

LESSONS IN
THE BOOK OF NUMBERS
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The Numbering of the Men of War

Chapter One

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers with the number of their names every male by their polls: From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies." 1:1-3.

The book of Numbers is a record of the journeys of Israel from the time they left Mt. Sinai after coming out of Egypt, and receives its name from the various numberings of the people. According to 1:1, we learn that Israel was probably camped in front of Mt. Sinai just short of one year. They came out of Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month (Ex. 12) and into the wilderness of Sinai in the third month (Ex. 19:1). Israel began their journey from Mt. Sinai on the 20th day of the second month in the second year (Num. 10:11). God never needs to hurry and as stated in Num. 9:22, Israel only journeyed when the cloud was taken up - "Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed."

As we will see from these lessons, it is important for us also to neither go ahead of the Lord, nor behind Him as to His purposes for us.

Israel is now about ready to resume their journeys toward the promised land, but first there is some very important business at hand. They are to be a people of war if they are to possess the land of Canaan, and this is the first occasion of their numbering. All families were numbered "from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel." All the instruction given to Israel in preparation for their journeys and conquests have special application to us. We do well to realize that we, too, must be prepared for war. Those numbered were not babies, but rather young men. Likewise, we must grow up into Christ in some measure before we are able to go forth to battle; and then, it is by no means going alone, but as a part of the overall army. Another important aspect of their preparation for battle is found in 1:18. Each one must declare his pedigree. In a spiritual sense, we must know who we are in order to battle effectively. We must know that we are a new creation in Christ Jesus, and that we do not war after the flesh, for we are no longer of the first Adam. Our citizenship is now in heaven and we must know and declare that, "now are we the sons of God."

There are twelve tribes named in these verses, but Levi is not among them; for theirs was a ministry which did not permit them to go to war. These names of the twelve tribes listed for war are wonderfully instructive of certain qualities and credentials which we need to battle effectively. All the tribes were necessary for a full victory.

Reuben, the firstborn son of Jacob, means "see a son." His name informs us of the fact that this is our beginning in the ways of God.

Simeon is the next named son. His name means "hearing," and reminds us that our victory not only results from God hearing us, as is the context of his name when it was first given to him by his mother, Leah, but that, we as good soldiers must listen diligently to the Leader of our spiritual warfare. A good soldier is one who follows orders and is absolutely submissive to those in authority over him, though he may not always agree with the strategy.

Gad's name signifies "a troop cometh," and informs us of a multitude of things both good and bad which may come in our lives as a result of the complete submission of Simeon.

Judah is "praise," without which we can never gain the victory. Praise lifts the spirit even though a troop of things may come our way. Paul expresses it thus: "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Later in this book, we find that when Israel went forward, it is the camp of Judah which leads the way. Praise must be an active part of our warfare if we are going to be victorious.

Issachar, the fifth tribe named, means "reward," and being in the fifth slot, teaches us that our rewards are all of grace. Divine Grace has caused us to triumph and the reward of victory is often beyond our wildest dreams.

Zebulun, "dwelling," is next and tells us that we must dwell where God puts us. There is where we will have the presence of the Lord. Psalm 91:1-7 declares the protection and victory of the one who dwells in the secret place of the Most High. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty . . . He shall cover thee with His feathers ... Thou shalt not be afraid ... a thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand." There is no substitute for the "dwelling Zebulun" when we are engaged in battle against the power of Satan.

The Tribe of Joseph is represented by his two sons. Ephraim, the "fruitful" one, is next and speaks of the fruit resulting from every battle. It is imperative that we realize our fight is not in vain. To the victor belongs the spoils of war, and so often this means spiritual fruit produced in us, is a result of an encounter with the enemy.

Next comes Manasseh - "forgetting." Paul mentions him in Phil. 3:13 as he says, "forgetting those things which are behind." We cannot grieve and sorrow over the hardships which we have endured, nor can we stand and gloat over all our victories, lest we be overcome by foolish pride. We need to forget those things which are behind and reach forth to the provisions which are yet to be possessed.

Benjamin is the next one named - "son of my right hand." He tells of the hope of reigning jointly with Christ, even as we are now seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This hope serves as a tremendous incentive to continue to fight the good fight of faith and win a crown of righteousness.

The Tribe of Dan emerges next - "the judge." It is not simply marching in judgment of the enemy, but a good soldier or warrior must also judge himself. Paul said, "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be disapproved." (I Cor. 9:27). He, like Peter, knew that judgment must first begin at the house of God (I Peter 4:17).

