isaac and Jacob, we see God working to fulfill His promises, even though it was very difficult for them to see them being fulfilled. Likewise, we face times in our lives when it is difficult to see God at work. We want God to be working in a more obvious way where we can kind of keep an eye on Him. However, God wanted them and He wants us to live by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith is not some kind of leap in the dark but a response to God's word (Rom. 10:17) in which it is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18). The phrase, "who were able to go out to war" was repeated over and over. How many of us are prepared with the armor of God for spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18)? Finally, we see that participating in God's plan was not considered voluntary, but obligatory. To many of us as believers have come to see our service to the Lord Jesus as optional rather than a responsibility that God has given us. We must remember that God's commands are for our benefit (Deut. 10:13). When we fail

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to love God as we should, it shows by failing to obey His commands (1 John 5:2-3). His commands are not burdensome but in doing them, there is great blessing (Luke 11:28). Do take note of the last verse that the Levites were not included in this number. This fact will answer a question that will come up somewhat later in our studies.

Numbers 1:47-54 - With God's people worship is just as important as warfare. We cannot effectively war against Satan unless we are submitted to God (James 4:7). Psalm 149:7 states that believers are to praise God with their mouth and to war with a two-edged sword against the enemies of God's people (Ps. 149:6). We see this concept set forth in 2 Chr. 20:18-22 when Judah routed a union of their enemies. The Levites were in charge of the tabernacle. The purpose of the tabernacle was to provide a way for God to meet with His people (Ex. 29:42-43). John 1:14 states that the word was made flesh and dwelt (Literally "tabernacled") among us. John 14:6 tells us that God can only be approached through Christ (John 14:6). As the priestly tribe, they carried the tabernacle. As believer-priests we bear the one who tabernacled among us to a lost and dying world (Mark 16:15). They were also to take care of it. As we care for one another, we care for Christ (Mt. 25:37-40). They were to camp around the tabernacle to be close to it. In the same way, we are to be close to Christ by abiding in Him (John 15:3). The Levites as the priestly tribe were to guard the tabernacle. As believer-priests, we are to guard Christ from those who would in some way distort Him and make Him out to be a Jesus of a different kind (2 Cor. 11:3-4). We do this to spare people from the just and holy wrath of a God whose wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people (Rom. 1:18) and who is angry with the wicked every day (Ps. 7:11). We see that at this point the people including the priestly tribe were doing everything that God commanded. As believers, an integral part of discipling people who have come to Christ is to teach them to obey everything that Christ commanded (Mt. 28:20, i.e. the New Testament) just as the people were obeying everything that God had commanded of Moses.

Numbers 2:1-34 - It is very helpful for those of us to look at the camp of God's people Israel and see some valuable lessons for the life of the church and our own lives. The tabernacle was at the center of the camp. In the same way, Jesus Christ who is pictured by the tabernacle is at the center of the church and the life of each individual believer. Imagine the problems that would have occurred if

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this order had been abandoned or distorted. The same hold true with the church. Since God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33) but a God of order (1 Cor. 14:40), we expect to see some kind of order among God's people. According to 1 Cor. 12:11-18, we are part of Christ's spiritual body and have assigned a specific place in that body. When believers are not functioning in their proper place, this often tempts other believers to try to move out of their place to take up the slack. This camp in its march to the promised land also pictured us as a foreigners and aliens without an earthly home (1 Pet. 2:11). Just like the church is united to God through Christ, the people of Israel were united to the Lord through Moses (1 Cor. 6:17 cp. 10:2). They marched at the Lord's command led by the pillar of fire by night which was a pillar of cloud by day (Exodus 13:21-22) while the church marches at the Lord's command through the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14).

Numbers 3:1-4- The priesthood is described as Aaron and his four sons. Under the New Covenant, we who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation serve as priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) under our high priest Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:17). God's word states that these priests were anointed for their service. We as believer-priests are anointed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 John 2:27). This simply refers to the Holy Spirit setting us apart at the time of salvation for our priestly service for Christ. We also noted that these sons of Aaron were appointed as priests. The Lord Jesus Christ appointed us to bear spiritual fruit. Being a priest is a solemn responsibility as we are messengers of the Lord (Mal. 2:7). We are not to serve God any old way just because we think that it is neat (Col. 2:23). As a result of trying to approach God their own way, Nadab and Abihu committed the sin unto physical death (1 John 5:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:30-32) in experiencing God's most drastic discipline for their irreverence. We see in verse 4 that being a priest involved being a servant. In the same way, we are servants of Christ under the New Covenant (Mt. 20:25-28; Gal. 1:10). This emphasizes that we are here to do what He wants rather than Christ being there to do what we want.

Numbers 3:5-13 - The Levites were brought near to be servants of their high priest Aaron. In the same way, we believers under the New Covenant have been brought near to God by the blood of our high priest Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:13). The purpose of our being brought near is so that we can be servants of Christ. This implies that we are under Christ to do His will and fulfill His purposes. Christ is not there to fulfill our purposes. The same was true with the Levites in their

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service to Aaron. The Levites were to do the work for the tabernacle. As we have noted before, the tabernacle is a picture of Jesus Christ who dwelt (literally, “tabernacled”- John 1:14) among us. We are created in Christ Jesus for good works planned out in advance by God (Eph. 2:10). Notice that the Levites were to serve not only their high priest Aaron but their fellow Israelites, God’s people. In the same way, we as believers are to serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13). The equipment of the tabernacle spoke of various aspects of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Aaron and His sons were to carry out the duties of the priesthood. Anyone who tried to usurp their position and authority was to be separated from God’s people by being put to death. In the same way, under the New Covenant, anyone professing to be a believer who tries to usurp the position and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, our high priest, is to be separated from the people of God by excommunication through the church discipline and restoration process (Mt. 18:15-17; Tit. 3:10-11). God emphasized His ownership over the Levites who were substituted for His ownership over the firstborn of the men of Israel. We as believers under the New Covenant are under new ownership. We are not our own because we have been bought with the price of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20 cp. 1 Pet. 1:18-19). For this reason, we are to use our bodies to glorify or spotlight God before one another and before all people (Mt. 5:16).

Numbers 3:14-26 - The purpose of this registration and census was to get a total of the number of Levites to substitute for all the firstborn males of Israel. For this reason, this included all males 1 month old or older. The sub-group of Gershon had 7500 males, 1 month or older. Their place in the camp was on the west behind the tabernacle. We carefully note that they had a God-appointed place in relation to the tabernacle (1 Cor. 12:4, 11-18) just as we have a God-appointed place in the body of Christ. They had a definite ministry or responsibility just as those of us who comprise the church (1 Cor. 12:5). Their ministry was to transport and care for the inner and covers of the tabernacle, the curtain for the entrance, the curtains for the court which is around the tent and the altar and the curtain for the entrance of the court. Their ministry focused on particular parts of the tabernacle which speak of various aspects of the person and work of Christ. The outer cover of the tabernacle was made of porpoise skins which were not attractive reminding us that our savior was despised and rejected of men and had no outward attractiveness (Isa. 53:1-3). The inner cover made of ram’s skins dyed red reminds us of His bloodshed death for our redemption and forgiveness

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(Eph. 1:7). The curtains were made of fine linen which pictures the perfect righteousness of Christ (Rev. 19:8 cp. 1 Pet. 2:22; 3:18). The curtains were made of the following colors: blue (reminding us of Christ's heavenly origin - John 6:38), purple (reminding us that Christ is the promised king - Mt. 25:31-34), scarlet (reminding us of Christ's shed blood without which there could be no forgiveness - Heb. 9:22). Finally, we see the words, "the entrance" reminding us that it was not an entrance - one of many - but the entrance. This reminds us that Christ is the only way to God (John 14:6). Each of these pictures of Christ were the responsibility of this clan of Levites. It reminds us that an important part of our ministry is to make Christ known in all His glory. God has given us this ministry and we are to fulfill it (Col. 4:17).

Numbers 3:27-32 - We see that this clan was assigned its place in the camp reminding us that God, the Holy Spirit has assigned us our place in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:11). Each item that they were responsible for reminds us of the Lord Jesus Christ who dwelt (=tabernacled - John 1:14) among us. The lid of the ark was the mercy seat reminding us that Jesus Christ is presently seated on a throne of grace to which we can come to find grace and mercy to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16). The ark contained the tables of the law (Heb. 9:4) reminding us of the fact that God's law was in the heart of Christ (Psalm 40:8). The ark also contained the pot of manna (Heb. 9:4) which speaks of Christ the true bread from heaven sent by the Father (John 6:31-33). Later on the ark contained Aaron's rod that budded (Heb. 9:4 cp. Num. 17:6-10) which reminds us of Jesus Christ our risen high priest who ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:23-25). The lamp stand reminds us that Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12), the true light that illumines every man that comes into the world (John 1:9). The altar of incense focuses on prayers (Rev. 5:8) and specifically on the fact that it reminds us that Christ intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father (Rom. 8:34). The altar of the burnt offering speaks of Jesus Christ who offered Himself for our sins (Heb. 10:12). The curtain into the most holy place speaks of Christ's flesh which was torn to open the new and living way for every believer to the most holy place so that we would have full fellowship with God (Heb. 10:18-19). As we present Christ to the unsaved and to fellow-believers in these various aspects of His work, we do so under the direction of our duly appointed spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17) just as they did their service under Eleazar.

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Numbers 3:33-39 - This clan was assigned a different part of the camp just as believers today are assigned a different part of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:18). The frame speaks of the boards of the tabernacle which were made of acacia wood (Ex. 26:15) which is translated incorruptible wood by the Septuagint. This speaks of the complete humanity of Christ (John 1:14 cp. Heb. 2:17). The fact that Acacia is translated incorruptible by the Septuagint would emphasize Christ in His resurrected humanity. These boards were overlaid with gold (Ex. 26:29) which has been understood by many Bible students to picture the deity of Christ. The bars would remind us that both of these qualities were held together in perfect balance as is taught in Col. 2:9 and Phil. 2:6-7. The bases were made of silver (Ex. 26:19) which was derived from the ransom or redemption paid for by the offering of the men of Israel (Exodus 30:11-16 cp. Lev. 27:3). The tabernacle as a picture of Christ rested upon these silver sockets which illustrate the fact that He redeemed us with His shed blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The work of Christ rests upon His the preciousness of His redemption just as the tabernacle rested upon the silver sockets formed by the silver redemption offerings. Their service in relation to the tabernacle focused on these items that picture Christ's humanity and deity in perfect balance and His redemption. As we present the gospel Jesus must be presented in His work of redemption and resurrection as well as His person as both God and man. The work of Moses, Aaron and His sons was unique with no else able or authorized to perform it. In the same way, there is no one else that can perform the work of priest and mediator for us other than the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5).

Numbers 3:40-51 – Part 1 - This passage brings two problems to light. The first of these that the total of all the first born males among the people of Israel outside of the tribe of Levi was 22, 273. The total of the Levites one month and older was 22,000. However, when we add the census of the Levites: Gershon – 7,500 (Num. 3:22), Kohath - 8,600 (Num. 3:28), Merari – 6, 200. However, these figures add up to 22, 300. Several statements have been noted that help us correct this discrepancy. There were a few Septuagint manuscripts that had the figure of 8,300 for Kohath. The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament completed in about 180 B.C. The earliest Hebrew manuscripts upon which our English translation was based date from the 7th or 8th century A.D. For many years, scholars thought the Septuagint was of questionable accuracy but the discovery of the Dead Scrolls showed that the Septuagint was much more accurate than previously thought. Ryrie points out

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that the addition of one Hebrew letter would bring the figure of 8,600 to 8,300. Putting all the data together, the Hebrew manuscript being almost 1000 years after the Septuagint could have suffered damage. There is always the possibility that some type of disease might have somehow reduced the total before the plan of redemption was implemented. Since inspiration extends to the original biblical manuscripts, we do well to trust that God is faithful to His word and that any problems are problems and not necessarily errors as some skeptics would try to have us believe. The other problem found in the lesson is that Num. 1:45-46 states that there were 603,550 men able to go to war in Israel. We see that the total of first born non-Levitical males was 22, 273. This would mean each family would have at least 50 males which is highly unlikely. The problem is solved by remembering that the law of the firstborn did not go into effect until the time of the Exodus (Ex. 13:1-2). This would mean that the figure of 22, 273 would refer to the first born males born after the Exodus. We will look at this passage in regard to its teachings and content in the next paragraph.

Numbers 3:40-51 – part 2 - The Levites were not in sufficient number to redeem all the first born male Israelites. A price had to be paid. With people there is no amount of money that would be sufficient to redeem according to Psalm 49:5-8 when it comes to our souls. It required the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). The dedication of the firstborn of livestock and people remind us that God is to receive the first portion of what we give to Him (Prov. 3:9-10). As the priestly tribe, the Levites were to be dedicated to the Lord. As believer-priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9 cp. Rev. 1:6), we are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2). God stated that the Levites were to be His exclusive possession. In the same way, we as believer-priests are God's exclusive possession (1 Cor. 6:19-20) who were bought with a price – the blood of Christ. Not only, does everything that we have belong to God (1 Chr. 29:12-14), but we ourselves belong to God. In dedication, there is a recognition that our lives are not our own to do with as we please but are the purchased property of a Savior who loved us while we were still helpless sinners and showed that love by dying as our substitute (Rom. 5:6-8).

Numbers 4:1-49 - Chapter 4 can be outlined as follows: The duties of the Levite clan of Kohath (4:1-20), the duties of the Levite clan of Gershon (4:21-28), the duties of the Levite clan of Merari (4:29-33) and the census of the Levites (4:34-49). We will look at the few matters not discussed in chapter 3. The years of

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service for the Levites was age 30 to 50. It is interesting that our Lord Jesus Christ was about 30 years old when He began His public ministry according to Luke 3:23. The principle that seems to be emphasized in chapter 4 by the age range of 30 to 50 is that the Levites, who in some ways correspond to spiritual leaders in the New Testament (1 Cor. 9:13-15) need spiritual maturity (Heb. 5:11-14 cp. 1 Tim. 3:6). Age 25 is given in Num. 8:24 as the starting age rather than age 30. This would seem to show us that there was a five year training period. One of the important responsibilities of spiritual leaders is to train future spiritual leaders so they can teach others as shown in 2 Tim. 2:2. One of the important matters raised was the Kohath clan who carried the holy objects could not see them without committing the sin unto death (1 Cor. 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16-17; 1 Sam. 6:19). We see that under the Old Covenant, the people of God could not have access to the most holy presence of God without going through the priests. Under the New Covenant, we have access to the most holy presence of God (Heb. 10:19-22). The people under the Old Covenant including the non-priest Levites did not have this because Christ had not yet died for our sins and been raised to open the new and living way into the most holy presence of God. They could not go in even for a moment to look at the holy objects which had to be properly covered by the priests, Aaron and his sons – no exceptions. This reminds us that we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provisions for our sinful nature – no exceptions (Romans 13:14). Only by holy living can we show a holy God our reverence and ultimately our love for Him.

Numbers 5:1-4 - There are several principles brought forth in this passage. The command was clear. People who had a skin disease, a bodily discharge or had touched a dead body had to be placed outside the camp. However, there was restoration for each of these groups set forth in Leviticus chapters 12-15 and Numbers chapter 19. Jesus during his earthly ministry touched a leper in Mt. 8:3-4; was touched by a woman with an issue of blood in Luke 8:44-45, and touched a dead person in Luke 8:53-55 without incurring defilement and showing that as God, he did not incur defilement. Since, we New Testament believers are not under the Old Testament law and its issues of ritual uncleanness because of disease, discharges or death, the question is how are these scriptures helpful or profitable (2 Tim. 3:16)? These issues under the law are manifestations of the flesh. Under the New Covenant, the manifestations of the flesh are detailed in Gal. 5:19-21. As believers, we are commanded to walk in the Spirit so that we do not fulfill the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-17). They are not compatible with the

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indwelling Spirit which is at war with our flesh. We as individual believers are to put away all inner and outward sins according to 2 Cor. 7:1. These people were put out of the camp so that they would be in harmony or fellowship with God as a camp. In the same way, when believers openly sin and refuse to repent, if restoration fails (Mt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1), then removal from the fellowship of the local church may be required (1 Cor. 5:1-13; Mt. 18:17) until they repent (2 Cor. 2:4-11) at which time they may be restored. This is needed for the purity of the church according to 1 Cor. 5:6-8 so that the church as group is in fellowship or harmony with God. Just as God dwelt in the camp of Israel, God through the Holy Spirit indwells the local church (1 Cor. 3:16). One key observation is that these ritual uncleanness cleanness issues called for the same removal whether the person was male or female. In the same, there is to be no partiality when it comes to the church discipline and restoration policy and practices (1 Tim. 5:21). It is instructive to observe that the people of God obeyed Moses at this time. We do well to trust that God knows what he is doing when he instructs on how to deal with sin in our own personal lives and in the life of the local church.

Numbers 5:5-10 - This passage reminds us of several important principles that we are to follow. Sin is first and foremost against God (Psalm 51:4). Idolatry is not generally a sin against others but is against God (1 Cor. 10:14). Sins against other people are also sins against God according to this passage in Num. 5 and 1 Cor. 8:12. To remedy this wrong, a blood sacrifice was required to make atonement (Hebrew, "kaphar") for the sin. The animal sacrifices only covered sin. They did not take it away (John 1:29 cp. Heb. 10:3-4, 11-12). God was able to pass over the sins committed under the Old Covenant (Rom. 3:25) because of seeing the blood of the animal sacrifice (Ex. 12:13). Keep in mind, the same blood of Christ that provides for the once and for all forgiveness of sins – and the penalty – the moment we trust Christ for salvation (Acts 10:43 cp. Eph. 1:7), also provides forgiveness of sins – and from its defilement – when we confess the sin or sins to God (1 John 1:7, 9). When we sin against another individual, the New Testament and clarifying passages in the Old Testament explain that we are to confess the sins to God (1 John 1:9 cp. Psalm 32:5) and to forsake the sin or sins (Prov. 28:13). In addition, Luke 19:8 would give us the principle that we are to make restitution to the one that we have wronged. If it is a monetary issue or material issue, it is important that the restitution be greater than the loss incurred by the injured party. This shows that we have truly repented of that sin. When we humble ourselves in this way, God is able to exalt us in due time (1 Pet. 5:6).

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Numbers 5:11-31 - Many probably wonder how this particular scripture is profitable for believers living under the New Testament. Basically, this involved a situation where a wife was suspected by her jealous husband of committing adultery. It would be a situation where there was no witness, and she was not caught in the act. In such situations the husband could bring the suspected wife before the priest to be tested by drinking water mixed with dust from the tabernacle floor interposed with an oath. The woman would be made to drink the water. After she drank it, if she was guilty, this mixture would cause her stomach to swell and her womb to shrink. The word "thigh" used in most translations is a euphemism for the "womb". A euphemism is an expression used to soften the bluntness and perhaps embarrassing connotations of a word. An example would be using the words "passed away" or "gone" for "died". This test would make a guilty woman also be childless. If the woman was not guilty, she would suffer no curse (Prov. 26:2) and would be able to have children. In no case was the woman to be stoned if found guilty by this test (Deut. 19:15 cp. 17:6). She was simply disgraced in the eyes of the people of God. It is important to note that there is no time mentioned in scripture when this test was needed. We would believe that if this test was done that God would so guide the process under the Old Testament so that it correctly blessed and cursed. One of the reasons that husbands would be reluctant to use this test is because it would very humiliating for you and the community of God's people to know your wife cheated and can no longer have children. It would also be very humiliating to the husband if the wife were innocent as proven by the test and would damage his reputation in the community. This passage is profitable because it teaches several important lessons: (1) God values sexual purity in the married and unmarried, and so should we (Heb. 13:4), (2) We are to avoid any hint of sexual sin (Eph. 5:4 – see the NIV) so that people will not be suspicious, (3) Our sins will find us out (Num. 32:23 cp. Zech. 1:6), (4) Our living in keeping with God's standard will eventually be evident (1 Tim. 5:25 cp. Mic. 2:7), (5) We are to be careful on making judgments based on suspicion and not based on substance or fact (John 7:24), (6) The water is a picture of God's word (Eph. 5:26) and the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39) and reminds us that God's word is a critic of the thoughts and intents of our innermost being (Heb. 4:12), and finally (7) The eyes of God are in every place seeing the good and the bad (Prov. 15:3).