Asher is the next named tribe, his name meaning "happy." He speaks of the warrior who is content, even happy, with the rigors and hardships of constant battle. This is something that must be learned, but it comes as a result of finding joy, contentment, and happiness in Christ Himself, rather than things and circumstances.

Finally, Naphtali, "the wrestler", tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. He knows who his enemy is and goes out to battle with spiritual weapons rather than carnal ones.

All these tribes were necessary for Israel to have complete victory over their enemies, and the various attributes which their names suggest, are also necessary for full victory in our lives. We must possess them and display them in our lives if we intend to experience the fulness of God. Revelation 5:10 declares that we have been made kings and priests unto our God. These twelve tribes who went to war, tell us of the kingly side of our ministry upon the earth. The priestly aspect of this ministry is portrayed by the Levites. 1:47. "But the Levites after their fathers were not numbered among them (those who went to war). The Levites were appointed to take charge over the tabernacle and all the contents therein. They were to take it down and set it up, and were encamped directly surrounding it "That there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel."

This priestly ministry of guarding the things of God and being in constant communion with Him, watching the guiding cloud of the Holy Spirit, to know when to move and when to stay, must be an active part of our experience. Not only so, but this same priestly company is seen in Rev. 7:1 as the four angels holding back the four winds of the earth - protectors from the wrath to come. Even now, these same ministers of faith lead the charge in hindering the mystery of iniquity which is already at work. I Thess. 2:7.

In all these ways, we are to be, in a very practical sense, kings and priests unto our God. Both ministries must be manifest in our experience if we would conquer and reign with Christ.

ISRAEL SET IN ORDER

Chapter Two

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace ... Let all things be done decently and in order." I Corinthians 14:33, 40.

Order is the subject of this chapter. We note from 1:46 that the number of the men of war was 603,550. This number did not include the Levites, or the women and children. With such a large congregation, order is paramount. Israel would never succeed in getting across the desert if they

went disorganized. Thus, God set them in order both for their journeys and also their encampments.

We must realize that God's order is far different from man's organization and formality. It is very important that we know the difference, because oftentimes God's ways seem extremely foolish and unnecessary to the natural man. For example, what General would circumcise an entire army as soon as they crossed over into enemy territory; yet, it was exactly God's order for Israel after they had crossed the Jordan. (Joshua 5:2).

On the other hand, in their quest to keep away from formality, Christians may develop a Corinthian attitude. "How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." I Corinthians 14:26. When Divine Order prevails, there is edification, not confusion. Such order requires sincere and honest hearts, which desire to be beneficial to the rest of the body, and not just to please themselves. It is being led by the Spirit of God, and by His desires rather than carefully planned and executed programs of men. There are also Scriptural principles of leadership which must be observed both in a worship service and in everyday life, in order that we do not fall into Satan's trap of "every man doing that which is right in his own eyes." (Judges 21:25). The steps of a righteous man are indeed ordered by the Lord, and when these ordained steps are followed, there will be Divine order.

Order for us starts exactly as it did for Israel: "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard with the ensign of their father's house." Once again, we must know who we are. People of today are troubled by an identity crisis. They are searching for themselves, not knowing who they really are. As Christians, we identify with the ensign of Christ. We are a new creation in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away, behold all things are become new. (2 Cor. 5:17). We no longer try to find an existence in our old head Adam, but a new ensign or banner of ownership has been raised over our head, even that of Jesus Christ.

The remainder of this chapter separates the twelve tribes of war into four different camps. On the east is located the camp of Judah. It is composed of three tribes - Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. Each of these tribes had a captain, and their names are suggestive of attributes in our lives. Naphthali is the captain of Judah, and his name means "discernment," which is invaluable to our experience today in separating the good from the evil. Nethaneel of the tribe of Issachar follows, and his name means "gift of God." This speaks of all the gifts which God has given to us in Christ Jesus, including the Holy Spirit with all of His gifts. Eliab of the tribe of Zebulun is the next captain. His name means "My God is Father," and emphasizes the realization that we need to know God in a very intimate relationship as a Father, and not as some great Deity in the distant heavens.

As we have noted, Judah camped on the East, and when Israel journeyed, this camp set forth first. Judah, meaning "Praise," illustrates the fact that praise must lead forth in our own experiences, as many Scriptures testify.

"On the South side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben." Located in this camp are the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Gad. Their respective captains are: Elizur, "My God is a Rock;" Shelumiel, "At peace with God;" and Eliasaph, "Associate with God." All of these meanings are easily interpreted as "captains" who should lead us in our going forth to battle. God must be our solid rock foundation. As a result, we not only have peace WITH God, but the constant peace OF God ruling our lives and calming all the troubled waters which would arise. This brings us to a much closer association with God Himself.

After the camp of Reuben comes the tabernacle borne by the camp of Levi. We notice from this arrangement, that whether camping or marching, the tabernacle is always in the center. When they encamped, there were four camps on the outer perimeter and four more located closer to the court. When they traveled, two camps preceded the tabernacle and two follow. Likewise, our lives must center around Christ and His redemption, as represented by the tabernacle and all that pertained to it.

To the West was the camp of Ephraim. Herein are found Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin. Their captains, Elishama, "My God is hearer;" Gamaliel, "My recompense is God;" and Abidan, "Father of the Judge, or of judgment;" tell us of a special relationship into which God has brought us. He does hear the cries of His people and He becomes their exceeding great reward. When dealing in judgment, it is not as a cold, uncaring seeker of destruction, but rather as a Father who deals with us and chastens us as sons, for our growth and development.

This camp made up the third rank in Israel, and then followed Dan, situated on the North side of the camp. Dan, Asher, and Naphtai are in this final camp, and they march forward last. Ahiezer, "Brother of health;" and Pagiel, "Events of God" are the first two captains named, and both are very important to our spiritual welfare. The "brother of health" comes only from the new creation, and speaks of the spiritual vitality and health which only Christ can provide through His resurrection life. Pagiel, captain of "happy" Asher, underscores the need for us to be content with ALL that comes our way, knowing that the steps of a righteous man are ordered by the Lord. Finally, Ahira, "The brother of evil;" seems at the outset to be out of place. We must realize, however, that evil can be no stranger to us, or we could be taken unawares. We must know what evil is, but in no wise do we partake of it.

The number of these tribes given in verse 32 is the same as in 1:46, and includes only the men of war from the twelve named tribes. The number of the Levites will be considered later and for various reasons.

THE NUMBERING OF THE LEVITES AND THE FIRSTBORN

Chapter Three

"These also are the generations of Aaron and Moses" 3:1. As previously noted, the tribe of Levi was not numbered among the men of war. Our present chapter records their number, the order of their encampments, and their purpose and sphere of service.

Originally, there were five priests, Aaron the high priest, and his four sons, who were his assistants. A devastating failure on the part of two of them is found in Leviticus 10. From Lev. 10:9, we conclude that Nadab and Abihu apparently became drunk, offered strange fire, and died by the hand of the Lord. According to this chapter, these two sons had no children and were not replaced.

The same failure and its result has occurred in Christendom today. Many are drunken on the wine of religion and need to heed Paul's exhortation in Eph. 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit."

The word "strange" as used in strange fire, means "profane, foreign, to commit adultery." It means that the fire was not pure; it did not come from the altar of sacrifice as the Lord had commanded. Spiritually speaking, their worship was not based on Calvary, and Christendom in their drunken stupor today, cannot distinguish the difference between genuine worship, whose basis is Calvary, and fleshly demonstration of the works of men. Some say, "All religion is good;" no matter that it denies the sacrificial death of Christ, and focuses attention on man rather than exalting Christ.

Even as Nadab and Abihu were not replaced, it seems today that real interceding prayer warriors who come into the holy of holies to meet with the Lord, are hard to find. The poor attendance at the mid-week prayer service across the country testifies to this lack of real prayer. The campaigns and ministries in behalf of men seem to be thriving, but the consistent, diligent, personal worship of God (just for Himself), is not really a popular ministry today.

With the absence of Nadab and Abihu, more responsibility was added to those priests who had remained faithful. Just so, I believe that we can safely say that real spiritual priests today are feeling more and more pressure from the powers of darkness, because the number of faithful priests is declining. And even though these two unfaithful sons did not fulfill their ministry, God's purposes were not stopped. God always has a ministry for those who are available and are faithful.

The priesthood today is an office of glorifying God and being in constant communion with Him and in harmony with His purposes. It is the priest who comes boldly to the throne of grace, where God says, "I will meet with thee and commune with thee." Ex. 25:22. Such a ministry is not always a public one.