Numbers 6:1-8 - This vow was a picture of dedication to the Lord for the New Testament believer. It is one thing to trust Jesus Christ as Savior and confess Him

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as Lord (=God, i.e. the supreme source of authority in one's life) in the salvation transaction. It is another thing to open our lives in dedication for Christ to do with us as He pleases (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Peter 3:15). The Roman Christians had taken that first step of receiving salvation, but were challenged by Paul to take that next step in yielding their lives and bodies to Christ. At salvation, we receive eternal life (John 3:36), but in dedication, we begin to experience abundant life (John 10:10). In the Old Testament, such a commitment was temporary under this law although there were certain cases where it was permanent (Samson – Judges 13:7, Samuel – 1 Sam. 1:9-11, John the Baptist – Luke 1:15). However, the verb tenses which speak of dedication speak of a once-and-for-all dedication of one's life as shown in Rom. 12:1 and 2 Cor. 8:5). This is to be a lifetime commitment. Under the Old Testament law, they had to give up alcoholic beverages, wine and any part or product of the grape. As believers, we are willing to set aside behaviors which are not commanded or forbidden by scripture to avoid causing weaker believers to sin (Rom. 14:13, 21). During the time of their vow, they were not to cut their hair. They were holy, set apart for God's purposes and set apart from the rest of God's people. This introduces the fact that the believer is commanded to live a separated life in 2 Cor. 6:14-18 under the New Covenant. We are not to be unequally yoked in marriage, business partnerships or even close friendships (1 Cor. 15:33). We see that the Nazirite was not allowed to go near a dead person during the time of their separation. In contrast to this the believer under the New Covenant is to go to the spiritually dead with the gospel (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:14). Their commitment to God had to be more important than their closest family. Under the New Testament, if we are going to be Jesus' disciples in the fullest sense, we must put Him ahead of our closest family members (Mt. 10:37; Luke 14:26). In doing this we avoid defiling ourselves (minimizing our usefulness to the Lord). The uncut hair was a symbol of their separation to God. Under the New Covenant, our symbol of separation is a holy life in a continual growth in holiness in cleansing ourselves of outward and inward sin (2 Cor. 7:1 which follows the discussion of separation in 2 Cor. 6:14-18). We do this by facing up to our sins and confessing them to God so that He will cleanse us (1 John 1:9) and by obeying God's word (Psalm 119:9).

Numbers 6:9-21 - In verses 9-12, we see the commandment for when a Nazirite vow time period is ended by a person dying in the presence of someone who has taken a Nazirite vow. In that case, the individual had to rededicate themselves

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and the time served up to the time of exposure to a dead person did not count for fulfilling the vow. As believers, when we dedicate our lives for God's use (Rom. 6:13), sin interrupts the impact of our dedication. A good example of that would be David's sin with Bathsheba. While the exposure to being with a dead person was not deliberate, it reminds as believers that we are to be spiritually alert and discerning (1 Thes. 5:6) to avoid stumbling into sin. When we do sin - whether intentionally or not - we are to confess our sins and remind ourselves that we belong to the Lord (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 6:19). We resume living a dedicated life but just as the time period did not count for fulfilling the Nazirite vow, so any damage that our sin did cannot be undone. In vv. 13-21 we see the sacrifices and offerings that are given when the period of dedication was over. This reminds us that no matter how dedicated any believer may be that there is still sin in the person's life (1 John 1:8, 10). We no longer have to honor animal sacrifices which merely covered the sins, but the blood of Christ provides for not only the payment for the penalty of sin (Eph. 1:7) but also for the defilement of sin which disrupts our fellowship with God (1 John 1:7). Our post-salvation sins including the sins of any dedicated believer are to be confessed to God for the restoration of fellowship. The Nazirite was to be careful to do what they vowed. As dedicated believers, our aim is to be for perfection although we will not achieve it in this life (Phil. 3:10-12). The fact that they could now drink wine, after the time period was complete, reminds us that a dedication of our lives to the service of Christ is a sacrifice of faith (Phil. 2:17). The shaving of the hair showed that this period of dedication was complete. Our period of dedication will be complete when we depart to be with Christ at death (2 Tim. 4:6-8) or when He returns if we are still living (1 John 3:2). Note: Jesus Christ was not a Nazirite (Mt. 11:19; 26:29) as falsely taught by some. However, he did live a sinless life (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22).

Numbers 6:22-27 - The chapter closes with a blessing that has been used as benediction in many churches. It was to be pronounced by those serving as priest. As believer/priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9), we can use this prayer to bless other believers or groups of believers. First of all, we can ask God to bless other believers. We can then ask God to guard or watch over other believers. The phrase "the LORD make His face shine upon you" would tell us that we can ask God to be pleased with them. Certainly, it is good to pray for God's grace to be working in the lives of other believers. In asking the LORD to "lift up His countenance upon them" is to ask God to show His goodness toward them. Finally, we can ask God to give other believers peace. They already have peace with God (Rom. 5:1), but they need the peace of God (Col. 3:15); peace with one another (Rom. 14:17-19) and peace with all people (Rom. 12:18). The purpose of

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this type of praying to help them show God's identity or ownership over their lives and have His blessing on them.

Numbers 7:1-89 - This chapter has much duplication. However, there are some important points that we need to note. The leaders of God's people are to set an example in giving to God's work and giving voluntarily. The gifts from each leader were the same. The fact that they were repeated for each leader demonstrates God's delight in the giving of each individual and specifying what they give. An important quality for giving to God's work was demonstrated and that quality is generosity. Prov. 11:25 reminds us that God provides generously for the generous giver. We also see that God is interested in the collective result of our giving. This offering was for the dedication of the tabernacle which was to provide God's appointed means for meeting and communicating with His people and being present with them (Ex. 25:8). We also see that there was careful accounting for these gifts. 2 Cor. 8:20-21 shows us that everything is to be pleasing not only in the sight of God but in the sight of the people of God. When Moses needed God's direction, He came to the tabernacle. When we need direction for our lives as believers, we continue to come in faith (for the Christian life - John 7:37-39) to Christ (the one who dwelt, literally "tabernacled" among us - John 1:14) so that we may received the aid of the Holy Spirit to teach (John 14:26) and to lead us (Rom. 8:14).

Numbers 8:1-4 - The lampstand had 7 lamps and was of one piece according to Ex. 25:31. The lampstand pictures Jesus Christ as the light of the world (John 8:12). Eternal life is in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:11-12) and according to John 1:4 this is the light of people. As the light of the world, Jesus lights (gives spiritual illumination or understanding) to everyone who comes into the world (John 1:9). The 7 lamps (7-fold Holy Spirit - Amplified Bible spoken of in Rev. 1:4) with their oil (Psalm 45:7 cp. Acts 10:38) speaks of the Holy Spirit. The 7-fold Spirit is described in Isa. 11:2 and is said to be upon Jesus Christ. Aaron was to mount the lamp stand so that it gave light in the tabernacle. No natural light was there (1 Cor. 2:14). One of the reasons that unsaved people stand condemned in their unbelief (John 3:18-20) is because Jesus as the light of the world has come. People for the most part love darkness rather than light because their actions are evil. They hate the light because if they come to it, i.e. Jesus Christ, their evil deeds will be exposed. As Christians, because we are light because we are in Christ and are to walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8). If we lack the light of Christ in our lives as believers,

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we need to come out from among the spiritually dead so that Christ can give us His light (Eph. 5:14). Aaron who was high priest was responsible to see that the 7 lamps gave their light. In the same way, Jesus Christ our high priest wants His light to shine through our lives so that when people see our honorable works, they will glorify God (Mt. 5:16). As we live without complaining or disputing, we shine as lights in a dark and sinful world (Phil. 2:14-15).

Numbers 8:5-10 - As believers, we are like the Levites serving in a priestly role to our High priest Jesus. In contrast to the Levites who are taken out from among the people of God (Israel), we are taken out of the world which is antagonistic to us (John 15:19). Of course, we are in the world but not of it (John 17:14-15). In order to fulfill their role, they were to be cleansed with the sprinkling of water which serves as a picture of the Holy Spirit who cleanses us at the point of salvation (1 Cor. 6:11 cp. John 7:37-39). The washing of the clothes is a picture of washing our garments in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which illustrates what happens when we receive Him by faith (Rev. 7:14). The shaving of the hair is puzzling to many. The hair was the most insignificant part of the body (Mt. 10:30). Its removal reminds us that that we need to remove even the smallest sin or encumbrance/weight (activities that are not sinful but that hinder our Christian lives – Heb. 12:1-2) from our lives to serve as priests (1 Pet, 2:5, 9) to the Lord. While they had to present a bull for their sin offering, Jesus died for us as our sin offering (Heb. 10:12). The Levites not only serve as a picture of our priestly service, but also as spiritual leaders among the people (1 Cor. 9:13-14). To properly install them as leaders, they were to be presented before the whole congregation of the people. This was done in front of the tent of meeting, i.e. tabernacle. We present church leaders before Christ who is present where even two or three of us are gathered (Mt. 18:20). The laying on of hands pictured the congregation's role in recognizing these people as leaders that God had raised up. In selecting church leaders, there is a formal appointment process as shown in Acts 14:23. There the Greek word for "appointed" was to vote by the raising of the hands. This laying on of hands by the congregation showed that they recognized these Levites as having been raised up by God (Num. 27:18-23). This visibly showed that authority was transferred to the Levites. When church leaders are appointed, this laying on of hands shows that authority has been given to them. This is why this is never to be done hastily or impulsively (1 Tim. 5:22).

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Numbers 8:11-22 - God claimed the firstborn son of every one of the families in Israel in each tribe. However, the Levites were given as substitutes for them. This continues with their preparation to do the work of the Lord. The Levites themselves were to be presented like a wave offering. In a wave offering, the offerer would present the offering by holding out his hands in front of the priest. The priest would take the offerer's hands and move them in a horizontal direction back and forth. This signified that the Levites were being given like a wave offering – first to the Lord and then to the priest. This type of offering was irrevocable reminding us that when we trust Christ as Savior, we are irrevocably given to our high priest Jesus Christ by God (Heb. 2:12). This means our salvation is secure and cannot be lost (Rom. 11:29). They could only be given upon being cleansed or purified. The animal sacrifice was necessary for this presentation or giving to take place. In the same way, the sacrifice of Christ was required to provide our cleansing or purification (Heb. 1:3) and we receive this provision by faith (Acts 15:7). After their purification, the Levites were to come and do their work at the tabernacle. Notice the same idea in Eph. 2:8-10. God's grace provides, our faith receives and then we do the good works that God has already prepared for us. The Levites were partners in making atonement (literally covering of sins) for the people of Israel. In a similar but not identical way, we as believers are fellow-laborers for Christ (1 Cor. 3:9) in telling others the gospel provision which Christ's sacrifice provided. The purpose of that atonement was to protect Israel from God's judgment. In the same ways, Christ's sacrifice provided salvation from God's wrath (Rom. 5:9). We have been given wholly to Christ so that we can glorify God (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We notice that the Levites did their service under the supervision of Aaron and his sons. We do our good works under the supervision of Jesus Christ who sees our very hearts and motives (Rev. 2:19, 23).

Numbers 8:23-26 - As we noted before, the starting age was 30 rather than 25 according to Num. 4:3. This would suggest that there was probably a five year apprenticeship before they assumed full responsibility for any particular duty or duties. This passage highlights the fact that our service as believer/priests for Christ is time-limited. There is going to be a time that either because of infirmity or death that we are not going to be able to continue our service within the ministries under our spiritual gift. Looking at the Levites from the perspective of being the spiritual leaders of the nation of Israel, God's people, it would be important for them to teach and train the younger men to assume this

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responsibility. In the church, spiritual leaders are to select faithful men to teach God's word in such a thorough way that they will be able to teach other men (2 Tim. 2:2). This is not the same as the last part of the great commission (Mt. 28:19-20) but would be a mentoring type of process. This can be done as a group or on a one-on-one basis. In the Great Commission, all believers who trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation are to be taught what He commanded (Mt. 28:20) while the process in 2 Tim. 2:2 involves faithful men only. Among the women, the older women are commanded to be communicating sound thinking to the younger women (Tit. 2:4-5). Finally, one very crucial application that we see is that work is to precede rest. We see this in God Himself in creation (Gen. 2:2) and His command to Israel to keep the sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11). In both cases work preceded rest or cessation from labor. In Hebrews 4:9-11, we see the same principle in the Christian life. We discipline ourselves to do our responsibility (1 Tim. 4:7-8) in living and working for Christ and then depend on Christ in faith to experience the rest that God has for us (Col. 2:6). In Mt. 11:28 we come to Christ by faith alone for salvation rest and in Mt. 11:29 we take Christ's yoke upon us and experience the rest of the Christian life. Christ's yoke is said to be easy in Mt. 11:30 which are His commandments which are not burdensome (1 John 5:2-3) in contrast to the yoke of the Old Testament law which the people of Israel were not able to bear (Acts 15:10). Once we have done what we are supposed to, we stand resting and waiting on God is doing His part in enabling our Christian service and warfare (Eph. 6:13).

Numbers 9:1-14 – God's word to His people is to be given by pastors and Bible teachers to remind believers concerning the need to obey in certain areas of the Christian life (2 Peter 1:12-15). This is also why God's word repeats certain commandments and instructions such as the need for purity in 1 Thes. 4:1-8, Heb. 13:4 and 1 Cor. 6:17-20. In verse 3 we see the principle that God expects us to be obedient in relation to time and details. Notice that Moses received the word from God and communicated it to the people. Verse 4 shows that we are responsible for communicating God's word whether it is as a pastor, teacher or just in a discipling relationship after God shows us what we are to communicate. On hearing God's word, we notice that the obedience of the people was total or complete. This is the kind of obedience that God blesses (Luke 11:28). Some of the people had disqualified themselves from being able to participate by being ritually unclean because of a dead body. This would be an unintentional sin under the Old Covenant. Moses did not know the answer and told them that he would inquire of God. It is okay for one presenting God's word not to know the answer to some question. However, they need to pray for God's help (Ps. 119:73;

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James 1:5) and search the scriptures for the answers. This requires diligence on the part of the presenter and patience on the part of those asking the question. God answered Moses' inquiry which allowed them to participate in the second month on the 14th day. The same rules were in effect. Notice the repetition of the command not to break a bone of it. Because the Passover is a picture of Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross (1 Cor. 5:7), the command not to break a bone was fulfilled by Christ at the cross in John 19:36. The one who chose not to participate among the people of Israel was ex-communicated or in some way cut off. Whether it is coming to Christ for salvation or whether it is for fellowship with Christ after salvation, our faith must rest in the sacrifice of Christ (Rom. 3:25 and 1 John 1:7, 9). A foreigner who resided among them could observe the Passover. This gave it an evangelistic outreach just as the cross of Christ is our message to reach the lost (1 Cor. 1:18-24; 2:1-5).

Numbers 9:15-23 - After the tabernacle was completed the Shechinah Glory appeared as a cloud by day and as fire by night. In this way, God could take on some visible form to lead His people. While God Himself is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16), He has appeared in various ways to people without showing Himself totally. During the earthly ministry of Christ, the one who had seen Jesus Christ had seen the Father (John 14:8-9). In the wilderness, God veiled Himself in the cloud and the fire, and in Jesus' earthly ministry, God veiled Himself in human flesh. The cloud reminds us that God does reveal Himself, but in veiling Him, it reminds us that as much as we know about God, there is much that we do not know about God (Rom. 11:33-36). The fire reminds us that our God is a consuming fire and that we had best heed His word and in a spirit of gratitude serve Him acceptably with reverence and awe ((Heb. 12:25-29). This cloud first entered and covered the tabernacle in Ex. 40:33-38 when Moses completed his erecting it. In the present age, God guides us through the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14) and the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17). These two do not work in competition with one another but in concert with one another. We are warned against being impulsive and moving on whim or presumption in Prov. 19:2. At the same time, we are to be prompt in obeying God's word (Ps. 119:60). The people of Israel were careful to wait when God showed that they were to wait, and they were quick to follow God when they were to move out and follow. Waiting on God is very difficult for many of us especially when evil moves forward seemingly unrestrained. Yet God promises blessing and reward for those who wait on Him (Ps. 37:7-9). In order to wait on the Lord, it takes faith that we will see God's goodness work in situations when we feel like giving up. If we

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choose to wait on God with faith and courage, He will strengthen us inwardly (Ps. 27:13-14). In all of this, the key is faith manifested in obedience to God's word.

Numbers 10:1-10 - The purpose of the trumpets was to give out messages to the people quickly. 1 Cor. 14:7-8 explain that there must be a distinction in the notes played or those who hear will not know what is being messaged. It could mean that the people would not be prepared to face their enemies. As believers, if the messages from God's word are not clear, those who hear will not be able to be prepared for the attacks of the world, the devil or their own sinful nature. The trumpets were used to gather the whole congregation of the people of Israel. God has messaged us in His word that we as believers are to meet together (Heb. 10:25). The blowing of the trumpets was used to communicate the camp moving out. In the same way, God's word communicates to us how we are to walk. We are to walk worthy of our calling (Eph. 4:1), walk in sacrificial love (Eph. 5:2), walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8), walk carefully and wisely (Eph. 5:15), walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) and to walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). The trumpets communicated to the people of Israel the need to be prepared for warfare. God's word communicates to us the need to be prepared for spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:3-4) with Satan and his demons (Eph. 6:10-18), with the world (John 15:18-21; James 4:4) and with the flesh, i.e. our sinful nature (Gal. 5:16-17). The trumpets also were used to assemble people for the feasts or ordinances that God had given them. In the same, God's word communicates to us the need to take part in the ordinances that He Has given to the church: water baptism (Mt 28:19 cp. Acts 2:41) and the Lord's table where we remember the Lord Jesus Christ who was God's final and complete offering for our sins (1 Cor. 11:23-26). Finally, it will be a trumpet that summons us to meet the Lord Jesus in the air at the catching up of believers (1 Thes. 4:16-18) and to herald Jesus' return to earth in power and glory over His enemies (Mt. 24:31).

Numbers 10:11-28 - We see the walk of God's people. The cloud guided them in their walk or march toward the promised land. In the same way, the Holy Spirit guides us as believers in our Christian walk (Rom. 8 :14). Our job is to keep in step with the Holy Spirit according to Gal. 5:25). The command from God came through their appointed leader, Moses. Our appointed leader Jesus has set forth in the New Testament His commands for our Christian walk. The cloud guided the people on when to move out and where and when to stop. In the same way, the Holy Spirit prompts us when to move forward for Him (e.g. Acts 8:29). In the

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same way, the Holy Spirit tells where to halt and not to go forward (Acts 16:6-7). Once again, we see that there was order among God's people (Col. 2:5) and a willingness to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). It would have been easy to start thinking that following the cloud was not the way to go especially when there were problems and adversity, but at this point the people were obedient to the word of God through Moses (James 1:22). We also see that there were duly appointed leaders which is necessary in God's work (Act 20:28; Tit. 1:5). We notice that wherever they went, they carried the tabernacle with them. In the same way, we are take Jesus (whom the tabernacle pictures) with us wherever we go just as the early church did (Acts 8:1-5). In the organization of God's people, we notice that there was a rear guard. The rear guard was necessary to protect those among God's people who were at the rear and struggling to keep up because they were vulnerable to enemy attack (Deut. 25:17-18). In the same way, we as believers have to act as a rear guard to help those who are straggling and struggling to keep up in their Christian walk (Gal. 6:1-2) because we are facing a three-fold enemy in the deceitfulness of our sin nature (Heb. 3:13), Satan (2 Cor. 11:3) and the world (Eph. 4:14). However, we are to pay attention not only to other believers but to ourselves as well (1 Tim. 4:16) knowing that if we think we stand we may fall into sin (1 Cor. 10:12).

Numbers 10:29-36 - Hobab and Reuel were evidently Old Testament believers. The journey to the promised land pictures the pursuit of the abundant Christian life (John 10:10). The believer receives life at the moment that we trust the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. The abundant Christian life, a life of blessings is experienced as the believer yields to the Lordship of Jesus Christ on an ongoing basis in a walk of faith and dependence on Him for direction and enablement (Col. 2:6; Eph. 6:10). Moses invited Hobab, his brother-in-law, to identify with the people of God in this goal. As believers, we are to enlist other believers in this goal. When we fulfill the last part of the Great Commission in Mt. 28:20, we are helping other believers to move toward experiencing the abundant life by obeying all of Christ's commandments, i.e. the New Testament. God had promised to give Israel this land just as Jesus had promised not only life but abundant life (John 10:10). As we obey God's word, we experience His blessing (Luke 11:28; James 1:25). Moses wanted Hobab to identify with God's people in this goal because he would have people who would treat him well. God's people are to be people who treat others as they would like to be treated (Mt. 7:12) and Hobab would benefit from this fellowship. Hobab was resistant to this idea and Moses pointed out that he could be very helpful in guiding the people to the promised land since he was familiar with a lot of the area. The leading of God does not leave out enlisting the help of believers to provide wise guidance. For example, if a church has a builder or architect in the in the church, and the church is planning to build a new building or a new church, it would be good to

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have his input and wisdom in this process along with prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is good to point out to new believers or believers who have not grown how God might use them to help the people of God in order to persuade them to get on board with being disciplined. They will experience the same blessings as other believers who are seeking to be obedient. From Judges 1:16, it would appear that Hobab relented and that he and his family went along in this pursuit. In our narrative above, we see the people moved toward this goal following the ark, a picture of Christ. By doing this, they would know when to rest. In our Christian walk, we are to be disciplined and purposeful and then when we have done what we are supposed to, we are to rest (Eph. 6:13). In rest, we depend or trust on the Lord to bring about the results in our Christian lives. However, to get to this rest we must have faith and obedience, and the generation that was being led failed to experience that rest according to Heb. 3:18-19. Just like the sabbath command that provided for rest, there was six days of work preceding that rest (Ex. 20:8-11). Like that command, the Christian life must be balanced between working/obeying God by faith and resting/dependence and trust. Moses prayer is a reminder that one of the provisions that God gives us in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18) is Spirit led prayer (Eph. 6:18). His prayer was for God to take action and give them victory over the enemy. That is why Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray so they would not experience temptation in the garden (Mt. 26:41). Moses asked God to be present when they were resting. Under the New Covenant, we do not have to request God's presence because in Christ, He has promised to be with us to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20).