We read in verse six, that the entire tribe of Levi was chosen to minister to Aaron and to do the service of the Tabernacle. Again, we emphasize that the priestly ministry was primarily one of worship; whereas the responsibility of the Levites was that of service. Both are necessary ministries; and although all the priests were Levites, yet all the Levites did not have the office of priest. This means that if we are a spiritual priest, we will also have a life of service and be beneficial to men. But, because one is always involved in service as was Martha of the New Testament, it does not mean that he is going to enter into the office as a worshipping priest. The responsibility of the Levites was to erect and take down the different parts of the Tabernacle, and carry them to the next camping place. Each family had a particular responsibility.

The responsibility of Aaron and his sons, is found in verse ten. "They shall wait on their priest's office." The word "wait" means to "guard, hedge about, protect." The priests were to jealously guard these vessels and adhere to God's explicit instructions. Likewise, today the spiritual priest is held responsible for how he guards the provisions of Calvary. It is no wonder that Paul cried out, "I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and Him crucified." (1 Cor. 2:2). Every Gospel minister is responsible for what goes forth from his pulpit. If a stranger to the ways of God is permitted to minister there, death, insofar as spiritual increase, will result.

"And I, behold I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn." 3:12. In the day God ordained the Passover, while Israel was still in Egypt, He hallowed all the firstborn unto Himself. The shed blood of the Lamb purchased their lives and they belonged to Him. As our present verse declares, God took the one tribe of Levi in place of the firstborn of Israel. He had bought them and could do as He pleased with them. Levi was then given to Aaron as ministers unto him and his sons. 3:6-9.

This exchange is the reason for the next numbering. "Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them." 3:15. The requirement for numbering the different ages in this book are interesting, and spiritually significant. The men of war were numbered from 20 years old and upward. In Chapter Four, the Levites are numbered for service from 30 years of age. Although male children were circumcised at eight days of age, they were apparently not presented to the Lord until they were 30 days, or one month of age. Luke 2:21-24 and Leviticus 12:1-4.

These ages describe different levels of growth and maturity in the Church. Those of the eighth day emphatically belong to God as a new creation, and though they are not numbered as a part of the commonwealth of Israel until after 30 days, they still belong to Him. The repentant thief who hung on the cross beside Jesus is representative of this group. They are positively of the eighth-day new creation in Christ, yet they never go on to become an active part of the Body of Christ.

Those numbered from thirty days portray believers who are a part of the Body, and may have great potential in spiritual things, but they do not have the strength or maturity to join in battle against the enemy. The Levites seem to express an even greater degree of spirituality in that their ministry did not begin until age 30.

The Apostle John makes this distinction of three groups in his epistle, written to Hebrew Christians. "I write unto you little children (one month) because your sins are forgiven." These have become a part of the Body, but with this meager knowledge and experience. "I write unto you young men because you have overcome the wicked one." These clearly represent the men of war. "I write unto you fathers because you have known Him that is from the beginning." These figure the 30 year-olds who have grown in experiential knowledge of the Eternal One and His purposes. Their special concern is in knowing Him personally as also Paul expressed in his personal testimony in Phil. 3:8-10: "Yea, doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ... That I may know Him in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering." Such knowledge can only be gained by years of spiritual experience and dedication to the Lord.

As we continue with our chapter, we see that Gershon was the first family of the Levites to be numbered, and his camp was located immediately on the west side of the Tabernacle. His name means "outcast," and his charge was that of the hangings and all the coverings of the Tabernacle. In spirit, we become Gershon, counted as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things, yet holding forth these hangings which beautifully express Christ and His righteousness.

Kohath is next and his camp was located on the south side of the Tabernacle. 3:29. It is fitting that he should have charge of the furniture. His name means "obedient," and is significant of the overall obedience of Christ in the plan of redemption, represented by these pieces of furniture. Merari follows, and he too, is matched perfectly with his job as well as his encampment. His name means "bitter," not in the sense of defilement, but rather in conjunction with his responsibility. Merari had charge of the boards, bars, and pillars. He was indeed a burden bearer. His camp on the north expresses to us the coldness of adversity which often accompanies the bearing of burdens.

On the east side of the Tabernacle was the camp of Moses and the priests. Their job was to be sure that no one intruded into the sanctuary which was ordained for the priests only.

The remaining verses of this chapter record the numbering and exchange of the firstborn for the tribe of Levi. A comparison of verse 40 and 43, reveal that there were 273 more firstborn in Israel than there were Levites. According to the record, each Levite purchased or redeemed one firstborn. Since there were 273 more firstborn, Moses was instructed to take five shekels each from the firstborn and give it to Aaron and his sons. Thus every individual was accounted for. So it is with men today. Christ has atoned for all of them collectively, but each one must be accounted for individually. Note the phrase, "I AM the Lord" in verses 41, 45. This informs us that God was sovereign in His action here, and had full right and authority to do as He pleased with those who belonged to Him .

THE NUMBERING OF THE LEVITES

Chapter Four

"Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers. From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the house to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." 4:2, 3.

Chapter Four begins with yet another numbering for Israel. This time, it is the Levites who are numbered for service. The qualifying age is a span of 20 years - from 30 to 50 years of age. It is surely no accident that Jesus began His earthly public ministry when He was about the age of 30. (Luke 3:23). This seems to be a prime time in life.

The remainder of this chapter details the exact service of each of the three families of Levi.

Everything which figures redemption is very carefully guarded. Not even the smallest point is overlooked. God leaves nothing to the imagination or convenience of men.

According to verse five, the ark was covered by the vail even in transport. The ark, representing the throne of grace, the very closest place of fellowship and intimacy with God, is always within the confines of the vail. The way into the holy of holies where the ark and the mercy seat were located, would not be opened to man until Jesus died on the cross and the vail was rent.

Besides the vail, the ark was also covered by badger skins. 4:6. This is representative of the impenetrable righteousness of Christ. Add to that, the covering of blue, and we are told that the ministry of Christ is of an overall heavenly character.

The table of shewbread is the next piece of furniture mentioned, and it too, is covered with blue.

They were then instructed to spread upon them a cloth of scarlet followed by the badger skins. 4:8. Scarlet speaks of the blood of atonement and reminds us again that Christ, the true Bread from heaven, the life Sustainer, is available to us because of His shed blood. As before, the protective badger skins tell us of Divine righteousness which cannot be penetrated, thus preserving the beauty of the flawless redemptive plan.

The rest of the furniture was covered in like manner, but with an interesting difference in regards to the brazen altar. 4:13. "They shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon." Purple, in Scripture, is symbolic of royalty and might seem to be out of place here. However, all is in Divine order, for the altar of supreme sacrifice must give way to the reigning Christ. Hallelujah! The Cross must of necessity give way to the Crown. Indeed, His work on Calvary, gave Him full title to the throne. "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name." (Philippians 2:9).

After all the furniture has been completely covered, the sons of Kohath were to bear the burden of it. 4:15. Up until that time, no one was allowed to view the pieces of furniture except the priests. 4:20. It is no different today. Only spiritual priests gain insight into the depths of God's plan of redemption. The way is open for all men to qualify for spiritual priesthood, but only a few really dedicate themselves and avail themselves of this great privilege.

As stated previously in these lessons, order was of paramount importance in Israel. Verses 16-33 in our present chapter, again reveal God's order. This time, we view it as to responsibility and authority.

Eleazar, one of the two remaining sons of Aaron was directly in charge of the oil, incense, the daily meal offering, and the general oversight of the tabernacle and sanctuary. 4:16. It seems from verses 18 and 19, that all of the priests shared in the authority over the Kohathites: "Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden, but they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die." Notice, however, in verses 28 and 33, that the service of Merari and Gershon was under the direct authority of Aaron's other son, Ithamar.

There is also clear-cut authority in the Church today. We are not referring to man's organization,

but God-given authority. He declares, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves." Heb. 13:17. As we shall see later, Kohath was not content with the place God had given to him, and he rose up against those in authority. The consequences were devastating, and we can be sure that God will not tolerate rebellion today in His Church.

Each of these families had their own direct sphere of service and even this was in some cases individually personalized. "And by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge of their burden." 4:32.

All of these Levites were important to the work of the ministry. There were no unimportant, or needless jobs. Each person was numbered and had a particular responsibility. All eight thousand, five hundred and eighty of them were numbered according to his service and burden. 4:48, 49.

As we shall see from examples given later, it is vitally important that every member of the Body of Christ abide in his own place and calling. Only in this way, can he fulfill his own responsibility without trying to either do something he wasn't called to do, or else shirk the responsibility given to him, and therefore, do nothing. "Thus were they numbered of him as the Lord commanded Moses." 4:49.

Will you serve the Christ of the Calvary road?