Numbers 11:1-9 – Part 1 - In this section, we see how not to handle hardship or adversity. Trials are designed or permitted by God to test our faith and produce endurance which is the ability to stay in fellowship with God. As this endurance develops and has its full effect, it produces maturity and balance so that we are lacking in nothing needed for a godly life (James 1:2-4). God's word commands us to do all things without complaining or arguing in Phil. 2:14. In trials God is looking for contentment through the power of Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:11-13) and for thanksgiving in and for all things (1 Thes. 5:18; Eph. 5:20). Complaining ignores the fact that God is present everywhere (Ps. 139:7) and it clearly states in our passage that God heard everything that was said (cp. Ps. 139:4). God was highly displeased with their complaining and is highly displeased with our complaining. God sent a judgment of discipline (1 Cor. 11:30-32) on His people which appear to have resulted in the premature deaths of some of them. They begged Moses to pray for those still living which He did. Psalm 106:23 explains that Moses stood in the breach between God's disciplinary judgment on His people and their utter ruin. 1 John 5:16-17 reminds us to pray for fellow-believers that we see sinning unless the sin resulted in their premature physical death. The people name the

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place Taberah which means “the place of burning”. This reminds us that our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29) and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31). This reminds us that God does not fool around, and we had better not either.

Numbers 11:1-9 – Part 2 - The next source of trouble within the congregation of Israel came from the foreign rabble, i.e. those who were not God’s people. In the same way, churches have trouble with agitation that comes from those who would come in and cause false doctrine and evil deeds. Jesus warned of wolves in sheep’s clothing in Mt. 7:15-20 in the form of false prophets who would be exposed by their fruits, i.e. deeds. Paul warned of those who were not genuine believers coming in and bringing ruinous doctrine and lifestyle changes that damage true believers (Acts 20:28-29). Peter warned of false teachers who would come in and cause many to follow their ways and bring the way of truth into disrepute (2 Pet. 2:1-2). These people who were not God’s people craved the things of the old life which misled the people of God, Israel, into complaining about missing the things of the old life. We are called to put off the old life with its deeds and be inwardly renewed and put on the new life of true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:22-24). They were tired of God’s provision of the manna which was to provide and sustain their new lives. In the same way, there are some Christians who lack an understanding that they are complete in Christ and that nothing needs to be added to completeness (Col. 2:10). The manna pictures the continual provision of Christ for our Christian lives (John 6:30-35). Paul stated that for him to live is Christ in Phil. 1:21. When we try to put the things of the old life prior to salvation in Christ, then we are basing our lives on that which cannot satisfy nor sustain us. Deut. 8:2-3 reminds us and it should have those prior to Christ that people do not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Deut. 8:2-3). When the people were physically hungry God had provided them manna. In the same way God provided for our spiritual hunger and emptiness in the Lord Jesus Christ and His word which works to bring us toward spiritual maturity with the abundant life which is what the promised land pictures for us. We must each fill in the blank from Phil. 1:21, “For me to live is _____.” If it is any more than or any less than the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to revise our answer. Christ brought grace and truth (John 1:17). We must not squander it (2 Cor. 6:1).

Numbers 11:10-15 - The weeping was the weeping of an unfulfilled craving. Rather than giving thanksgiving for what they had, they had a crying tantrum much like a child in the supermarket or store who makes a scene because he cannot have what he wants. This brought about God’s righteous anger and resulted in Moses not being pleased with their response. Moses was sick and tired of dealing with God’s people because of their immaturity and their sense of

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entitlement. He poured his feelings and emotions to God who could do something rather than the people who were in no mood to obey God at this point. Moses told God that he felt that God had not favored him by giving him the burden of leading them. There are times in our life when we feel at the end of our rope and lash out at others rather than taking the matter to God as Moses did. We are told to cast our burden on the Lord because He will sustain us (Psalm 55:22). We are told to cast our cares upon God because He truly cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). Like Moses, we need to be honest with God. David stated in Psalm 55:17 (NASB) that God will hear His complaint when He prays to Him. If we feel, we must complain, it is good to take the matter up with God being mindful not to forget and express gratitude for all His benefits (Ps. 103:2). Moses had his eyes on His inability to get meat for the people rather than God who could do more than he could imagine or think (Eph. 3:21). Moses begged God to kill him if He was going to let this situation continue. We will see that God will not kill Moses but show him that He has heard Moses' feelings. God's response reminds us that sometimes we need to hear people's feelings more than just their mere words and to look at what the real need is. We will see how God handled this in the next paragraph.

Numbers 11:16-30 – part 1 - This section of scripture deals with two problems. The first of these problems was that Moses was feeling overwhelmed in trying to lead the people in the ways of God because they were not responding consistently in faith and obedience. The second problem was the people were tired of the manna and craved meat. They needed to learn to be content with God's provision and God explained how He was going to address that problem. For the first problem, Moses was instructed by God to gather the appointed leaders before Him in front of the tabernacle. God would then give His word to Moses and put the Holy Spirit upon these 70 elders. Yahweh came down in a cloud, i.e. the Shechinah Glory. He placed the same Holy Spirit who was on Moses and put it on each of the 70 elders. We note that they continued prophesying when the Holy Spirit was placed on them. However, two of the elders had not actually come to the tabernacle but remained in the camp and the Holy Spirit was placed upon them as well causing them to prophesy. When a young man reported this to Moses Joshua and some of the other young men wanted Moses to stop them. However, Moses refused stating that no one should be envious on his account because God had raised up other men who could prophesy. This reminds us that we as believers are not to quench the working of the Holy Spirit in other believers and other ministries (1 Thes. 5:19). It is not about any single human leader or organization that God has raised up. It is about God's purposes and plans being carried out, and it is about God equipping leaders with supernatural enablement to share the challenge and burden of leading the people of God. God had answered Moses' feelings of being overwhelmed not by

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removing Him or rebuking Him but by enabling others to step up and aid him. Notice Moses' desire that all of God's people have the Holy Spirit upon them and that they be prophets or mouthpieces for God will be fulfilled at the end of the tribulation according to Ezek. 39:29 with the nation of Israel coming to Christ. We will look at the second problem in the next paragraph.

Numbers 11:16-30 – part 2 - Previously, we looked at the problem of Moses feeling overwhelmed and God's provision of additional men to help him with the leadership of God's people. We will now look at the matter of the people's discontent and complaint about having only manna and not having meat. The people were to be commanded to dedicate themselves to God. He was to remind them about their complaint of not having meat to eat and for their sin of looking back to Egypt. This reminds us that we are not to look to the old man or pre-salvation life (Eph. 4:22). We are also not to look at the past (Phil. 3:13; Eccl. 7:10). He was to tell the people that God had said that He was going to give them meat to eat for 30 days until they were sick of it. God was going to do this because they had complained and been ungrateful as well as looking backward to the old life. Moses asked God how He was going to provide this much meat for so many people. He was looking at the problem by sight and not by faith (2 Cor. 5:7). God told Moses that His power had not been reduced and that he would see what would happen. So Moses passed these words on to the people. Sometimes, we find our faith weak, and God has to show us that He is the God who provides (Gen. 22:13-14). Then we see it with our eyes. Like Moses, we cannot see how God's power is going to work in an overwhelming situation, but here we see that God is able to do far more than we ask or even think (Eph. 3:20).

Numbers 11:31-35 - As we look at this passage, we notice that God actually sent a wind that brought quail from the sea, and they fell all around the camp of God's people. Somehow God's direction of the air currents caused the quail to fly about 3 feet off the ground making it easy for the people to catch them. Here we see how God turned an apparent blessing into a curse (-sentence of judgment – Mal. 2:2). Psalm 106:14-15 explain how the people craved intensely so that God gave them their request, but sent a plague of disease among them. This reminds us that when we are so strong-willed that we want what we want that God gives it to us to show us that His plan prior to giving us our craving was far better than our plan. Psalm 78:26-31 explains more detail on how that God controlled the winds to accomplish this feat. God gave them their desire and before they could be completely satisfied, God brought a judgment of discipline that killed some of the strongest and healthiest people including some of their better men. 1 Cor. 11:30-32 explains how God uses a judgment of discipline when believers refuse to judge themselves by confessing and forsaking their sin (Prov.

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28:13). The New Living Translation calls these the “graves of gluttony” but the best translation is the “graves of craving”. 1 Cor. 10:5-6 warns us as New Testament believers not to crave evil things as they did lest we come under severe discipline from God. Psalm 78:32 states that in spite of all this, the people still sinned and failed to let God’s discipline correct them. God did not discipline His people because of a lack of love just as He does not discipline us because of a lack of love. Quite the contrary, God disciplines us because He loves us (Heb. 12:5-6). We must remember that God disciplines us for our good so we can share His holiness (= being set apart for His purpose – Heb. 12:10). However, if we let discipline train us, it will not be pleasant at the time, but after a time will produce the results of peace and righteousness in our lives and characters (Heb. 12:11). Let us not thwart God’s purposes in discipline by being stubborn, but let us be trained or taught by it (Prov. 29:1 cp. Heb. 12:11). Notice, finally, that the people of God had to remain at their next stop for some time. This would suggest that when believers have to be strongly disciplined because of evil cravings that it creates delays in moving toward experiencing the abundant Christian life that Jesus provided along with life, i.e. salvation (John 10:10).

Numbers 12:1-8 - In verse 1, the feminine singular form is used with the word “spoke.” This indicates that Miriam led in the criticism. Exodus 15:20 explains that Miriam was a prophetess and the sister of Aaron and Moses (Num. 26:59). She and Aaron were wanting an equal part of the leadership of the people of Israel. They obviously did not approve of Moses marrying a Cushite woman. Exactly what their basis of disapproval was is not clear. It was true that God had spoken through Miriam at some point because she was a prophetess. However, this did not make her or Aaron equal in authority with Moses. God’s word clearly commands believers to value and obey those whom God has set over them (1 Thes. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17). God’s word tells us that God actually heard their words. God knows our very thoughts and knows our words before they jump out of our mouths (Ps. 139:1-4). Moses had not put himself forward so much as God had appointed him for this task. Moses did not have a lust for power and prominence like Miriam and Aaron. God’s word explains to us that Moses was very humble more so than any other living man at that time. This was an important quality of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 11:29; Phil. 2:8). Humility is the recognition that apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). It is about making ourselves less to make Christ more (John 3:30). Humility recognizes that everything we have and are has been given to us by God (1 Cor. 4:7). Humility recognizes that our adequacy and sufficiency are from Christ (2 Cor. 3:4-5). Finally, humility waits for God to exalt them in due time (1 Peter 5:6). In this situation, Moses did not have to wait long. God came down in the Shechinah glory cloud and summoned the three of them to the tabernacle. God made it clear that if there was a prophet that He would make Himself known and speak

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to them in a vision or a dream. However, Moses was unique in this regard. God considered Moses faithful in His household and spoke with Him face-to-face in a direct and understandable manner. Moses had not seen God as such, but He came closer to doing so (Ex. 33:18-23). God asks the question as to why Miriam and Aaron were not afraid to speak against Moses, the servant of God. Titus 3:2 reminds us that we as believers are not to malign anyone. In the next paragraph, we will notice the consequences of such speech.

Numbers 12:9-16 - We saw in the criticism of Moses' marriage to the Cushite woman that Miriam (the main instigator) along with Aaron stated that they were equally entitled to lead the people. God was angry with them because they had spoken against Moses, the one, whom He had put in authority. Miriam was afflicted with a severe case of leprosy. Illness is one of the ways in which God judges His people who sin (1 Cor. 11:30-32). Aaron immediately confessed his sin to Moses. He specified that both he and Miriam had sinned and acted foolishly. Keep in mind that foolishness is knowing what God expects and behaving or thinking otherwise (Mt. 7:24-27). However, Moses prayed to God for her healing. We are commanded to confess our sins to one another in James 5:16. When we have wronged someone, it is a good application of this command, to confess our sins to one another in order to make things right. However, we also see in James 5:16 that the one receiving the confession is to pray for the one who confesses so that they may be healed. Luke 6:28 adds that we are to pray for those who mistreat us. Miriam was separated from the camp of God's people for seven days. 1 Cor. 5:1-13 reminds us that sometimes unrepentant believers have to be separated from God's people. The last two verses of our passage in Numbers make it clear that God's people could not move on toward the promised land until Miriam was restored. This demonstrates that sin slows the progress of God's people in moving toward maturity, but it does not stop it.

Numbers 13:1-20 - Deut. 1:21-22 explains that Moses had told the people of God to go take possession of the land and not be fearful or concerned about the prospect of trouble. However, the people wanted Moses to send out spies to spy out the land. With this information in mind, we see that God told Moses in the first verses of our passage to accede to the request of the people to spy out the land before they tried to enter. God will sometimes let people see certain realities for themselves before they take a step of faith (e.g. Gideon in Judges 6:37-40; 7:9-14). In this case, the majority of the spies did not respond in faith to what they saw. Capable men who had demonstrated leadership abilities were chosen. We will see in future paragraphs that abilities are useless to God unless there is faith and availability. The land is a picture of the abundant Christian life. The purpose of sending the spies was to know what the land was like and to note what problems there would be, the severity of the problems and the

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number of problems. The abundant Christian life is described for us in the pages of scripture in Gal. 5:22-23 as a life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. In Luke 14:25-33, we see the difficulties or problems of the abundant Christian life. This is a life of complete or full discipleship. Briefly, this type of life requires putting our walk with Christ above the closest human relationships including above ourselves (Luke 14:26). It requires suffering because of following Christ (Luke 14:27). It also requires surrendering the ownership of all we have to the control of Jesus Christ (Luke 14:33). We have to know our enemies: Satan (2 Cor. 2:11), the world (John 15:18-21; 1 John 2:15) and the flesh/sinful nature (Gal. 5:17). We will see the contrast between those who look at the strength and size of the enemy and the obstacles versus those who look at the greatness, resources and power of God.

Numbers 13:21-33 - We see a real contrast between God's people who are spiritual and those who are carnal/fleshly. Carnal or fleshly believers make decisions by reasoning from what they see, circumstances and feelings. Spiritual believers make their decisions based on the word of God, His promises and His power. They live by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). It was very clear that all the spies saw how fruitful the land was. In the same way all believers can see the blessings of the abundant Christian life. However those who are carnal among God's people focus on the size of the obstacles to the abundant Christian life. Just like the carnal perspective of the majority of the spies, they see problems everywhere. To be sure the abundant Christian life is full of problems. There are two ways that these people could make their decision. They could make it by faith in God's word and promises. This simply means that we let God's word make the decision. The second way is the way of those who are carnal believers. Circumstances make the decision. Observe that Eccl. 11:4 makes it clear that we cannot be productive as Christians if we let circumstances govern our lives and our decisions. The carnal and majority report majored on the inadequacy of God's people next to the size and overwhelming power of the enemy. The spiritual and minority report majored on the ability of God's people to do this backed by God's power and God's promises. Caleb was the lead spokesman for the spiritual believers (verse 30) along with Joshua (Numbers 14:6-9). One lesson that should ring in our hearts is that the majority is not always right in a multicultural setting such as our country and not even among believers.

Numbers 14:1-4 - Notice that the people did not respond to approach of faith but rather responded to the approach of sight. There was great sorrow among the people. However, it was not a godly sorrow that leads to repentance (= a God-ward change of mind). It was rather a sorrow of this world that leads to death. The people were complaining against Moses and Aaron. God wants us as believers to avoid complaining so that we can be lights for Christ in this dark

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world (Phil. 2:14-15). We are specifically told not to complain against one another in James 5:9 because Christ could bring judgment at any moment. While those who are believers are not going to face a judgment of condemnation (John 5:24), they can face a judgment of God's discipline according to 1 Cor. 11:30-32. There was widespread depression among the people because they were looking at circumstances rather than the promises of God's word. They falsely believed that their wives and children would be victims of what they saw as a bad decision to leave their old life in Egypt. To them death in that old life or even in the wilderness would have been better than this. When people leave the preaching and teaching of God's word, they turn to humanly devised plans for living rather than God's word (2 Tim. 4:2-4). Despite their spiritual advantages, they were wanting to go back to the old life in Egypt. The writer of Hebrews warned the believers in Heb. 5:11-6:1 to move out of their stalled spiritual condition and press forward to maturity. They were warned against ignoring their spiritual privileges and returning to the old life to manage their day-to-day lives by falling away from moving toward maturity (Heb. 6:4-6). In the same way, these people were ready to go back to the old life to cope rather than to press on to the promised land, i.e. a picture of the abundant Christian life.

Numbers 14:5-10 - We see in Moses and Aaron utter dependence on God. They were powerless to stop the people from rebelling against their leadership, but they knew the one who had the power to help them and protect them, the Lord Himself. Leaders may find themselves in a spiritual situation in which there is an coalition of carnal believers and counterfeit believers opposing them. A pastor in a Bible-believing church had a board of 7 deacons who were opposing him at every turn. He called a pastor in a sister church to take the matter before God. Within a week the situation took a dramatic turn. One of the deacons took a job in another community too far away to remain. Another deacon was transferred by his company out of state. One of the deacons suffered a fatal heart attack. Two of the deacons were on a short trip together and were tragically killed when their car was involved in a head-on collision. Another deacon left his wife for another woman and resigned. The seventh deacon had to resign to care for his severely ailing wife. We see that the two spies who had looked at the situation by faith, Joshua and Caleb, tried to reason with the rebellious congregation who were looking at the situation by sight rather than faith (2 Cor. 5:7). They tore their clothes as an expression of their grief. When others sin against God, then should bring us sorrow (1 Cor. 5:2). The basis of their reasoning was that the land was very good and that if God was pleased with them, He would lead them into that land. In the same way, we know that the abundant Christian life is very good as outlined in Gal. 5:22-23. However, for God to be pleased with us, there must be faith because without faith, it is

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impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). For God to lead us into abundant life there must be faith just as faith was needed by these people to experience God's leadership into the land. The people were afraid of the enemy. There is no reason for us as believers to live in fear. God has not given us a Spirit who brings fear but love, power and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7). Joshua and Caleb warned the people not rebel against the Lord. When we sin purposefully sin against God and the promises of His word, we bring spiritual disaster to our lives. We need to practice the prayer of Psalm 19:13 that God would keep us back from deliberate and presumptuous sins. Joshua and Caleb were not impressed by what they had seen, but were impressed with the greatness and power of God who would be faithful to His promises. They saw that the enemy was a defeated foe. We know that our spiritual enemies are doomed to defeat: Satan now if we submit to God and resist him (James 4:7) and in the future when he is cast into the lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:10), the world now if we put our love for God in first place (1 John 2:15-17) and in the future when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and His Christ (Rev. 11:15), the flesh now if walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and totally when Christ returns (1 John 3:2). They pointed out that the protection of their enemy was gone just as the protection of our enemy is gone. Finally, we have the promise of the presence of Christ to the end of the age (Mt. 28:20). Heb. 13:5-6 tells us that His presence means that we do not need to fear people. The people were talking of stoning them. They were disregarding the clear teaching of God's word not to follow a crowd in doing evil (Ex. 23:2). Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb were not popular, but they were right. God is the vindicator of those who are His and on this occasion, He appeared immediately and began a process that would eventually quell the rebellion of this coalition of carnal and counterfeit believers.

Numbers 14:11-19 – Part 1 - God's conversation with Moses and Moses intercession are detailed here. God noted that the people had rejected Him. In rejecting God, they were rejecting God's authority over their lives. This demonstrated a high degree of carnality among the people as well as the presence among them of those who lacked the reality of salvation. The root of their problem was a lack of faith in the working of God to bring them to the promised land. This lack of faith persisted in spite of all the signs (=miracles that show and support God's message). This is a problem among Christians in relation to God bringing them to experience the abundant Christian life and bring those who merely profess salvation to a genuine saving relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. As New Testament believers, the Hebrew Christians were warned not to harden their hearts against the voice or word of God (Heb. 3:7-8). We are not to put God to the test after understanding and experiencing His undertakings for us (Heb. 3:9). When we let our hearts or our thinking go astray from God's thoughts and fail to learn God's ways, we cannot experience the abundant Christian life referred to as

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God's rest (Heb. 3:10). We have to carefully examine ourselves for an evil, unbelieving heart in moving away from fellowship with God (Heb. 3:12). We do this by examining ourselves to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5), i.e. that we have really trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Then if we have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we need to examine ourselves and return to walking with the Lord in fellowship (Lam. 3:40). It is vital that we be in healthy Christian relationships so that we encourage one another daily to prevent being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). Because these people had not examined themselves and returned to walk with the Lord, God was ready to kill all of them with disease and make a greater and mightier nation than these people from Moses. This was the second time that God had proposed using disciplinary judgment to put to death all His people (see Ex. 32:9-10). However, we will see that Moses intercedes for the people so that they will be spared the most drastic form of disciplinary judgment (1 Cor. 11:30-32). Part of our responsibility as believers is to intercede for one another to help fellow-believers whom we see sin to avoid experiencing premature physical death or other drastic consequences by God's disciplinary judgment (1 John 5:16-17).

Numbers 14:11-19 – Part 2 - Moses prayer of intercession was not based on anything worthy or good in God's people. In the same way, Christ's intercession (Rom. 8:34) and speaking in our defense as our advocate (1 John 2:1-2) is based on the merits of Christ and His sacrifice, not on any worthiness or merit on our part. Moses appealed to God to spare total disciplinary judgment on His people for the sake of God's reputation. He also appealed to God to spare them because of His great power. God's power is unlimited (Luke 1:37). It would appear to the unsaved that God lacked the power to deliver His people because God had supernaturally led His people up to this point. Moses emphasized that it would damage God's credibility in the sight of the unsaved because it would appear that God was not able to keep His promises. One of the truths concerning God is that He keeps His word (Num. 23:19). God's greatness among the unsaved would be reduced and damaged. He pointed out to God that God Himself had said that He is patient or longsuffering. He also reminded God that He had communicated that He is abundant in mercy and forgiveness. However, he recognized that God would not forgive those who are guilty. This simply means that if they fail to repent, they will not be forgiven and restored. He also recognized that here is cumulative guilt. The guilt of previous generations can fall on present generations if they continue in the sinful rebellious ways of the previous generation (Ex. 20:5). However, generational guilt will not fall if they discontinue in their sinful ways. Ezek. 18:4-24 explains how this works. Moses asked for God – based on God's mercy - to pardon the guilt of His people in the manner as He had previously done from the time that they were in Egypt.

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Numbers 14:20-25 - First of all, we see that God honored the intercession of Moses for the people of God. God forgave them for their sin. However, God did not remove the consequences of their sin. It works the same way in our lives. God made a promise concerning the future condition of the earth. There would come a time when the earth would be filled with His glory. This refers to the 1000 year kingdom of Christ in which the curse will not be removed but greatly relieved. Isa. 11:9 states that the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord. This promise reminds us that there is a new day coming for this earth. Our sin delays that coming according to 2 Peter 3:11-12 while holy and godly living hastens it. These men had seen a portion of God's glory and had seen His signs in Egypt and the wilderness. Ten times they had put God to the test. It is never a good idea to keep putting God to the test (Deut. 6:16) by presumptuous and impulsive choices. They also failed to listen to God's word. God stated that they would not enter the land, i.e. a picture of the life of blessing for the Christian. Heb. 6:12 explains that it is through faith and patience that we experience God's promises. Heb. 3:7-12 gives us ample warning. We are not to harden our hearts when we hear God's word like these people did. These people tested God and saw His works for up to 40 years. Because they went astray in their hearts, i.e. their thinking, and did not know God's ways, they did not experience entering the land, a picture of the blessed and abundant life. The only exceptions were Caleb (v. 24) and Joshua (v. 30). Caleb is said to have had a different internal disposition in relation to God and had followed God fully. If we are following God fully by obeying His word, we will experience God's blessing on our lives (1 Sam. 12:14). These people were not ready to face their enemies and had to be disciplined and taught by God in the wilderness. Sin brings discipline from God to train us and delays His blessing on our lives (Heb. 12:5-11). Without submission we are not ready to stand up to the enemy (James 4:7).

Numbers 14:26-35 – Part 1 - God's word again confronts the sin of complaining against God (Phil. 2:14). Lam. 3:39 challenges our thinking in that it asks why should we offer up complaints in view of our sins. We are also reminded of God's presence everywhere at all times who hears these complaints (Ps. 139:1-7). When we repeatedly sin against God and test His patience, we intensify His discipline that He brings into our lives. God pronounced the following disciplinary judgment on His people: Every numbered man 20 years and older who complained against God would die before living to enter the promised land. Joshua and Caleb were the named exceptions. Of course, this excluded the women, and it excluded the Levites since they were not numbered according to Numbers 2:33. We know that Eleazar, who was over 20, entered the promised land based on a comparison of Num. 20:26 and Joshua 14:1. Their excuse had been that their children would be killed if they tried to occupy the promised land. These children, as adults, would live to experience living in the land. Deut.

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1:39 shows that God did not hold those under 20 accountable because they did not know the difference between good and evil. How many Christians fail to experience God's blessings because of disobedience in a given time period, while younger Christians come to experience those blessings because they obeyed in a future period? We notice that the disobedience of the numbered men over 20 who complained brought suffering on their offspring because of their unfaithfulness. 40 days that resulted in unbelief and disobedience brought about 40 years in the wilderness and great delay in entering the promised land. The consequences of sin in the Christian life far outweigh the benefits. Sins may be forgiven and fellowship restored, but we miss out on God's blessing on our obedience (Luke 11:28; John 13:17). In their pride, these men had failed to humble themselves and experienced God's opposition rather than his grace (James 4:6).

Numbers 14:36-45 – Part 2 - We see that God did not delay on bringing His disciplinary judgment down on the spies who made the bad report. God used illness to kill them. However, Joshua and Caleb remained alive. God's discipline can become drastic even in our New Testament era (1 Cor. 11:30-32; Acts 5:1-10). When Moses told the people what God had told him about having to remain in the wilderness, they mourned but not because they had sinned against God and His promises but because of the bad results their sin had brought. It is proper to mourn because of our sins according to James 4:8-10. However, it should result in humility (James 4:10) and repentance according to 2 Cor. 7:9-10). The people finally believed that they could defeat the enemy, but their faith was not based on God's word (Rom. 10:17) but was based on presumption. Previously, at the word of God, they had exercised faith and crossed the Red Sea on dry land. The Egyptians acting on presumption attempted to cross the Red Sea and were drowned (Heb. 11:29). The people of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea were not acting on faith, but were acting contrary to God's word and resisting the discipline that He had imposed. Moses confronted their disobedience and warned them that they would not succeed. God's presence would not go with them into the battle. As Jesus said, "apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5). The people were roundly defeated. Their worldly sorrow attitude toward their sin resulted in premature physical death. As believers, we must not let people tell us that we are not living by faith, when their statement is based on presumption rather than the word of God. Finally, we must remember that in order to be successful in spiritual warfare that we must be strong not in our own might but in the might and power of God (Eph. 6:10).

Numbers 15:1-16 – Part 1 –

This passage can be viewed in two ways. The first way is to look at how it speaks of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The second way is how it relates to the believer's sacrifices and service to the Lord. In relation to Christ, we see the

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phrase “a pleasing aroma to the Lord”. This reminds us that Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins on the cross was pleasing to God (Eph. 5:2). The same idea is caught up in the word “propitiation”. Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins propitiated or satisfied God’s righteous wrath against our sin (1 John 2:2). The grain offering consisting of flour speaks of Jesus Christ as the “the bread of life” (John 6:33-35). The bread pictures His flesh or His body which was sacrificed for our sins (John 6:51). All one had to do was to eat of the bread in order to receive the benefits of it. In the same way, all we have to do to receive the benefits of Christ’s death in our place is to trust in Him for our salvation (John 3:18). The olive oil speaks of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:2-6). Christ made His sacrifice for our sins according to Heb. 9:14 through the Holy Spirit to cleanse our conscience through His shed blood. The drink offering was to focus on the fact that Christ poured out His soul to death (Isa. 53:12, NKJV). By looking at the passage in this way, we see what Jesus meant in John 5:39 and in Luke 24:25-27, 44-46 concerning how the Old Testament scriptures had Him as the central point of importance and emphasis.

Numbers 15:1-16 - Part 2 - In the last paragraph, we looked at how this passage spoke of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this paragraph, we will look at how this passage relates to the sacrifices and services of the believer. As believer-priests, we offer spiritual sacrifices to God such as praise, thanksgiving, doing good, sharing and giving to God’s work (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15-16; Phil. 4:18). One of the focal points of these offerings was pleasing God which is what we as believers are to be doing (2 Cor. 5:9) in all respects (Col. 1:10). We are commanded to grow in living to please God (1 Thes. 4:1). As believers, we are commanded to give offerings to God (1 Cor. 16:2). When it came to God’s commands under the Old Testament, those who were foreigners who lived among and identified with God’s people had the same responsibilities and privileges in relation to these offerings. This reminds us that Israel’s presence among the nations was to have an evangelizing influence on the non-Jews around them. In the same way, we are to tell the gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15). The flour used to make bread reminds us that Christ is to involved in everything that we do and say (Col. 3:17). The olive oil involved with each sacrifice reminds us that we are to walk by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and that we are to let Him fill or control us (Eph. 5:18). Keep in mind that these sacrifices did not take away sin (Heb. 10:3-4). They only covered it until Jesus died on the cross to not just cover our sins but to take them away. (John 1:29).

Numbers 15:17-29 - The sacrifices as noted before point to Christ as the bread of life (John 6:31=33, 51), a sacrifice pleasing to God (Eph. 5:2) and the drink offering as the outpouring of His soul (Isa. 53:12). Verses 20 and 21 point to the fact that the first portion of what we produce or receive belongs to the Lord (Prov. 3:9-10). This is why we are to seek God’s kingdom and His righteousness first with our

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material possessions because in doing so, He promises to see that our needs are met. If all the people as a group sinned against the Lord, there was to be an offering given by the people as a group. If just one person sinned, then the individual himself was to bring an offering. In both instances, the priest was involved in this just as Christ as a high priest was involved. In this case the high priest killed and burnt the offering. In the case of Christ, He offered Himself (Heb. 10:10-14). The Old Testament sacrifices were temporary provisions for fellowship, but not for salvation. It is very clear that the Old Testament believers were saved by faith (Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:3-4 cp. Rom. 4:3-8). The salvation and justification that they received was provided by the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross. The sacrifice of Christ is also the provision for fellowship of the New Testament believer (1 John 1:7). For this reason, when these Old Testament believers offered the animal sacrifices and the priest made atonement, this only covered the sins but did not remove or erase them as pointed out in Rom. 3:25. However, it made it possible for them to have fellowship with God. Much of the book of Hebrews is devoted to this issue. Two things that we must keep in mind are that the Hebrew words for "atone" and "atonement" mean to cover not to remove or erase. Secondly, as we noted before, Christ's sacrifice actually took away our sins (John 1:29). Both Jewish believers, and non-Jewish believers who had identified with the nation of Israel, were able to avail themselves of the sacrifices covering their sins. One other important note though, is that the animal sacrifices were only for sins committed unintentionally. In the next paragraph, we will see why David was unable to offer a sacrifice for sinning against God intentionally for his sin against Uriah and Bathsheba.

Numbers 15:30-36 - This passage deals with defiant or intentional sin. This type of sin is considered more severe than sins done out of ignorance or not knowing better. When it came to a violation of this type, we again see that there was no partiality with God in dealing with the natural born Jew and the non-Jew who had identified with the people of God (Rom. 2:11). The impact of intentional sin is that it brings disrepute upon the name or reputation of God. Such a sin was despising God's word in breaking His commandment. This type of sin called for being completely cut off by death. Under the New Covenant, grace attempts to restore those who sin (Gal. 6:1) and then if all attempts fail, the unrepentant sinning believer is placed outside the fellowship of believers (Mt. 18:15-17). However, this person can still be restored upon true repentance (2 Cor. 2:4-11). The law only brought wrath (Rom. 4:15) and condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9) and no possibility of restoration. The man who violated the commandment to remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy by not working violated that law and was removed from the people of God by stoning him to death. Moses consulted God as to what the punishment should be and was told by God to put him to death. Notice that the whole congregation was involved in the carrying

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out of the penalty. When David sinned in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, his sin was intentional and there he could not offer any sacrifice according to Psalm 51:14-16. The only sacrifice that he could bring was a broken and a contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). 2 Sam. 12:13 explains that David deserved to die, but God was gracious to him. The penalty of the law was not carried out because there were not two witnesses to David's actions (Deut. 17:6). There have been numerous people in counseling sessions where they were planning to sin to get what they wanted with the excuse that they could confess it later and be restored. Such a mindset invites the discipline of God (1 Cor. 11:30-32).

Numbers 15:37-41 - The command was given to the people of Israel to have blue tassels on the corners of their clothing. This was to be done by all generations as a continuing reminder. It was blue in color which many Bible students believe was to remind them of heaven and looking at everything through a heavenly or divine perspective (Col. 3:1-2). This tassel was to help them recall the commandments of God so that they did not let their thoughts or their eyes direct their lives. We are commanded to guard our hearts, i.e. our thoughts with all diligence because out of them proceed the issues of life (Prov. 4:23) and guard what they look at with our eyes so they do not look at what is wicked or worthless (Ps. 101:3; 119:37). In the same way, as believers, our goal is to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5) and to think on the things that best please God (Phil. 4:8). What we look at in terms of reading, the movies, art, and on the internet has a tendency to influence our thoughts because our thoughts have a tendency to follow what we view (Job 31:7). Our thoughts and what we look at tend to promote unfaithfulness to God. Playing the harlot is an expression that speaks of unfaithfulness or spiritual adultery against which we are warned (James 4:4). The goal is to remember to do all of God's commandments. God's desire for His people then and for us now living under the New Covenant is total obedience. Not only was there a need to continually remember God's commandments. There was a need for them and for us by way of application to be holy, i.e. set apart for God's purpose, i.e. His ways and thoughts. The motivation for the people of Israel to obey God's commandments was the fact that He had delivered them from their previous life of bondage in Egypt. For us, the motive would be the fact that God delivered us from our previous life of bondage to sin (Rom. 6:17-18).

Numbers 16:1-7 - Four ringleaders among the Levites and Reuben are named: Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On. They rallied 250 leaders from among the people to rebel against Moses. This reminds us that it is alright to name names of those who promote error (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Gal. 2:6 reminds us that it does not matter whether they are prominent or not if they are in the wrong. They accuse Moses and Aaron of putting themselves forward as the leaders of the people. On

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is not mentioned in the rest of the narrative or at other points in the rebellion and its issues. There is a rabbinical tradition that stated that On's wife talked him into withdrawing from the rebels. Psalm 106:16 states that they were motivated by envy. They correctly stated that everyone in the congregation of Israel was holy, i.e. set apart for God's purpose. However, they wrongly concluded that everyone was equally set apart for leadership. Aaron was called by God according to Heb. 5:4. We know that Moses was the most humble man on earth (Num. 12:3). He and Aaron had not elevated themselves to the position of leadership. Because of their humility, God had exalted or elevated them to the position of leaders at this time (1 Pet. 5:6). Acts 20:28 reminds us that the Holy Spirit elevates certain believers to be leaders in the church congregation. Moses' response sets an example of all believers who are leaders. Before responding to critics, it is well to take the matter to God in prayer. Evidently, Moses received an answer because he instructed Korah and all his followers that God would reveal the very next day who He had set apart to be the leaders of the people and to be the one who would draw near to Him. God would also reveal those who truly belong to Him (2 Tim. 2:19). Moses pointed out that it was not him and Aaron who had gone too far in being leaders, but it was Korah and his followers who had gone too far. We are to take note of those who cause divisions contrary to God's word (Rom. 16:17-18). Moses and Aaron were going to let God's word decide the issue. We do well to do so before replacing spiritual leaders.

Numbers 16:8-14 - Moses rebuked Korah and the men with him. He reminded them of their 4-fold privileges: (1) God had separated them the rest of the people of Israel, (2) He had brought them nearer to God through their work at the tabernacle, (3) They were solely qualified to do the service of the tabernacle, (4) They were in a position of visibility in standing in front of the congregation. Moses put his finger on their problem of envy (Ps. 106:15) because they were seeking the priesthood. Heb. 5:4 reminds us that this honor is not to be taken by anyone other than the one God calls. As believer/priests, we are not all qualified to be leaders or any other role other than the role for which God has given us (1 Pet. 2:5 cp. Eph. 4:11, the word "some"). We have the privilege of the priestly works of intercessory prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-2; offering praise and thanksgiving (Heb. 13:15), doing good, sharing (Heb. 13:16) and giving to God's work (Phil. 4:18). These men who rebelled against Moses and Aaron were not content. The root of their discontent and all discontent is to focus on what we cannot do rather than what we can do for God. Their complaint against Moses and Aaron were more against God than against these two men (Ex. 16:7-8). 1 Cor. 10:10 warns us against complaining against leaders in this way and risking severe discipline from God. Dathan and Abiram refused to respond to Moses' summons. They excused their disobedience to God's appointed leaders (Heb. 13:17) by falsely saying that

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Moses and Aaron had failed in their role as leaders. They stated that Moses and Aaron had taken them out of a land of milk and honey. Like many Christians – carnal or counterfeit – they exaggerated the life before they were redeemed. They were barely surviving in Egypt and were in bondage. In the same way believers today forget that they were in bondage before they were saved (Rom. 6:17-18). Eccl. 7:10 and Phil. 3:14 instruct us to not look to the past. They accused Moses and Aaron of lording it over the congregation when they had merely been following God's instructions. Finally, they laid the failure to enter the land (a picture of the abundant Christian life) at the feet of Moses and Aaron when the real problem had been the lack of faith and obedience on the part of the people (Heb. 3:18-19). Finally, they accused Moses and Aaron of deceit when the real problem was the disobedience of the people. They were looking at this situation from a worldly viewpoint rather than looking at the situation from the perspective of God's word. This reminds us that all of life is to be viewed through the lens of scripture rather than a secular lens.

Numbers 16:15-22 - Moses was very angry about the rebellion but took the matter in prayer to God. We do well when we encounter angering situations to take matters to God rather than to take matters into our own hands. Moses asked God not to regard their offering because of their attitude. Moses had not done any harm to any of those involved in the rebellion. He had not taken anything from them by force or by deceit. Moses was evidently guided by God to issue a challenge to those who were opposed to the God-given authority. This would consist of bringing their firepans with incense on them and their censers and stand in front of the tabernacle doorway. In praying to God, Moses had received wisdom for this trial. In the same way, as we pray in faith to God in the face of trials and testings, God promises to give us the wisdom that is needed (James 1:5). The confrontation appeared very unequal as Korah and his two confederates along with the 250 men of repute showed up to confront Moses and Aaron. God again proposed to Moses and Aaron to destroy the congregation and asked them to separate themselves from everyone. However, Moses and Aaron asked God to be merciful since it would be punishment of all the people for the rebellion of this sizable minority. They prayed that God would restrain His judgment and His anger. As believers, we are to intercede for all the believers (Eph. 6:18). We note that all people have a human spirit which some Bible teachers would deny. We will see that the intercession of Moses spared more extensive judgment on the entire congregation so that God would deal with those who were participating in the rebellion.

Numbers 16:23-35 - God brought about a dramatic response to his rebellion against His appointed spiritual leaders. The people were warned to separate themselves from these people. We are given similar warnings to stay away or

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get away from those who are in rebellion against God and profess to be believers (1 Cor. 5:9-11; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:5). The test was simple, if these men in rebellion and everything that belonged to them went alive into sheol, it would mean that God had spoken to and through Moses and that these men had rejected the leading of God. If it did not happen, then it would mean that God had not spoken to Moses. However, the judgment of which Moses had spoken came to pass and these men and their households went down alive into Sheol except for the sons of Korah who evidently did not rebel with their father (Num 26:11). This accords with Ezek. 18:2-24. Sadly, the sins of these leaders except for Korah cost them not only their own lives but the lives of their family and their possessions. In addition, fire from God killed the 250 men of repute who had supported these men in their rebellion. Once again we see God's discipline can be severe. Believers living in this age of grace must realize that God can and does still deal out some strong discipline and judgment (1 Cor. 11:30-32). Those who were genuine believers would obviously experience physical death while those who were not genuine believers would experience condemnation (John 3:18). God had the attention of His people for the moment. One of the problems is that believers have sometimes become lax in their fear of God. We are warned to conduct ourselves in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Pet. 1:17).

Numbers 16:36-40 - All the incense burners that had been carried by the 250 men of repute who had been killed by the Lord's fire were to be taken out of the fire. They were considered holy (set apart for God's exclusive purpose) because they had been presented in the Lord's presence. They were made of bronze and used to cover the altar. This would warn the people of God that anyone who was not a descendent of Aaron should never enter God's presence to burn incense. The bronze speaks of judgment. It would remind these people that God had brought judgment on those who had violated his order for the priesthood. By being used to overlay the altar, it speaks of Christ who was judged for our sins when He died on the cross (Rom. 8:3; John 12:31; Gal. 3:13). The Hebrew word for "altar" means to lift up. Christ used this figure to describe His death on the cross (John 3:14; 12:32). Jesus Christ was uniquely qualified to be our high priest because it was based on a superior and eternal priesthood (Heb. 7:1-28). We are able to enter God's presence under the New Covenant by the new and living way provided by the Lord Jesus Christ and to make intercession for people (Heb. 10:19-22 cp. 1 Tim. 2:1-2). This account serves as a reminder to recognize the privilege conferred upon us that these people did not have and to be reminded that we only have this privilege because of the finished work of Christ and His authority. We are never to disregard the holiness of God because God will bring discipline upon those believers who do so (Heb. 12:9 cp. 1 Cor. 11:30-32).

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Numbers 16:41-50 - One would think the people would really be cautious about challenging or rebelling against God's appointed authorities after what happened to Korah, his associates and the 250 men. Proverbs 26:11 states that a fool who repeats his folly is as disgusting as a dog returning to its vomit. A fool is not so much without knowledge as he is a rebel against what he clearly knows. As believers, we must be careful as we forget what lies behind (Phil. 3:13) that we learn from the past and not repeat our sins (Psalm 85:8). Once again, we see complaining against God's appointed leaders amounted to a complaint against God (Ex. 16:7-8). Rather than holding Korah and his followers responsible for inciting God's disciplinary judgment, they held Moses and Aaron responsible. Yet, they would have died with Korah and his group if Moses and Aaron had not interceded for them. This time, Moses and Aaron did not have to pray. God showed up in the Shechinah glory and once again proposed to Moses and Aaron that He was ready to destroy the people of God quickly. However, once again Moses and Aaron interceded for them. However, God sent a deadly plague of disease among the people that killed 14,700 of them. Moses knew that they needed restoration and Aaron, the priest, was to make atonement for them. It is said that Aaron took His stand between the living and the dead to check the disciplinary judgment of God in the form of a plague of disease. In the same way, our high priest Jesus Christ is our advocate who speaks in our defense before the Father (1 John 2:1). Christ's death on the cross provides for the restoration of fellowship when we sin according to 1 John 1:9. It is important that we intercede for fellow-believers who sin so that they will keep physically living and not die at the hand of God's discipline (1 John 5:16-17 cp. 1 Cor. 11:30-32). It is instructive to see how Moses and Aaron were so faithful in their ministry of intercession. May we be equally faithful as believer/priests.

Numbers 17:1-13 - God was attacking the root problem that the rebellion of the people was their lack of belief that the authority of Moses and Aaron was from God. As a result, God had Moses set up a test for a rod to be taken from each of the 12 tribes. Each of these rods represented the authority God had given each leader of each tribe. Aaron's name was to be on the rod for the tribe of Levi. These were to be deposited in the tabernacle. The miracle would be that the one that God chose to be high priest would have his rod sprout. The purpose of this miracle would be to confirm God's choice for the one to serve as high priest and to put an end to the complaining of the various factions among the people. The very next day, Moses went into the tabernacle and found the rods were all the same except for the rod of Aaron which had sprouted blossoms and ripe almonds. This showed the unique authority of Aaron in producing life out of something that was dead. It pictures the Lord Jesus Christ who was dead and buried and came forth alive (1 Cor. 15:3-4 cp. Rev. 1:18). Notice that this miracle was verified by the leaders of each tribe. This reminded people that Aaron and

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his sons were to have a perpetual priesthood (Ex. 40:15). In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ because He was raised from the dead to be our high priest in heaven forever (Heb. 7:22-25), lives permanently. Just as Aaron's rod produced fruit, so Christ's life produces fruit in the lives of those believers who abide in Him (John 15:4-5, 16). Aaron's rod served as a sign to God's people not to complain or rebel against their leaders knowing that such a sin could lead to premature physical death (1 John 5:16-17 cp. 1 Cor. 11:30-32). The people over-reacted to this sign and the disciplinary judgment of God by feeling that they were going to die and especially if they came near the tabernacle. Like a car veering off the right side of the road overcorrects and goes off the left side of the road, these people over-reacted by thinking they should just not go near the tabernacle. Just like the car veering off the right side of the road, the corrective is to get back on the road. The people needed to simply approach God at the tabernacle in the way prescribed by God. Because of Jesus' finished sacrifice and His High priestly position, those of us living in the age of grace can draw near with bold confidence to God to find the grace and mercy that we need (Heb. 4:16).

Numbers 18:1-7 - We note that service for God must not have elements that are displeasing to God. Aaron and his sons were responsible as leaders to guard their service in the sanctuary from anyone doing anything that would make it displeasing to God. We note that leaders are responsible not only to watch the lives those under their charge but their own lives as well. Both Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16) and the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:28) were responsible to guard those were under their authority as well as themselves from anything that would violate God's word. The Levites were to assist the priests just as the deacons are to assist the leaders of the church (Acts 6:1-3). However, the Levites were to stay away from the priestly rituals and holy objects. In the church the deacons were to be helpers to the leaders so that the leaders could devote themselves to the ministry of God's word and prayer (Acts 6:4). If the priests and Levites had continued to handle their responsibilities as prescribed in God's word, they and the people would have avoided God's displeasure and discipline. In the same way, when the church follows the pattern set forth in the New Testament, they avoid incurring God's displeasure and are blessed (e.g. Acts 6:7) Another way to view this passage is to understand that all of us as believers are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). We have a responsibility to handle the things of God which He has entrusted to us such as the treasure of the gospel (2 Tim. 1:14). God set clear boundaries for His people including the priests and the Levites. Their fear of dying prematurely expressed in Num. 17:12-13 would be relieved by simply respecting and obeying these boundaries. The same principle holds true for us.

Numbers 18:8-20 - The priests functioned as the leaders of the Levites. They were in charge of all the offerings given by the people including animal sacrifices and

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crops. They were full time in God's work. This established the principle that is carried on in the New Testament that believers as God's people are to support their full-time spiritual leaders (1 Cor. 9:13-14). This was a provision for the priests and their families. They received a tithe of the first and best portion of any crop or animal. The principle for Christian giving is that God - and by His granting it to the priests - gets the first portion of these items (Prov. 3:9-10). Also, since these offerings were primarily for God and only secondarily for the priests, they had to be the best (cp. Mal. 1:7-9). Any unclean animal or any firstborn son was to be redeemed by 5 shekels of silver. The fact that human beings were not sacrificed points to two fundamental principles: (1) Human life is valuable to God and (2) Human beings are by nature unclean according to Job 25:4. We can see from this passage that the sacrificial system and giving to support God's work was designed by God to be a blessing to the priests. However, those who were ritually unclean missed out on this blessing. This ritual uncleanness was a picture of sin in our lives. One of the things that sin does in our lives as believer/priests is that it deprives us of God's blessing (Jer. 5:25). God said that the partaking of offerings to God was for the priests as the spiritual leaders and was a permanent covenant. On the other hand, the priests did not have any inheritance in the land. God was their portion. As believer priests, our inheritance is in heaven and is not earthly (1 Pet. 1:3-4). As the Psalmist said in Psalm 73:26, God is our portion forever.

Numbers 18:21-32 - The people were to tithe to support the Levites. In turn, the Levites were not to receive any allotment of land among the people of Israel. It would appear that the people were responsible to give the tithe (10%) to the Levites and the Levites were responsible for administering the tithes. Of all the tithes received, the Levites were to give 10% of these tithes to the priests. This establishes the principle that full-time Christian workers are to give proportionately to the work of God. One of the duties of the Levites was to safeguard the tabernacle and the area immediately around it to keep the people who were not Levites away from it. The food offerings were their food supply for them and their families. Once again, we see the seeds of the principles of New Testament giving: proportionate giving (1 Cor. 16:2 "as the Lord may prosper"), giving the Lord the first portion of income or harvest (Prov. 3:9-10) and finally giving your best to the Lord (1 Cor. 10:31 cp. Rom. 12:11; 2 Cor. 8:1-5). The Levites were to handle what was given as holy. In the same way, church officials must be completely honest in God's sight and man's sight (2 Cor. 8:18-21). To fail to do so invites God's discipline.

Numbers 19:1-22 - We must remember that Christ's sacrifice on the cross not only provided cleansing from the penalty of sin, but also provides cleansing from the

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defilement of sin. We receive the benefits of being cleansed from the penalty of sin when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (Acts 10:43). We receive the benefit of being cleansed from the defilement of sins committed after our salvation by confessing the sin or sins to God and being forgiven and restored to fellowship (1 John 1:9). The sacrifice of the red heifer is a picture of Christ's work in dying for our sins. The fact that the red heifer was to be unblemished and without defect reminds us that Christ was without sin in action (1 Pet. 2:22) and nature (1 John 3:5). The red color of the heifer reminds us of the fact that Christ's shed blood not only justifies us (Rom. 5:9) but cleanses us from the defilement of sin (1 John 1:7). The fact that a yoke is not on the red heifer speaks of the fact that Christ was never in bondage to sin. It was slain outside the camp. Hebrews 13:12 reminds us that Jesus suffered outside the gate. The fact that the blood was sprinkled 7 times toward the tabernacle reminds us that Christ's sacrifice was complete (Heb. 9:26-28; 10:10, 14). The fact that the red heifer was burned completely reminds us that Jesus Christ was judged totally and completely for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21). The rest of the chapter would remind us that sin sidelines the believer for a time so that he is defiled and not useful for God until cleansing takes place. The water speaks of the role of God's word in cleansing our sin (Eph. 5:26; Psalm 119:9). The responsibility to wash the clothes speaks of our need to confess the sin to God that He might cleanse us from sin's defilement. The accidental contact with a dead body reminds us that all of our sin is not intentional but it still needs to be cleansed, and it still sidelines us for a time. Notice that this defilement affects the objects that these people touched. In the same way, sin often results in us using things in a way that dishonors God (e.g. driving a car in a way that harms others). These people who refused to be cleansed from their defilement were cut off from God's people and were therefore useless to the rest of God's people and to God's plan for them. In the same way, if we do not confess and forsake our sins (Prov. 28:13), we hinder our usefulness to God and to other believers.

Numbers 20:1-6 - The death of Miriam, the sister of Moses, was a marker of the fact that the older generation of the people of God were dying. The main focus of this passage was the problem of carnality among the people of God. The presenting circumstance was that the people and their animals had no water. This coalition of carnal believers gathered together against Moses and Aaron blaming them for the presenting problem. As believers, we are to hold our

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leaders in high esteem (1 Thes. 5:12). We are warned against complaining in Phil. 2:14; 1 Cor. 10:10 and James 5:9 because the judge is ready to bring judgment or discipline on us at any moment. We see that carnality often is characterized by a death wish. We readily forget that God has a purpose for our lives. They were looking at their circumstances and questioned God's purpose for their lives. We are instructed to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Because they were not in the land, the carnal among God's people lost sight of the fact that they were going to enter the promised land. In the same way, carnal believers on facing testing and trials will often deny the reality of the abundant Christian life. On facing this challenge, Moses and Aaron brought the matter to God. James 1:5 reminds us as believers that if we lack wisdom in facing any test or challenge, we are to ask God because He will not find fault with us. Heb. 4:16 also reminds us that when we face a time of need, we should come before God and the throne of grace to find the grace and mercy that we need to face that situation. This is especially important when we are unfairly blamed for a situation. Notice that complaining was the first resort of the people while prayer was the first resort of Moses and Aaron. 1 Cor. 10:11 reminds us that these things were written in the Old Testament as examples for us to teach or warn us on how to respond to adversity.

Numbers 20:7-13 – Part 1 - God gave Moses some very specific instructions. He was to take the rod and speak to the rock. The Hebrew word for "rock" speaks of a elevated rock whereas the word for "rock" in Exodus 17:6 speaks of a rock that is not elevated. The rock is stated to be a picture of Jesus Christ according to 1 Cor. 10:4. In Exodus 17:5, Moses was to take the rod with which he struck the Nile River and strike the rock once. The rod used in Ex. 17:5 was Moses' rod or staff of judgment. There the rock (picturing Christ) was struck once. Jesus was judged for our sins (John 12:31) once for all (1 Pet. 3:18). However, in our reading, the priestly rod of Aaron was used. Moses was not to strike the rock, but simply speak to it. The elevated rock speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ on high as our High priest in heaven (Heb. 4:14). By striking the rock twice, Moses failed to represent the picture of Christ's work. Notice that water came forth in Ex. 17:1-7 reminding us that Jesus' death provided the living water of salvation (John 4:13-14) imparted by the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39 cp. 6:63) which started our Christian life. In our passage in Numbers, the living water of salvation imparted by the Holy Spirit not only starts our Christian life but sustains it. One of the myths that many hold on to is that God's blessing means God's approval. We see that God blessed here in this passage and in Exodus 17. However, in this passage, God was not pleased with his servants Moses and Aaron. Yet God chose to bless the people despite the disobedience of Moses and Aaron. We will continue looking at this passage in the next paragraph.

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Numbers 20:7-13 – Part 2 - There are still many truths in this passage to be seen. We see that the sin of Moses and Aaron was unbelief in God's word. According to Numbers 20:24 and 27:14, they rebelled against God's command which was to treat God as holy. As leaders, Moses and Aaron were to be examples to the people. Anytime that we as believers fail to take God at His exact word, we are not respecting His holiness. The attitude of Moses and Aaron was not good. They denounced the people as rebels. As believers, we are to speak that which edifies or builds up and not that which tears down (Eph. 4:29). They also claimed glory for themselves and robbed God of His rightful glory, when they spoke harshly saying, "Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock. Their emphasis was on what they could do rather than what God could do. To be sure the people were guilty of provoking Moses to sin with what he said (Psalm 106:32-33), but this did not absolve Moses from speaking rashly. However, when we provoke others, we are sinning against God (Gal. 5:26). We may have people provoke us, but we must take responsibility for letting the provocation move us to sin. We see that God is concerned for animals because He provided water not only for the people but for their animals as well. Job 38:39-41; Psalm 147:9; Mt. 6:26 show God's concern for animals and their needs. God's judgment in the form of discipline came down strongly on Moses and Aaron (1 Cor. 11:30-32). This is a good illustration of the sin unto death spoken of in 1 John 5:16-17. Finally, we see that God had to use someone else (Joshua) to lead the people of God into the promised land. When God's people fail to carry out the plan He had for them, many times He will use someone else to achieve His purposes (Est. 4:14).

Numbers 20:14-22 - In this passage, Moses presented the testimony of God's people. He spoke of the hardships that they had encountered. He spoke of their bondage and mistreatment in Egypt. In the same way, we as believers suffered under the bondage of sin prior to being saved. When we give our testimony, it is needful to give the "before" picture. The testimony of Moses spoke of the outcry of the people to God and His sending His Angel to save or deliver them. In the same way, as we give our testimony, it is important to explain what God did in saving us from our lives of bondage to sin. The testimony was the foundation of the request of God's people to pass through the territory of Edom with a pledge to not take any of their crops or water as they passed through. However, Edom refused to let them pass through their territory. After threatening God's people, the people of Edom came out with a large army to re-enforce their refusal. The root of this was Jacob's stealing the blessing from Esau (also called Edom) through deceit and outright lying. While Esau forgave his brother, his

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descendents were not so forgiving. The deceit of Jacob created a lack of trust on the part of the Edomites for the people of Israel which had persisted. It shows that sins can be forgiven, but that does not stop consequences and destroys trust. This refusal on the part of Edom created more tension between them and the people of Israel which will culminate in their final judgment in relation to Jesus' return to earth and the battle of Armageddon (Isa. 63:1-6). Some see this passage in Numbers as conflicting with Deut. 2:1-7. However Deut. 2:1-7 shows that the people were allowed to buy food from the people of Edom. In Deut. 2:1-7, the people of Israel were commanded to pass through the territory of the people of Esau, i.e. the nation of Edom. The Hebrew words translated "passed through" are also translated "pass by" in Gen. 18:3 and the Hebrew word for the word "territory" is translated "border" 150 times by the NASB. This understanding harmonizes with Judges 11:16-18. Numbers 20:14-21 makes it clear that the people of Edom did not let the people of Israel pass through their country, but they did pass by Edom on the border area.

Numbers 20:23-29 - Many have supposed there is a contradiction between Deut. 10:6 which speaks of Aaron being buried in Moserah and Num. 20:25-28 which speaks of Aaron being buried on Mt. Hor. It is the view of many Bible students that Moserah is the name of a district or region where Mt. Hor is located. It would be like saying someone is buried in Illinois or saying they were buried in Chicago. Both would be correct. The fact that it states that Aaron was gathered to His people lends supports the teaching that those who had died still were existing and gives early testimony to belief in life after death. The fact that Aaron would not enter the land shows that he had missed God's best for his life. As believers, we must strive to experience God's rest by taking Christ's yoke upon us. This speaks of obedience to His commandments, i.e. the New Testament (contrast the yoke of the past, the Old Testament law – Acts 15:10). The reason for his premature death (the sin unto death – 1 John 5:16-17) was the fact that he and Moses both had rebelled against God's command at the water of Meribah. Aaron's son Eleazar accompanied him and Moses up the mountain where he could visibly see the cost of this sin. The stripping off of Aaron's garments and putting them on Eleazar shows that our position and honor in this life do not follow us to the next life and God's provides a successor. God's worker may die, but God's work continues. Notice that Moses and Eleazar rendered exact public obedience to God's word in contrast to the public disobedience that Moses and Aaron had committed in Num. 20:12. We are reminded that all people have an appointment with death (Heb. 9:27), that our times are in God's hands (Ps. 31:15) and that God has determined the limits of our life time

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although sin may shorten it as in this case (Job 14:5). As a result of Aaron's death, the people mourned for 30 days. When Stephen, the church's first martyr died, there was great mourning for him (Acts 8:2). As believers, we mourn the death of fellow-believers, but we do not mourn in the same way that unbelievers (who have nothing to look forward to) mourn (1 Thes. 4:13) but we mourn of as those who have a wonderful future with the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father in eternity.

Numbers 21:1-3 - The king of Arad pictures Satan who heads up the warfare against God's people. He is a Canaanite. The Canaanites remind us of the world ruled by Satan (John 12:31). The people of God were on their way to the promised land just as those who have trusted Christ for salvation on or their way to God's place of blessing or the abundant Christian life. Satan fought against God's people and took some – but not all – of them as captive. In the same way, Satan wars against believers today (Eph. 6:10-12 cp. 1 Pet. 5:8). As a result, some believers end up as captives of Satan to do his will (2 Tim. 2:26). The first step to resist this enemy is to submit to God in complete commitment just as the people of Israel vowed to do (James 4:7). The people of Israel were dependent on God's power to deliver this enemy into their hands. As believers, we must be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and are dependent on that power for victory over Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9). Their promise was to utterly destroy these Canaanites which they did. They submitted – resisted – and the enemy was defeated. This is the same principle for us as believers under the New Covenant according to James 4:7. Finally, notice that a key factor that brought victory was prayer on the part of God's people Israel and the response of God in giving them victory. Eph. 6:18 reminds us of the importance of Holy Spirit directed prayer in our spiritual warfare and the need for God's power and enablement (Eph. 6:10).

Numbers 21:4-9 - This group of the people of God were not very spiritual. They wanted to be in the land now. So it is with the abundant Christian life and spiritual maturity. Believers become impatient because they think they should be experiencing it now. That is why we are to walk by the Spirit because one aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is patience (Gal. 5:16, 22-23). It states that the people were impatient because of the journey. Going to a distant place by foot takes time and perseverance. So it is with the Christian life. God tests us to mature us according to James 1:2-4. God tests our faith to develop perseverance, and the result of that perseverance is maturity. Spiritual maturity also takes time according to Heb. 5:12-14 (note the words, "by this time"). Microwave maturity is not to be found in the Christian life. To be sure, there was a real physical problem, but there was a real spiritual problem as well – a lack of contentment and thankfulness. The people spoke against Moses and against God. They maligned both of them. The word "you" is plural so both Moses and

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God are blamed for bringing them up out of Egypt out into the wilderness to die. There was no food and no water at this point. We note that carnality among believers tends to find fault with both God and spiritual leaders for adversity. Yet God was using this to test them and teach them that people do not live by food alone, but by every word of God (Deut. 8:2-3). Contentment has to be learned according to Phil. 4:12-13 and is made doable by the power of Christ (Phil. 4:13). It is easy to not be grateful for what God is providing, but a lack of gratitude is the attitude of the time period in which we live and to which we are not to be conformed (Rom. 12:2 “world” = “age” with 2 Tim. 3:1-2 “ungrateful”). The people were focused on what they did not have rather than what they had. God’s discipline on them resulted in Him sending poisonous snakes among them to bite them so that many died. The people confessed their sin to Moses and to God. He prayed for them and God arranged the following remedy. Moses made a bronze serpent, put it on a pole so that all the people who were bitten had to do was to look and live. The lifting up of the bronze serpent was a picture of Christ being lifted up on the cross. All they had to do was to look at it, and they would live. This reminds us that salvation from the penalty of sin is by simple faith (John 3:14-15). This reminds us that we must be careful about encumbering the receipt of salvation with a host of conditions outside of simple faith.

Numbers 21:10-20 - The sin and subsequent discipline of God’s people had halted them from moving toward the promised land. In the same way, when we sin, and God has to discipline us, it creates a delay in our moving to experience the fullness of the Christian abundant life. We notice that that the people of God moved out. When we sin, confess and are restored to fellowship, we as believers need to move out in our Christian lives and head for God’s place of blessing or the abundant life. This move toward the promised land is called a journey. In the same way, our move toward Christian maturity and the abundant life is a journey. The term “set out” is used to emphasize a definite goal for where the people of Israel were going. In the same way, we Christians set out to follow Jesus knowing it requires endurance, suffering and finally joy (Heb. 12:1-2). We see that the people camped at certain spots. The Christian life involves times of work and times of rest. Both are important for a balanced Christian life. Only as we take Christ’s yoke upon us, i.e. obey His commandments do we experience that rest (Mt. 11:29). Reference is made to the “Book of the Wars of the Lord” (a book from antiquity, which has been lost) and appears to be a collection of poems. It speaks of locales on the way to the border of Moab. Many of these are unknown locations to modern scholars. The people did not know where they were going. They were simply following the leading of God. In the same way, God leads us today. We do not know where we are going, but God directs our steps (Prov. 16:9). As they following the leading of God, the people of Israel

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needed and received more guidance. In the same way, present day believers are led in this manner by God (Acts 9:6) as we obey God's leading. They came to a place called "Beer" meaning "well". The people were commanded through Moses to assemble so God could give them water. Water is used as picture of salvation in John 4:13-14, the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39) and the word of God (Eph. 5:26). Here we see a picture of God's people meeting together to experience the cleansing and refreshment of the word of God. We notice that God provided the location for the well, but the leaders had to dig the well with their scepters and staffs. In the Christian life, spiritual growth and refreshment requires leaders who are willing to work at making the provision of God available to His people. While the people did not yet reach the promised land, they had made progress by following God's leading. As believers follow God's leading they will not reach the fullness of the abundant life all at once. Like the people of Israel, progress and growth will be incremental.

Numbers 21:21-35 - There are several principles for God's people that are worth noting in this passage. There was an effort to pursue peace on the part of God's people. We are called to live in peace with all people so far as it depends on us (Rom. 12:18). We notice that the opponents of God's people attacked them. So it is with us today. Our Lord was hated by the world and so are we His followers (John 15:18-21). While the people of God fought used physical warfare in their encounter with the enemy, those of us living in the present age are committed to spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18) with spiritual weapons (2 Cor. 10:3-5). The people of Israel used their swords to defeat the enemy while those of us living in the present age use the sword of the Holy Spirit which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). We note that Sihon, the defeated king had defeated the people of Moab whose God was Chemosh. Chemosh was powerless to prevent some of the people of Moab to be taken captive. On the other hand, the true God of Israel had enabled His people to not only defeat the enemy but completely wipe them out. This victory demonstrated the reality of the true God. When believers love the world more than they love God (1 John 2:15) and befriend the world system (James 4:4), they fail to be holy so that the unsaved can see the reality of God (Heb. 12:14). Physical victory helped to serve as a testimony to Moab of the reality of the true God while spiritual victory in relation to the world helps the unsaved world to see the reality of God. While the victory over King Og teaches similar lessons, there are additional lessons to be learned. First, believers are not to face our conflicts in this world with fear. God has not given us a Spirit who produces fear (2 Tim. 1:7) but produces a bold confidence (Acts 4:31). Because of Christ's presence, we can be content and not fear what people can do to us (Heb. 13:5-6). They were to trust in God's power to give them the victory (1 Cor. 15:57;

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Phil. 4:13). Finally, God reminded them of their previous victory just as He reminds us of our previous victories.

Numbers 22:1-14 - This verse opens with further progress to the promised land and reminds us that we are to be progressing toward God's place of blessing in our Christian lives. However, the fact that we are progressing in our walk with the Lord does not mean that there will not be opposition. Our primary opponent is Satan who seeks opportunity to weaken us (2 Cor. 2:11) so that he can overpower us (1 Pet. 5:8). Such was the case with Israel. The concern of the enemy was that Israel had overwhelmingly defeated the Amorites and that they were numerous. When there is a sudden increase in numbers among the children of God as there was in the early church, Satan began to make his subversive moves (Acts 5:1-4). Balak was the king of Moab. He was very concerned because the Amorites, whom Israel had defeated, had themselves defeated Moab. He enlisted the help of a prophet who knew about the true God named Balaam. Balaam had a reputation for successfully blessing and cursing various peoples. Balaam would enlist God or enlist a demon to effect blessing or cursing. He was astute enough to know that he could not do this without God's approval. Satan's power and activity have to have God's permission (Job 1:12; 2:6; Luke 22:31-32). Prov. 26:2 explains that people may not curse us without a God-approved cause either through God himself or through demonic power. The elders of Moab and the elders of Midian brought money to enlist Balaam's help. This was to appeal to Balaam's weakness, the love of money (2 Pet. 2:15). We are reminded that our lives as believers are to be free from the love of money and to be content with what we have because Jesus has promised that He will never leave us (Heb. 13:5). Balaam told these men that he would need to hear from God before agreeing to do what they asked. God told him not to go with these men and that he was not to curse the people of Israel because He, i.e. God, has blessed them. Up to this time Balaam did alright. He told them that God had not given permission for him to go with the leaders of Moab and Midian. It is important to always follow God's word and not look for a way around that word. However, we will see that the enemies of Israel did not give up their plan to curse the people of Israel. Even Satan withdrew from tempting Jesus until an opportune time (Luke 4:13). We must remember that Satan continually seeks to wear us down just as he tried with Jesus and succeeded with Balaam.

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Numbers 22:15-22 - Balaam had passed the first temptation discussed in our last meditation. However, Satan working through Balak was ready to offer a greater temptation. This happened with Jesus, and it happens with us (Luke 4:13). God has explicitly told him not to curse (=ask God or any demon to judge) the people of Israel because God was purposing to bless Israel (cp. Num. 22:12). However, Balak was following Satan's strategy to wear down the reluctance of Balaam. So Balak sent more important men to Balaam to offer him great honor and money. At this point, we see Balaam's heart. He invited the men to stay with him, and he was going to consult God to see if God would agree to let him curse the people of Israel. When God has told us something in His word, we are not to ask for an exception so that we can get around what He has clearly told us. Secondly, he asked these men to stay with him that night. 1 Cor. 15:33 reminds us that bad company corrupts good morals. The only reason that Balaam would have had was his hope that God would change His mind so that Balaam could enrich himself. Balaam was more interested in enriching himself than in enriching the purposes and plans of God. This is called the way of Balaam in 2 Pet. 2:15 in loving financial gain for doing what was not right. When Balaam consulted God, He told Balaam that if the men came for him, he could accompany them, but he must only say what God told him to say. However, God's word plainly states that Balaam got up and went with them on his donkey. It does not say that they came for him the next morning. Because Balaam went with them when they had not come for him, God's anger was aroused. The Angel of the LORD (who is God appearing as an angel – see Gen. 16:7-13) took His stand in the way as an adversary against Balaam riding on his donkey accompanied by two servants. When we sin, we invite God's opposition whether we are a believer or an unbeliever. This is why the work of the cross provides reconciliation for salvation for the repentant unbeliever who trusts Christ (2 Cor. 5:18-19) and practical reconciliation for believers who sin and then confess that sin (2 Cor. 5:20 cp. 1 John 1:7, 9).

Numbers 22:22-33 - In this meditation, we see that God was opposed to Balaam's plan to go with the men of Balak. God supernaturally enabled the donkey to see the Angel of the LORD, but Balaam did not see the Angel of the LORD. When we are out of God's will, we are not able to see things from a spiritual standpoint. Three times, God used the donkey to save Balaam's life. However, Balaam was oblivious to that fact. Three times Balaam struck the donkey. We notice that despite the pain and frustration of this trial, Balaam did not ask God for wisdom. Such trials remind us to ask for God's wisdom (James

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1:5). So God supernaturally opened the mouth of the donkey so that it could speak. This reminds us that scripture presents a supernatural explanation of many events and interactions rather than a naturalistic perspective. To try to remove the supernatural from scripture leaves us with a few stories and some rules but no risen Christ and no Holy Spirit. 2 Pet. 2:16 adds to the obvious supernaturalism of the event by pointing out that the donkey spoke with a man's voice. The passage goes on to explain that the donkey speaking to him rebuked (better "exposed") his own transgression and restrained his lack of rational thinking. It is obvious that this event that brought Balaam's anger against the donkey was arranged by God to delay Balaam's plan and to save his life. God not only knows all things but knows all possibilities as exemplified by the fact that if the donkey had not balked at Balaam's control, he would have died. When God opened Balaam's spiritual eyes to see the Angel of the LORD with a drawn sword, Balaam saw things from God's perspective rather than a human viewpoint. This episode brought Balaam to bow in submission to God and on his face in humility. God wants us to pray that the eyes of our hearts would be open to His working (Eph. 1:18). The eyes of our body enable us to see the realities of the natural realm whereas the eyes of our heart help us to see the realities of the spiritual realm. God's desire for our lives is to use testings to bring about submission of our will or want-to to His will or want-to and to expose our insufficiency. While Balaam's change of mind was only temporary, it would be sufficient for God to use Balaam for His purposes in relation to the people of Israel.

Numbers 22:34-41 - When Balaam saw things from God's perspective rather than a human perspective, he realized that he had sinned against God. He confessed his sin to God. However, his confession is less than completely sincere. God had originally told him not to go with the men unless they called him (Num. 22:20). He had no reason to not realize that God was opposing Him. Balaam is telling God that he sinned not because it was against God but because he did not know God was standing in the way to confront him. It is like confessing our sin to God because we did not know He was going to take drastic action. Balaam did offer to go back, but God had another plan. Now that Balaam knew that God was serious, God was going to use Balaam to show how He can turn cursing into blessing for us as believers (Deut. 23:5). God directed Balaam to go with the men, but to say only what God told Him to say. Balak was less than pleased with Balaam's slowness in answering his summons. Balaam made it clear that he could not say anything he wanted but had to speak God's message. As believers, we must communicate God's word and not just communicate something to please people (1 Thes. 2:4). Balak was completely clueless as to why Balaam was late. He mistakenly thought that Balaam did not believe that he would be generously paid. Balak offered sacrifices to his false

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god to try to enlist his help for Balaam and shared the sacrifice with Balaam and the men with him. Num. 24:1 would suggest that these sacrifices were to provide omens from demons to work in this situation. Balaam assumed that God might let him curse this people because of their sinfulness. Because he was hoping to get paid, he persisted in his error-based thinking (Jude 1:11).

Numbers 23:1-12 - Once again, Balaam tried to get some change of mind or concession from God. He wanted the money, but was not about to do anything contrary to what God had told him. He had Balak build 7 altars (these were evidently altars to Baal). After sacrificing the animals, Balaam sought a response from God. God told Balaam in no uncertain terms to take His message and speak it to Balak, the king of Moab. The message clearly upheld God's covenant with Abraham which promised blessing and not cursing on Israel (Gen. 12:1-3). Balaam acknowledged that Balak had brought him to curse Israel and announce their doom or condemnation. However, the issue was that he could not condemn them or announce their doom since God had not condemned them. As believers living under the New Covenant, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly or supernatural realms (Eph. 1:3) and we are promised that we are not under God's condemnation in John 5:24 and Rom. 8:33-34). Israel was set apart from the other nations (Deut. 7:6-8). We believers living under the New Covenant are set apart as part of God's people the very moment that we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior (Acts 26:18). Balaam noted that God had kept His promise to make the people of Israel as numerous as the dust (Gen. 13:16). In the same way as we share the gospel, God increases the number of believers (1 Cor. 3:5-8). Balaam wanted the death of the righteous, but unfortunately had not received the life of the righteous (1 John 5:11-12 cp. Rom. 4:3-5). Balak complained that Balaam had blessed Israel instead of cursing them. Balaam emphasized that he could only speak God's word. God had turned the intended curse into a blessing (Deut. 23:5) and often does the same for us.

Numbers 23:13-26 – Part 1 - "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" Balak and Balaam were trying to win God over to allowing some type of curse to be placed on Israel. *(Special note: It would appear that Mt. Pisgah was slightly northwest of Mt. Nebo. It would appear that Moses climbed Mt. Nebo and went from there to the top of Mt. Pisgah. Numbers 27:12-13 stated that Moses would die in the mountain of Abiram but this is no contradiction as Mt. Nebo is part of Abiram range of which Nebo is a part according to Deut. 32:49-50. Also according to Deut. 32:49-50, Moses would go up to Nebo but would die on the mountain that he would ascend which is Pisgah).* The sacrifices of Balak and Balaam were the sacrifices of false religion to try to manipulate God. Balaam

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again met with God and was instructed on what to tell Balak and the men with him. Unlike man, God does not lie nor does He change. When God states in His word that He will do something, He will do it. In the next paragraph, we will look at a comparison of the unchanging nature of God and the responsiveness of God. Balaam made it clear that God had commanded him to bless Israel and that he could not reverse God's blessing on Israel. Verse 20 gives us a picture of the justified and forgiven identity or position of all God's people. This is and was received by faith (Rom. 4:3-8). While their practice came up short as ours does (1 John 1:8, 10), their identity or position was perfect (Heb. 10:10, 14). God demonstrates His presence and His sovereignty among the people of Israel just as Christ does for us under the New Covenant (Mt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:18). God's great power is at work among them delivering them from their old life in Egypt just as God's power delivers us through the gospel when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as savior (Rom. 1:16). No counterfeit prophecy or occult practices empowered by Satan and his demons will work against Israel or against God's church in the New Testament (Mt. 16:18). The prophecy ends with God bringing total victory for His people Israel. This will be fulfilled with the return of Christ to reign on earth as king. In the same way, God has made us New Testament believers more than conquerors (Rom. 8:37). Balak asked Balaam not to curse nor bless Israel. However, Balaam reminded Balak that He had to do all of what God says. That is good counsel for us as well.

Numbers 23:13-26 – part 2 - In this paragraph, we will look at the unchanging nature of God as contrasted with His responsiveness. God does not change in relation to His absolute will. God is responsive and willing to change with respect to His allowable will. The context of the passage tells us what the case is. God is unchanging nature in relation to his absolute will is noted in the following passages: Malachi 3:6 states that the fact that God does not change prevents the descendents of Jacob/ Israel from being wiped out. James 1:16-17 explains that there is no change in God or even the appearance of change as to Him being the source of every good and perfect gift. Psalm 119:89 shows that God does not change with respect to His word. Numbers 23:19-20 tells us that unlike people God does not change with respect to His promise to bless Israel. Hebrews 6:13-17 informs us that when God promised to bless and multiply Abraham, verse 17 tells us that His purpose or counsel in doing this was unchangeable. In 1 Samuel 15:26-29, God stated that He would not change His mind in removing Saul as king of Israel. Finally, according to Isaiah 31:2, God does not call back or retract His word to judge those leaders of Israel bent on doing evil and relying on Egypt. God's responsiveness and willingness to change His mind in relation to His allowable will in the following passages: a. Genesis 6:5-7 – God decided to blot out almost all people because He had changed His mind about having made them because they had given themselves over to continual evil. 1 Samuel 15:35

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states that because Saul was so prideful and disobedient, God changed His mind about having made him king. In Jonah 3:10, God changed His mind about destroying Nineveh because the people had turned from their evil way. Jeremiah 18:7-10 illustrates that God can purpose to bring judgment but if there is a turning from evil, He will change His mind regarding bringing judgment. God can also purpose to bring blessing but if there is the doing of evil, He can change His mind regarding blessing them. A final example is that God in Exodus 32:9-14 changed His mind about destroying Israel for the golden calf sin because of the prayer of intercession by the man Moses. As can be seen, when we try to build a doctrine that makes God unresponsive by focusing on the scripture that demonstrate issues on which God will not change, we run into confusion and contradiction. The same is true when we focus only on the scriptures where God changed His mind because of how people responded to Him. Again, God does not change in relation to His absolute will. God is responsive and willing to change with respect to His allowable will. The context of the passage tells us which aspect of His will is involved.

Numbers 23:27-24:13 - Once again, we see the error of trying to get man's will done by God instead of God's will done by man. Both Balak and Balaam ignored what God stated in Num. 23:19 about His truthfulness and his unchanging purposes in relation to Israel. They continuing offering sacrifices to idols in relation to manipulating God. We are called upon to do what God wills and not what our will happens to be. On this third occasion, Balaam did not consult the demonic influence of omens. As a result the Holy Spirit of God came upon him. This did not mean that he was believer as prophecies from God may be pronounced by unbelievers (Mt. 7:22-23; John 11:45-53). The scriptures state that his eyes were opened. The eyes of our body see the physical realities while the eyes of our heart when opened by the Holy Spirit see spiritual realities (Eph. 1:18). He mentions God's blessing on the abiding place of the people of God. For us as believers, Jesus Christ is our abiding place for the blessing of God. The presence of the descendents of Israel in many waters can be explained by the fact that the waters pictures the nations of earth (Rev. 17:1, 15). Israel was scattered among the nations for some 2000 years until many of them were gathered into the Jewish homeland after World War II. The king higher than Agag refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who will occupy the throne of David and rule over Israel forever (Luke 1:31-33; Isa. 9:6-7). Agag refers to the king of the Amalekites and appears to be a title like Caesar which all the Amalekite kings assumed. The same God that brought Israel out of Egypt will strengthen His people and their king shall defeat His enemies among the nations with no one to be roused against him. Finally, Balaam closes with the blessing on those who bless Israel and the curse on those who curse Israel. Instead of cursing Israel those 3 times, Balaam blessed them because God turned the curse into blessing (Deut.

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23:5). In anger Balak ordered Balaam to go home without pay reminding him that God had held him back from great honor in being richly paid. Balaam reminded Balak that he had told his messengers that Balak could not pay him enough to speak anything other than the word of God. May we be committed to that command to speak God's word – nothing more and nothing less. May we like the Psalmist in Psalm 119:72, 127 value God's word more than the finest gold.

Numbers 24:15-25 - Here we see Balaam, so close to God, but so far from God. This man lacked a genuine faith in the true God and was identified with the false teachers of 2 Peter 2:15-16; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14. He could see the spiritual reality clearly, heard the very word of God and received knowledge from Him. He recognized that God was all-powerful and had a vision of the future of Israel. This prophecy was shared with Balak even though he did not request it from Balaam. The king, who will arise like a bright star out of Israel, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Under Jesus, Israel will be totally victorious over Moab. They will also totally defeat Edom and wipe out their survivors. Other nations that will face God's judgment at prior times include the Amalekites who will perish forever even though it was the most powerful nation of its time. The Kenites who looked to their cliff for security would face captivity and destruction from Assyria. He pointed out that Assyria itself would be destroyed by invaders from Cyprus. These lessons fulfilled in secular history remind us that there is no power and no security apart from the Lord Himself (Prov. 21:30-31; 1 Cor. 1:25) and that God will sooner or later bring to judgment those nations who turn their backs on God. (Ps. 9:17). Balaam and Balak went home completely unchanged and unrepentant in response to the truth that God had given Balaam.

Numbers 25:1-9 - Here was Israel, almost ready to enter the promised land. The women of Moab invited the people of Israel to the sacrifices of their gods. Since these rites involved sexual immorality, some of the men of Israel were participating in this immorality and disloyalty to God. One of the principles that we see is that before believers enter into God's place of blessing in their lives, the enemy, Satan and his ally the world, often draw believers into some type of sin. 1 Cor. 10:8 explains that the big sin was sexual immorality. By comparing Numbers 31:16 with Rev. 2:14, we know that this temptation occurred because of the counsel of Balaam who had not been allowed to curse Israel. When believers are drawn into sexual immorality and alternative gods (i.e. idolatry), it is referred to as the doctrine of Balaam. The strategy for avoiding these sins is one and the same. We are commanded in 1 Cor. 6:18 to flee sexual immorality and in 1 Cor. 10:14 to flee idolatry. According to Ps. 106:28-29, they joined themselves to Baalpeor and ate sacrifices offered to the dead. One of the tenants of Canaanite religion was the divinity of the dead. Hosea 9:10 states that the

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people devoted themselves to shame in the incident of Baalpeor. The people of Israel ate the sacrifices to their gods which New Testament believers are told not to do in 1 Cor. 10:19-22 because such fellowship is fellowship with demons (=angels of Satan). We cannot enjoy fellowship with God and fellowship with demons because God is a jealous God (jealous meaning that He requires our exclusive devotion and service) who is provoked at such compromising sin. A plague broke out, and God's word to Moses was to put to death the leaders of the people in this sin to turn away God's wrath. Under the New Covenant, we do not separate from the people of God who sin, but seek to restore them (Gal. 6:1 cp. Mt. 18:15-16) but if that fails, then we separate from them (Mt. 18:17 cp. 1 Cor. 5:9-13). Under the Old Covenant, they separated from sin by executing those who were involved. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar saw a man of Israel bring a Midianite woman into his tent for illicit sex, he ran them both through with a spear. This stopped the plague that had fallen on Israel because of this sin. According to verse 9, 24,000 people died in the plague and according to 1 Cor. 10:8, 23,000 of those 24,000 died in one day. *(Skeptics who try to discredit God's word have tried to say this is a contradiction, but 23,000 is the number who died from the plague in one day while 24,000 is the total number of people who died in the plague).* As believers, this incident shows that we must be on guard against the encroachments of Satan on pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3) and on wholesome marital sex (1 Cor. 7:5).

Numbers 25:10-18 – Part 1 - While Israel was mourning the sins of the people who had participated in the idolatry and sexual immorality, Phinehas took action when one of the men brought his idolatrous lover into the camp. Mourning over the sins of fellow-believers is an appropriate response (1 Cor. 5:2) when it leads to repentance among God's people that results in godly action to deal with the problem (2 Cor. 7:8-12). It was obvious that this was open rebellion against the word of God and the leaders that God had appointed over them. This type of person causes division. Under the New Covenant such a divisive person is to be given two warnings and removed from fellowship with the people of God according to Titus 3:10-11. Those who profess to be believers, i.e. part of the people of God, are to be removed from the fellowship if they reject restoration efforts by lack of repentance with such sins as sexual immorality or idolatry (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Under the Old Covenant, open sin like this was to be judged by removing the offenders from the fellowship of God's people by the death penalty. God commended Phinehas for his prompt action in turning away God's wrath from the people of God. He was commended for being jealous with God's jealousy. Much of the jealousy that we see is man's jealousy, and that is sinful (James 3:14, 16). However, being jealous with God's jealousy is a different matter. Godly jealousy is wanting the people of God to be wholeheartedly

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devoted to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2-3). The jealousy that Phinehas had for God was so great that it prevented God from wiping out the people of Israel. He was rewarded with a covenant of peace which was that a permanent priesthood through Aaron would be through Phinehas, Aaron's grandson. Phinehas showed that he was righteous by faith by acting to uphold God's word and God's honor (Ps. 106:28-31). Notice that God's word named the promoters of error. Some men of God are condemned for doing this, but Paul named names and named their error (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Notice that the slain man from God's people was the son of a leader and the woman was the daughter of a leader among the Midianites. Sometimes, God's people are hesitant to act against prominent people and to look the other way when they bring sin and error among God's people. They hesitate to act against someone because of their relationship to a leader among them or against keeping someone out of the fellowship who is related to a prominent person in the unsaved world. We are to act without partiality in handing open sin and rebellion (1 Tim. 5:20-21).

Numbers 25:10-18 – Part 2 - God's word to the people of Israel through Moses was that they had an enemy in the Midianites. They were to strike them, i.e. take the offense against them. We too, as believers under the New Covenant have an enemy who is hostile to us. Satan goes about like a roaring lion to see whom he can overpower (1 Pet. 5:8). We are given a set of spiritual weapons for offensive and defensive purposes. Our weapons of offense include the word of God and Spirit-led prayer (Eph. 6:17-18). We are to be hostile to or resist Satan according to 1 Pet. 5:8-9 by being spiritually alert, guarded in our thought life and firm in faith. The enemy was said to have tricks. For New Testament believers, Satan uses various devices or tricks of which we are not to be ignorant (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan not only tries to overpower believers just as these people tried to overpower the people of Israel, but Satan also works to deceive us as New Testament believers (2 Cor. 11:2-3). Believers are not to be deceived with regard to bad company according to 1 Cor. 15:33 because such company corrupts good morals. Finally, we notice that the deceit of the enemy brought God's disciplinary judgment on the people of God. Satan overpowered and deceived Peter according to Luke 22:31-32 and would have completely ruined Peter had it not been for the intercessory prayer of Jesus for him. Satan took control of the thinking of Ananias as he sought to create a false impression of being very generous (Acts 5:3-4) and with which his wife was in accord. As a result, God's disciplinary judgment fell on them (Acts 5:4-5, 9-10 cp. 1 Cor. 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16-17). Satan in working through Midian was trying to deceive the people of God into thinking that we can have the best of God and of the pleasures of this world by compromise. We must continually keep Christ on the throne of our lives and our hearts because we cannot serve two masters, no matter how hard we try or how sincerely deceived we may be (Mt. 6:24).

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Numbers 26:1-51 - One of the points of interest is the fact that Reuben, Simeon and Gad were on the south side of the camp of the people of Israel and each lost on the number of men of fighting age: Reuben lost 2,770 men during the wilderness wanderings, Simeon lost 37,100 men while Gad lost 5,150 men. When God has to remove some of His people from this life because of sin (1 Cor. 11:30-32), it means fewer of God's people available to engage in spiritual warfare. It also points to the fact that the proximity of these tribes may have caused sin and rebellion to spread more easily (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Reuben's loss may well be connected to the fact that two of their men conspired with Korah in the rebellion against God's appointed leaders and were punished by God's discipline so that they died prematurely (vv. 5-11). As leaders they may well have exercised a bad influence on the men of their tribe. In regard to Simeon, many of them may well have suffered death in the plague and one of the sons of the leaders was an instigator in their involvement in the sins of sexual immorality and idolatry (Num. 25:6-15). With Gad in close proximity to these tribes, it would be likely that much of this adverse influence may have more easily spread to them. God recalled the deaths of Er and Onan in vv. 19-22 who perished because of an unspecified sins on Er's part and the failure to reproduce of the part of Onan. This reminds us that as believers under the New Covenant that God wants to spiritually reproduce by sharing the gospel (1 Cor. 4:14-15). The numbering of the men showed the high cost of sin especially in some of the tribes while the increase in the numbers showed the grace and mercy of God in sparing many of the people. As we encounter the loss of fellow-believers, we are to be thankful for the time God gave them among us, but to be equally aware that God takes sin seriously and so should we.

Numbers 26:52-65 - Several observations can be made from this passage. The size of the land area was determined by the size of the tribe with the larger land areas going to the larger tribes and the smaller land areas going to the smaller tribes. As believers under the New Covenant, our basic inheritance is in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4) and comes to us because we are believers (Acts 26:18). Another part of our inheritance is based on faithful service (Col. 3:24). The places of their respective inheritances was determined by casting lots. Prov. 16:33 reminds us that God is sovereign over the casting of lots so that their inheritance was determined by God. Knowing that God is sovereign over the casting of lots put an end to any possible bickering or arguing among the tribes (Prov. 18:18). We are reminded once again of the unfaithfulness of Nadab and Abihu for trying to worship God in their own way rather than the way prescribed by God (Col. 2:23) and the consequences of their sin unto death (1 John 5:16-17; 1 Cor. 11:30-32). It serves as a warning reminder to us as New Testament believers not to come to God our way but to do everything in the name of Jesus (Col. 3:17). The Levites had no inheritance of a land section but were scattered among the people of

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Israel because Levi and Simeon had been violent in their treatment of the people of Shechem per their father Jacob's prophetic pronouncement (Genesis chapter 34 cp. 49:5-7). Simeon's inheritance fell completely within the land tract given to Judah. Another reason the Levites were scattered among the people was to teach the people and by doing so to turn them from sin and to the blessing of obedience (Mal. 2:4-7). Finally, they had no land parcel inheritance because God was their inheritance (Num. 18:20). This required them to live by faith off the tithes and offerings of the people (Num. 18:21). As can be seen, sin has consequences. With the exception of some of the Levites who were not numbered in the roll of fighting men (Num. 1:46-47), no man over 20 at the time the people balked at entering the land in Numbers 13 and 14 were alive except Caleb and Joshua. God keeps His word whether for blessing (Mic. 2:7) or for disciplinary judgment (Zech. 1:6).

Numbers 27:1-11 - We have the ruling or judgment on inheritance from God. In the course of the people of God living together in a fallen world, there often are questions that do not appear to be covered by God's word. The example here was the daughters of a man who had no son, and therefore, his inheritance would pass completely out of the family line. We observe some very important principles for handling difficult questions. First of all, we need to listen and hear out the person or persons with the concern before giving a response (Prov. 18:13). The next step was to take the concern to God and ask for His wisdom and His direction (James 1:5). God gave His answer through His word (in this case His spoken word). God's word affirmed that the concern of the women was right. This means that it was in agreement with His standard. God gave direction to Moses not only on this matter but also other possible issues that might occur. We see the same kind of development in the New Testament when the Greek-speaking widows were neglected in the daily distribution of food. The Apostles, who were functioning as the church leaders were led to develop the beginnings of the deacon ministry (Acts 6:1-7). In this case, the whole church was brought together to ratify and approve this ministry. One of the necessary attributes of a good leader is to make good and right decisions in harmony with God's word. This requires good judgment which is listed in 1 Tim. 3:2 which is referred as being sensible (HCSB) and prudent (NASB). Finally, we notice that God's word not only addressed the question of the daughters but also other related questions that may occur. As we go to God's word for answers for our questions and concerns, we often encounter information that will later be of help to fellow-believers. With the New Testament believer, the focus of our concerns with regard to inheritance is our inheritance in heaven (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Our job is to help other people participate or share in this inheritance. When we tell others how to be saved, and they choose to exercise faith, they receive this inheritance as a gift

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of God (Acts 26:18). This is the most important information regarding inheritance in all of God's word.

Numbers 27:12-14 - Moses was told to go up to the mountain of Abarim, i.e. the mountain of the Abarim range. Some scriptures appear to be in conflict as to where Moses was to die. However, the following information helps to solve this conflict: One of the principles that we see is that the word of God, when it makes a prediction, is fulfilled literally not figuratively. In Num. 20:12, God told Moses that he would not lead God's people Israel into the promised land. In Numbers 27:12-14, God told Moses that he would see the land but not actually enter it. Since past prophecies have been literally fulfilled, we should expect future prophecies to have a literal fulfillment. It would appear that Mt. Pisgah was slightly northwest of Mt. Nebo. It would appear that Moses climbed Mt. Nebo and went from there to the top of Mt. Pisgah. Numbers 27:12-13 stated that Moses would die in the mountain of Abiram but this is no contradiction as Mt. Nebo is part of Abiram range according to Deut. 32:49-50. Also according to Deut. 32:49-50, Moses would go up to Nebo but would die on the mountain that he would ascend which is Pisgah (see also Deut. 34:1-5). The phrase "gathered to your people" shows us that the believers in the Old Testament regarded people who died as still existing and provides testimony to the fact that they believed in life or consciousness after death. Moses was reminded that the reason for his death was the fact that he and Aaron had sinned by rebelling in the wilderness of Zin by not treating God as holy in front of the people that they were leading. As Christians living under the New Covenant, we must realize fellowship and usefulness are restored when we confess our sins, but the blessings that obedience would have brought in place of that sin cannot be retrieved.

Numbers 27:15-23 – Part 1 - Prayer is simply talking to God. Moses asked God to appoint a man to replace him after his death to lead God's people. Notice that request was specific and not vague. Moses received an answer from the spoken word of God. However, God gives us answers to our requests via the written word and the leading of the Holy Spirit. God's answer was very definite. Notice that Moses did not ask God to appoint Joshua as his successor, but asked God to make that decision. This is a good pattern for us in our prayers. The need for human leaders to lead God's people is demonstrated throughout the Bible and includes their due appointment (Mt. 9:36; Acts 6:3-6; 14:23; Titus 1:5). Notice that Moses acted in obedience to the word from God. When we seek God's guidance and He shows us what to do, it is imperative that we follow His instructions. The laying on of hands was to officially commission someone for a specific task or role. It visibly showed that authority was transferred or given to them. The laying on of hands does not give any special gift or added capabilities. The one

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or ones laying their hands on the one who is commissioned are merely recognizing and acknowledging that God has commissioned the person or persons for that specific role or responsibility. In the next paragraph, we will look at this passage and note what God says about the human spirit.

Numbers 27:15-23 – Part 2 - One of the questions that comes up is: do people have a human spirit prior to salvation. Verse 16 clearly points out that all people have a human spirit including the unsaved (Num. 16:22; Gen. 41:8; Luke 8:55; Jas. 2:26; Deut. 2:30; 1 Kings 21:5). Zech. 12:1 informs us that God forms the spirit of people within them. To be sure, the human spirit is dead meaning that it is separated from God prior to salvation. Death always carries the meaning of separation and not extinction in the minds of the biblical writers. When we are born again, our spirit is born again (John 3:3-6) or made alive. Rom. 8:10 states that our bodies are dead because of sin, but our spirits are alive because of righteousness. That is to say that when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our savior, the righteousness of Christ is credited to us (Rom. 4:3-5, 21-24). Our body is world conscious, while our soul is self conscious. However, our human spirit is God conscious. When we physically die our human spirit leaves our physical body (James 2:26). Yet, if we experience resurrection the human spirit returns to the body as in Luke 8:55. It is very important that we note that the human spirit is not the same as the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:16). There are people who teach that we must cultivate our human spirit because it does not sin. However, 2 Cor. 7:1 shows that the spirit is involved in sin and needs cleansing.

Numbers 28:1-15 - The purpose of the offerings was to provide a means where a sinful people, the people of Israel, could have fellowship with a holy God. The daily offering was given. This reminds us that fellowship with God is a daily matter. We bring our requests to God in prayer daily according to Mt. 6:11. God's word would encourage us to study His word each day (Acts 17:11). We are to take up our cross daily and follow Christ (Luke 9:23). This involves obeying God's word on a daily basis even if it means suffering. These offerings were said to be a soothing aroma. This means that they pleased God to cover sins. However, they did not please God for taking away sins (Heb. 10:4-5). The emphasis on the animals being without defect pictured the sinlessness of Christ (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15). The drink offering pictured Christ pouring out His soul as a substitute for us as sinful people (Isaiah 53:12 – the word "Himself" in many translations is correctly translated "His soul" in the NKJV). The Sabbath offering reminds believers that God has provided rest from our own efforts to attain to salvation (Mt. 11:28), rest for our souls or inner beings in taking Christ's yoke upon us (Mt. 11:29-30 cp. Acts 15:10) because His commands or yoke is easy and not burdensome (1 John 5:3). Finally, we know that when we as believers experience physical death, we will rest from our earthly labors (although we will have

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unburdensome work in heaven (Rev. 22:3). The grain offering and flour offering remind us that Christ is the bread of life (John 6:35). As the bread of life, Christ provides and sustains our salvation and also provides for our fellowship with God. The offering by fire reminds us that Christ was judged for our sins on the cross (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:13). The oil speaks of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:1-6, 12 with the focus on verse 6) who was the means by which Christ offered His sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:14). The monthly sacrifices with the blowing of the trumpets (cp. Num. 10:10) reminded the people of all that God had done for them serving as a memorial. As believers, when we gather around the Lord's Table, it is to remember what Christ did for us on the cross (1 Cor. 11:24-25). We see Christ and His provisions for our salvation and our Christian life with Him all over this passage.

Numbers 28:16-31 - We look at the offerings for the Passover and for the day of First Fruits. We will not repeat the details about the offerings since these were covered in the previous paragraph. The Passover and feast of unleavened bread were held back to back with the Passover coming first. The Passover clearly speaks of the death of Christ according to 1 Cor. 5:7 where Christ is said to be our Passover who has been sacrificed. The unleavened bread reminds us that Christ was the sinless Son of God without sin in His behavior (1 Pet. 2:22) or sinful nature/inclination (1 John 3:5). This sinlessness made His sacrifice totally acceptable to God. Leaven is often used as a picture of false doctrine (Mt. 16:6, 11-12) and sinful living (1 Cor. 5:8). The Feast of First Fruits clearly speaks of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:20). Finally, we notice that the Passover picturing Christ's death involved meeting together. When we meet together we remember Christ's death by partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:24-25). The Feast of First Fruits also involved meeting together. Historically, the church has met on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:7). Finally, we see that these two feasts communicate the basics of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:3-4): with the Passover/Unleavened Bread commemorating the death of Christ and with the Feast of First Fruits commemorating the resurrection of Christ.

Numbers 29:1-39 - We notice that vv. 1-6 deals with the feast of trumpets. This reminds us of the future regathering of Israel in relation to the return of the Lord Jesus (cp. Isa. 27:13). In vv. 7-11, we see the Day of Atonement which reminds us of the future turning of Israel to Christ (Zech. 12:10-14; Rom. 11:25-27). In vv. 15-39, we see the feast of tabernacles or shelters which had a two-fold purpose. It looked back at the redemption out of Egypt (Lev. 23:43) and looked forward to the time when the feast will be observed by all the nations in the world during the 1000 year kingdom (Zech. 14:16-21). In a similar way, the church observes the Lord's Supper looking back at Christ's death for our sins (1 Cor. 11:24-25) and

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looking forward to Christ's second coming (1 Cor. 11:26). We have looked at how these sacrifices point to Christ in our previous study on Num. 28:1-15. Each of these feasts with their sacrifices provided rest for the people of God. We see that no work was to be done in vv. 1, 7, 12 and 35. The term "rest" is a very important concept in the living of the Christian life. Mt. 11:28 speaks of the rest we experience when we trust the Lord Jesus Christ as savior. We are not dependent on our works to experience that particular rest (Eph. 2:8-9). There is also the rest that we enter when we become fellow-laborers with Christ by living and operating under His commands (Mt. 11:29-30). As believers under the New Covenant we must remember that we have sacrifices that we are to offer to God: our bodies (Rom. 12:1), giving to missions (Phil. 4:18), the people we bring to Christ (Rom. 15:16), thanksgiving, praise, sharing and doing good (Heb. 13:15-16).

Numbers 30:1-16 - This involved the taking of vows or oaths. Ordinarily, if someone made an oath or vow, they were expected to carry it out. However, three exceptions were given. If a daughter made a vow, a father could annul it if he did so on the day he heard it. Otherwise, it would stand. If an unmarried girl made a vow and then got married, her husband could annul it on the day he heard about it but not afterward. If a woman was married and made a vow, the husband could annul it on the day he heard of it but not afterward. We also note that divorced women or widowed women could not have their oaths annulled showing that they were no longer under their father's authority. As believers under the New Covenant, we are commanded to not lie and to tell the truth (Eph. 4:25) – vow or no vow, oath or no oath. However, we are to tell the truth in such a way that it shows love (Eph. 4:15). The prohibition against lying even extends to lying to ourselves as mentioned in Psalm 51:6. We must remember that one crucial aspect of our struggle with Satan and his demons is truthfulness (Eph. 6:14). As believers, we must stand behind our word unless we agreed to do something sinful. In that case, we confess the matter to God (1 John 1:9) and explain why we are not keeping our word in that instance. A vow was a promise to God to do something while a pledge or oath was a promise to God not to do something. This passage gives us insight into parental authority and the authority of the husband. Notice that in both examples the purpose of the authority was to prevent the one under authority from making an unwise vow or pledge. In this way, this protected those under authority from unwise commitments and choices.

Numbers 31:1-6 - This was to be the last battle for Moses as the time of his death was fast approaching. God commanded that His people were to take vengeance on the people of Midian for trying to deceive the people in the matter of Peor (Num. 25:16-18). Vengeance is God's unique prerogative. However, God does delegate vengeance to people in certain instances. Human

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government is an avenger and servant of God according to Rom. 13:3-4. Other times God uses wars to bring about His vengeance on individuals and nations as in Luke 21:22. In this case, God commanded His people to fight a holy war to destroy these people. God's promise that He would bless those who blessed Israel and curse those who cursed Israel was being worked out (Gen. 12:3 cp Num. 24:9). God's plan was to use Israel to bring about His judgment on the people of Canaan. God can use nations to judge other nations, or He can judge them directly himself as He judged Sodom and Gomorrah. It states that the men were armed for war. As believers, our wars are not against human beings but against the spiritual forces of Satan and his demons who oppose us (Eph. 6:12). We must be armed with the spiritual armor of God (Eph. 6:13-18). The presence of the priest with the trumpets insured that there would be someone to intercede for them and to direct them. Christ on high is the one who empowers us for spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10). In the same way, our high priest Jesus Christ intercedes for us (Rom. 8:34; Luke 22:31-32) and gives us direction through His commandments (John 14:15).

Numbers 31:7-18 - By killing all the men, they were leaving no room for the enemy to get a foothold among them. In the same way, we are not to give Satan a foothold in our lives (Eph. 4:27). They killed kings of Midian and Balaam the prophet who had counseled the people (Num. 31:16) to lead the people of God into sexual immorality and idolatry. The church of today is warned against the doctrine of Balaam which is idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:14). They used their sword to separate the enemy from themselves. We use the word of God, our spiritual sword (Eph. 6:17) to separate the enemy from ourselves. Zur was one of the leaders killed. You will recall that it was his daughter Cozbi who was brought into the camp by one of the men of Israel and both of them were slain by Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron (Num. 25:8-15). God blessed them with livestock and goods as a result of carrying out God's command. However, they allowed the women and children to live. Moses rebuked them for their lack of discernment because many of these women had been involved in the idolatry and immorality that had led to the disciplinary judgment of God on His people for their participation with these Midianite women. To correct this, these women had to be separated by death from the people of Israel so they would not be able to lead the people astray. By killing the male children, they were insuring that the enemy would not at some future time be able to attack them. In dealing with sin, we are to think about taking away opportunities for Satan to attack us in the future in some vulnerable area of our life. For example, if someone has a Ouija board and Satan uses it to bring an attack against your family, it would be prudent to get rid of the board so that Satan could not use it at some future time of temptation and vulnerability. Obviously, we should not have a Ouija board any way. They were allowed to

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keep the virgin girls because they could be taught the ways of God and assimilated into the people of God. Since the worship of their idol involved sexual immorality, they had not been involved in the false worship. Furthermore, the command that they be killed in Deut. 20:16 was applicable only to those in the promised land.

Numbers 31:19-24 - There are several principles to be developed from this passage. The first principle is that ritual defilement occurred when someone touched a dead person. This pictures unintentional sin which still is to be confessed and forsaken (1 John 1:9). The time period of 7 days was to impress upon the people of God the fact that sin makes them unavailable for service to God and others because it consumes time that belonged to God. The captives, who were not part of God's people, had to be purified too because they were going to become a part of them. Under the New Covenant, those who trust Christ as Savior are purified from their sins by faith in Christ (Acts 15:9) and experience the washing (i.e. bath) of regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3:5). This moves those who were under Satan's dominion to God's dominion (Acts 26:18). These captive women were under the dominion of the enemies of God's people but were now under the dominion of the true God. The second principle involved the cleansing of every garment. Garments picture our lives. The cleansing of the garments would picture ridding our selves of sin or turning our back on sin in our lives. This illustrates the need to not only confess our sins but to forsake them as well (Prov. 28:13). The third principle is that things are used in one of two ways: those that are consistent with God's purposes and those that are not consistent with God's purposes. To illustrate this lesson, the things that had been misused for purposes other than God's purpose had to be cleansed to impress upon God's people that they were to be used for God's purposes. The more durable things such as the various metals had to be cleansed by fire while the things that would be burn were cleansed by water. Fire is a picture of God's word according to Jer. 23:29 in all of its power. Water is used to picture the cleansing power of God's word (Eph. 5:26; Ps. 119:9) when it is obeyed. The fourth principle is that we must be sure that our lives (pictured by the clothes) are washed. This involves confessing our sins (1 John 1:9), forsaking our sins (Prov. 28:13) and obeying God's word (Ps. 119:9). We have to ask ourselves, do we need to do any laundry in our lives?

31:25-54 - The spoils of the war were divided as follows: The soldiers who went to war took half of the spoils. The rest of the people got the other half of the spoils. The soldiers were to give 1/500th of the spoils to the Levites while the people who received spoils were to give 1/50th of the spoils to the Levites. When God brings blessings our way by giving us success in spiritual warfare, these are to be shared with those who were not directly involved in the main struggle. Notice that a

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careful list of the blessings or gains of their warfare were carefully counted. This reminds us that we as believers need to be careful to count our blessings of each and every kind. The blessings that come our way as a result of spiritual struggle are to be shared with those who are full-time workers for the Lord just as these soldiers shared with the Levites. The blessings received by the people who were not directly involved in the struggle are to be shared with those who are full-time workers for the Lord. When blessings are shared with us, this passage shows that a greater percentage of those blessings are to be passed along to full time workers for the Lord. The officers and the commanders gave a thank offering to God because not one of their soldiers was killed in the war. This offering consisted of the gold things they had acquired in the battle and was done not because they were commanded to do so, but because of the grace God had shown them. The phrase "These are to remove our sins so we will belong to the LORD" is better translated by the NIV "to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord." The idea of atonement in this case was a ransom to God for His grace in sparing lives that would have ordinarily been lost in the war. The giving of the soldiers of 1/500th of the spoils and the giving of the other people of 1/50th of the spoils was commanded, but the gifts of the officers and the commanders were commended. Ps. 116:12 helps us ask ourselves what we should give to God for all His benefits.

Numbers 32:1-5 - The tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32:33 includes them) had large herds and flocks of livestock. They asked Moses and Eleazar to be allowed to settle east of the Jordan River in the lands that they had conquered. These areas were not part of the promised land. They wanted this land in place of a share of the promised land. Their choice was based on their occupation or livelihood rather than the promises of God's word. The promised land was a picture of the abundant Christian life and God's best for His people. Many believers are so interested in their livelihood that they sacrifice God's best to maximize it. God had blessed these people with the large herds and flocks. They were more concerned with the blessing God had already given them rather than the potential blessing of experiencing God's best for them. These people of God were not completely spiritually dull. They recognized that God had enabled them to conquer this land east of the Jordan River but seemed unable to grasp by faith that the same God would enable them to thrive in the promised land. Believers today have the same problems in relation to the abundant Christian life. Their interests were based not on God's interests but their own interests. Phil. 2:21 reminds us that this is a problem for many of us as believers when making decisions. If we put God's interests first, then He promises to take care of our basic needs (Mt. 6:33). We are encouraged to seek what is best over what is good or even very good in Phil. 1:10. Like many Christians today, they were choosing to walk by sight rather than by faith (2 Cor.

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5:7). God's ways and thoughts often seem inferior to our plans, but we do best when we choose to live by faith in God's promises and not lean to our own understanding and to acknowledge God in all our decisions so He can take our lives and guide them in a straight course consistent with His will (Prov. 3:5-6). This splitting of the people of Israel on either side of the Jordan River created problems in relation to unity and defense in the future of this nation. They could not foresee this, but our God whose understanding is infinite (Ps. 147:5) could. All of us as believers leave a legacy for future generations of believers. Let us leave a legacy of absolute faith in God's word and the pursuit of His best.

Numbers 32:6-15 - Leaders must ask penetrating questions of God's people when they lack the commitment to seek God's best in the abundant Christian life. Moses did just that. He was concerned that they would not engage the enemy in warfare and would by doing so hinder and discourage the rest of the people from experiencing the promised land which is a picture of the abundant Christian life. Moses was very concerned that they were repeating the same mistake as the majority of the leaders and the people experienced at Kadesh Barnea when they vacillated between returning to the old life in Egypt and going into the promised land or the place of God's best blessing. The Hebrew Christians in Heb. 5:11-6:8 were in danger of trying to avoid hardship by moving backwards in their Christian lives and not pressing on to maturity. As believers, we are to learn from our own failures (Prov. 26:11) and the examples of the failures of other believers (1 Cor. 10:11). When believers fail to do so, it causes great concern to spiritual leaders as it did to Moses and Eleazar. The problem of the previous generation had been a failure to follow God with their whole heart. When we fail to do this, we can easily move away from God (Heb. 3:12). Moses reminded them of the severe disciplinary judgment of God that fell on all the numbered fighting men 20 and older (see Num. 14:29 – this exempted women and the Levites who were not numbered according to Num. 2:33 with the fighting men). Moses was concerned that another generation would fail to experience God's promises because of lack of faith and disobedience (Heb. 3:18-19 cp. 6:12). This serves as a warning for believers today as the references in the book of Hebrews show us. Moses was very concerned that this request would bring God's wrath down again and bring about the ruin of God's people. In the New Testament, believers are warned not to bring the local church which is a temple indwelt by the Holy Spirit to ruin (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Note: He is not talking about the church building but the believers collective as a group which comprise that local church. The ruin/destruction for those who bring about that ruin in 1 Cor. 3:16-17 must be understood in the context of causing ruin or destruction of rewards (not salvation – see 1 Cor. 3:10-15) in their own lives and the lives of other believers. In the next paragraph, we will continue looking at this request when the 2 ^{1/2} tribes make their counterproposal.

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Numbers 32:16-27 – The proposal was broadened by the Reubenites and Gadites to obtain permission to give up any inheritance in the promised land which was west of the Jordan River and simply keep the land that had been conquered east of the Jordan River. They proposed that they would go into the promised land and help their fellow-people conquer the promised land. Moses stated if they would do this that they could settle east of the Jordan adjacent to the promised land. One element that is missing from this exchange between the Reubenites and Gadites with Moses was Moses seeking to know God's view of the matter. When there is deviation by any believer from the course that God has set for them, this is obviously a matter for prayer. We do not see Moses doing this. As believers, we should always pray before making major decisions. We should not just make the decision because it looks good. We need to ask for God's wisdom and will (James 1:5). Moses was in agreement with their decision. However, he laid down several stipulations: (1) They could go ahead and build pens for their animals and fortified cities for their children. (2) They were to march in front of the army in crossing the Jordan River and into battle and remain there until all the land would be conquered. (3) Only after the land was taken could they return home. (4) God would punish them if they did not keep the commitment and thereby sinned. If we believers do not keep our commitments, that is the same as lying (Eph. 4:25), and it will invite God's discipline (1 Cor. 11:30-32). One of the principles that we observe is that Moses saw, every part of what was being done as dependent on the working of God. God would be with His people in crossing the Jordan River. He recognized that they were depending on God to force out the enemy. Finally, he knew they were dependent on God to take the land. In turn we believers are dependent on Christ to move into the abundant Christian life (Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:6). To gain victory over our spiritual enemies the devil (Eph. 6:10), the flesh (Gal. 5:16-17) and the world (1 John 5:4-5), we are dependent on Christ and the Holy Spirit. Moses reminded them that they should go over and be armed for the conflict in taking the promised land. As believers, we are to take up all of God's provisions for spiritual warfare so that we are spiritually armed (Eph. 6:13-18). The Reubenites, Gadites and half tribe of Manasseh (see Num. 32:33 for their inclusion in this arrangement) remind us of believers who are willing to contend for the truth of God's best without experiencing it themselves.

Numbers 32:28-42 - Moses formalized the agreement so that the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh would cross over the Jordan and help the rest of God's people conquer the promised land. They were reminded that this would be in the presence of God. God is present in two senses. The first is the fact that the eyes of God are in every place observing what is good and what is bad (Prov. 15:3). 2 Chr. 16:9 gives a second sense in which God is present and that is to support those whose hearts are loyal to Him. It is the second sense

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that is used here. The consequence of them not crossing over to help the rest of God's people conquer the land would be that they would not be able to keep the land east of the Jordan and would have a smaller inheritance in the promised land. The purpose of the fortified cities was to protect their children according to Num. 32:17 from the inhabitants of the land. The inhabitants of the land are a picture of the world for us. As believers under the New Covenant, we are to protect our children from the world. We do this by consistently bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord according to Eph. 6:4. They changed the names or identity of the cities that they conquered from the enemy. We invade Satan's territory which is the world and tell people the gospel. Some believe and they become citizens of the kingdom of God. This changes their identity from being of this world (John 17:14-16) to being citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). Let us pray for open doors to invade our enemy Satan's territory (Col. 4:3) and the boldness to tell the gospel to others (Acts 4:29, 31).

Numbers 33:1-49 - This passage lists where the people of God had been and how God's faithfulness and responsiveness had been shown. God provided leaders in Moses and Aaron just as He does for the church (Eph. 4:11). It recounts their deliverance from bondage in Egypt which mirrors God delivering us from the bondage of sin (Rom. 6:16-18). God's power had been shown to be greater than all of Egypt's false substitute gods. In the same way, for believers living today, God's power in us is greater than He who is in the world (1 John 4:4). It recounts their passage through the Red Sea which broke the power of Egypt over the people of God. Likewise, God has broken the power of our old life of sin over us (Rom. 6:1-11). God provided water for their physical thirst just as He provides living water through Christ for our spiritual thirst (John 4:13-14). The Sinai desert was an important landmark in the giving of the law (Exodus chapters 19 and 20) in an awesome demonstration of the absolute holiness of God in contrast to the sinfulness of man and the need for a Savior (Rom. 3:20). Rom. 7:12-14 reminds us that the law was spiritual, good, righteous and holy, and Deut. 10:13 explained that God's commandments were for their good. While the law was not the means of salvation, but to show that salvation could only be by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:21-24). In Num. 33:16-17, the "Graves of Craving" was where the people of God experienced the disciplinary judgment of God in the form of a plague and pre-mature physical death because they failed to be content with God's provision (1 Cor. 10:6 cp. 11:30-32). This reminds us as believers to learn to be content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11-12). The death of Aaron reminds us of the costly sins of irreverence, unbelief and disobedience (Num. 20:12; 27:14). As believers under the New Covenant, we are to express our salvation by doing works with an attitude of fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12), to walk by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7) and do be doers of God's word and not merely hearers (James 1:22).

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Numbers 33:50-56 - Notice that the people were to drive out all the inhabitants in the promised land. This reminds us as believers that we are to go for a total victory in our conflict with our spiritual enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil. It would be partial obedience to drive out any less than all of the inhabitants of the land. When our love for God is not what it should be, the love for the world can erode our love for God (1 John 2:15). We are to make no provision for the flesh, i.e. sinful nature (Rom. 13:14) and not to give Satan a foothold (Eph. 4:27). The people were to destroy all the carved images of the gods of the land. The only image of God that we are to value is the image and likeness of Christ (Col. 1:15). They were to destroy the idols (substitute gods) of the land. In turn, we believers living under the New Covenant are to guard ourselves from idols (1 John 5:20-21) who would replace Christ in our lives and to flee idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14) because idolatry is directly connected with worship of demons which could open us to demon influence in our lives. The land like the abundant Christian life is something that God gives us to us, but it requires spiritual warfare to appropriate it and then a commitment to settle or abide in Christ for fellowship (John 15:1-5) just as the people of Israel were to settle or abide in the land. The land would be divided by lots with more being given to the larger tribes and less to the smaller tribes. The lot was one of the means of guidance for God's people prior to the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. The last time we see the lot used was to pick a successor apostle to Judas just prior to Pentecost in Acts 1:21-26. The lot's decision was from God (Prov. 16:33) and put an end to all contention or arguing (Prov. 18:18). Finally, the people were reminded that if they disobeyed God (which they did), the leaving of footholds for the enemies of God's people would create carnal blindness in the eyes of the people of God and they would undermine the purity of Israel and their ability to live holy lives (= lives that are set apart for God's purpose and not their own purpose nor the purpose of those around them). When believers tolerate error in their midst, sooner or later they will give into that error and it will become dominant. Carnal blindness results when we allow the world into the church and into our values (Psalm 40:12; 2 Pet. 1:5-9). This is why we believers need to be growing in our development of critical character qualities in our Christian lives.

Numbers 34:1-29 - The promised land is a picture of the abundant Christian life and the place of God's blessing. We must remember that all Christians experience life or eternal life when they trust Christ for salvation. However, not all Christians experience abundant life. Christ came that we might have life (salvation) and abundant life (the life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit and God's best – John 10:10; Gal. 5:22-23; Phil. 1:10). The boundaries of the abundant Christian life are the commandments of Christ (Mt. 28:20; 2 Pet. 3:2). Notice that

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there were boundaries that separated them from the outside world of those who were not God's people. As believers, we are not live like the world outside of the commandments of Christ (Rom. 12:2). There were boundaries between the people of God just as there are boundaries or commandments for believers in our relationships to one another (Eph. 4:25-32). These people were inheriting the land because of their relationship to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As believers, we have an inheritance in God's kingdom because of our relationship to Christ (Acts 26:18). We are presently in the spiritual phase of that kingdom (Col. 1:13) and will be in the earthly phase of that kingdom in Christ's 1000 year reign on earth (Rev. 20:6 cp. Rev. 5:9-10). Following that, we will be in the final phase of the kingdom in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 22:5). Moses appointed men to divide the land among the tribes: Joshua, the political and military leader, and Eleazar, the High priest and spiritual leader. In the same way God will appoint Christ who will be both the political/military leader and High priest to divide the inheritance. Chapter 47 and 48 of Ezekiel describe how Christ will divide the land among some of the tribes of Israel during His 1000 year kingdom. Christ will appoint the 12 Apostles to be judges over Israel during the 1000 year kingdom (Mt. 19:28-30 cp. Isa. 1:26) and will have us New Testament believers ruling with Him over the earth as judges of men and angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3). We must keep in mind that when we trusted Christ for salvation, that secured our entrance into the kingdom. Our faithfulness now in living within the boundaries of God will determine our role in the future earthly kingdom.

Numbers 35:1-8 – Notice that this section of scripture deals with obligations of the people of Israel to full-time workers for the Lord which were the Levites. They were to be given cities in which to live. They were also given pasture lands around each of these cities for animals. This provided shelter and food for the Levites. Every tribe contributed, and contributions were based on tribe size. New Testament giving for God's people living under the New Testament or New Covenant is outlined in 1 Cor. 16:2. Every believer is to give, and giving is to be based on their income size. Those who have more give more, and those who have less give less. In verse 6 the cities of refuge are mentioned for protection of people who kill someone unintentionally. This will be explained in more detail in the next section of this study.

Numbers 35:9-34 – The cities were to protect people who had killed another person from being executed by the blood avenger until it was determined if the person had killed the person intentionally or unintentionally. If the killing was unintentional, the killer had to stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest. If they left the city before that time, the blood avenger could put them to death. If the killing was intentional, the Levites would allow the blood avenger to execute them. One of the lessons, we learn from this is that

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government has authority from God to execute criminals under both the Old Covenant as shown here and under the New Covenant (Romans 13:4; John 19:10-11; Acts 25:11). Also personal revenge is prohibited under the Old Covenant as shown in this section and in Proverbs 20:22; 24:29; Deut. 32:35. It is also prohibited under the New Covenant (Romans 12:19; 1 Thes. 5:15). Revenge is to be left to God to do so through His own direct intervention or through His servant human government (Romans 13:4). This passage shows us that we should not be hasty in our judgments (Proverbs 18:13) and actions (Proverbs 19:2) and that we should hear all sides of a matter (Proverbs 18:17). This passage shows us in verse 27 that the one who executes criminals for government is not guilty of murder. The principle of requiring at least 2 witnesses to inflict punishment is upheld here and in Deut. 17:6; 19:15. The New Covenant upholds this standard (Mt. 18:15-17; 2 Cor. 13:1). Open confession of intentional murder or wrongdoing is an exception to the requirement for witnesses (Joshua 7:19-25; 2 Sam. 1:5-16). In verse 31 paying a ransom or anything less than death for intentional murder is less than God's standard. So life in prison is not a biblical alternative to capital punishment. Confinement in the city of refuge was somewhat equivalent to being in prison. Letting people buy their way out is not in keeping with biblical norms according to verse 32. Verse 33 shows that allowing people to live who are proven guilty of intentional murder pollutes a nation. The final verse 35 reminds us that we are not to misuse what God has given us.

Numbers 36:1-4 – When a man of Israel died and had no sons, his land passed to his daughters. Their concern was that if the daughters married someone from another tribe that the land would pass from the daughter's tribe to the husband's tribe. In this way the inheritance of the daughters' tribe would pass to her husband's tribe. This scripture is helpful to us because it teaches us that when we have a problem with what God's word says and especially if it contradicts what another portion says, we are to take the problem to our spiritual leaders for godly advice and direction (Psalm 1:1 cp. Prov.13:20).

Numbers 36:5-9 – Moses gave them God's word on the matter. Psalm 119:24 teaches us that God's word is to be our counselor. When daughters inherited land from their father, they were to marry only within their tribe. In this way the land would not pass out of the daughter's tribe's allotment. Several lessons come from this passage. Firstly, spiritual leaders are not to give their personal opinion when answering the questions of those who consult them. They are to give God's word's view of the matter. Secondly, God's word declared the security of the inheritance of each tribe's land allotment. This reminds us that the believer's inheritance in heaven cannot be destroyed, lose value with time nor be ruined by sin (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Our salvation is guarded by God's power (1 Peter 1:5). Thirdly, we see that God gave these girls the freedom to marry whom they wanted with

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the restriction of marrying a man within their tribe. In the same way, God allows us as believers to marry whom we choose within the restrictions that His word places on us for close relationships. The person we marry must be a believer (2 Cor. 6:14-17), must not be involved in the sins of 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Tim. 3:1-5, must not be causing divisions among Christians by advocating teachings that are contrary to God's word as taught in Rom. 16:17-18, and he or she must not be unscripturally divorced if the ex-spouse is still living (Mt. 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15, 27 cp. Mt. 18:15-17; Romans 7:1-3). Also, if the ex-spouse of an unscriptural divorce is remarried, this makes the other spouse eligible to remarry if he or she meets the preceding criteria (Mk. 10:11-12).

Numbers 36:10-13 – We note that the daughters that had brought about these commandments did marry men from their own tribe. From this passage we see the following teachings: They obeyed God's word (James 1:22). They obeyed their spiritual leaders (Heb. 13:17). This shows us how God's inspiration of scripture works. God gave these commandments to His people through Moses. God is the source of His word, and He chooses men to communicate it. This agrees with the teaching of 2 Peter 1:21.