There are sorrowing hearts to cheer;

When you help to soothe the stricken ones,

The Christ of the cross is near;

There are sinning souls on life's long trail

That may to Him be led;

And over this sweetest ministry

His tenderest love is shed.

So walk with Him the way of the cross

While He helps to lift each load,

And lovingly serve the thorn-crowned One -

The Christ of the Calvary road.

THE CLEANSING OF THE CAMP

Chapter Five

"Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue and whosoever is defiled by the dead. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them: that they defile not their camps in the midst whereof I dwell." Vs. 2, 3.

It is not difficult to see why God gave the above instructions. Were these instructions not given and enforced, the entire nation could have become a leper colony. It was imperative that cleanliness be preserved. This is the natural point of view, but of course, there is a very important spiritual view.

Three conditions are addressed in our text, and each has a spiritual counterpart. Leprosy tells of one who continues in sin. Leviticus 13 explores the many ramifications of this disease, and we find that there was a tremendous burden laid upon the priest in determining if the plague existed and to what extent. Sin is like leprosy in that it comes from within, it is contagious, it mutilates the body, and it is incurable except by Divine intervention.

The running issue (Leviticus 15) refers more to frailties of nature or certain weaknesses that we have in ourselves. These weaknesses vary from one individual to another, but when one gives in to them and becomes bound, it becomes a defiling issue closely related to leprosy.

One defiled by the dead refers to one who has fellowship with the flesh, and this too, is defiling. Such defilement is by no means always in an immoral sense, but the religious flesh is also tremendously defiling. It is this religious defilement of which Paul speaks in II Cor. 6:13-18.

From our present chapter, it might seem that those who were expelled from the camp, were victims of an irreversible decree, that they were doomed to spend the rest of their lives without the camp, but such is not the case. In Leviticus 14, it was the responsibility of the priest to go outside the camp to the leper to determine if he was still leperous. Leviticus 15 tells us that one with an issue could be cleansed of it. Numbers 19 makes provision for one defiled by a dead body, to be cleansed.

Such also, is Paul's teaching in the New Testament. God's purpose is not simply to get rid of a distasteful offender for the benefit of the congregation, but his primary concern is for the defiled

one to be cleansed and restored.

For the "leper," the one who high-handedly and deliberately continues in sin, Paul declares, "Deliver such an one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." I Cor. 5:5. This was not simply for the purpose of getting rid of this man. Paul uses this same principle in I Tim. 1:20 - "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." The overall purpose then, is to rectify wrong attitudes through literal suffering in the body, and to bring the offender to repentance. Paul declares in II Cor. 2 to forgive the man, and in vs. 8, 9, he states a very important purpose in telling them to put this man without the camp in the first place: "Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. FOR TO THIS END ALSO did I write."

The Apostle's intention from the beginning was RESTORATION, not AMPUTATION.

Furthermore, it is imperative that they restore him in genuine love and forgiveness, "lest Satan should get an advantage of us." This same warning is issued to Ephesian saints concerning anger. "Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down on your wrath." Eph. 4:26, 27. Phillips translation of v. 27 is, "Don't give the devil that sort of foothold." If we are not filled with love and forgiveness, we will give way to Satan and be filled with the opposite attitude - hatred, bitterness, animosity, anger.

Instructions concerning one defiled by an issue is given in Gal. 6:1: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault (side-slip, lapse, or deviation, unintentional error), ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the SPIRIT OF MEEKNESS ... Bear ye one another's burdens."

Once again, the purpose is to restore, and that, without an attitude of superiority. If one is overcome of his own weakness, it is the spiritual ones who are to lift him up toward cleansing, rather than alienating him to further defilement.

Finally, one who is defiled by a dead body, is not to be shunned as though he were not a part of the Body of believers. In the ninth chapter of this book, the men who were defiled thus, were exhorted to keep the passover. In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus taught that saints are to wash one another's feet in the Word of God, and thus cleanse from defilement as well as refresh each other. We can minister to others without partaking of their evil deeds or sanctioning their defiling practices. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners and Paul became all things to all men without being defiled. We will never be able to win people if we alienate them with a condemning and judgmental spirit.

The way of cleansing continues in our chapter as the requirements of the trespass offering are repeated. This offering was two-fold, as it showed man's responsibility to God and man's responsibility to man. Neither burden could be ignored, then or now. The principles for freedom from guilt recorded in our text is God's way for us today.

First, "they shall confess their sin which they have done." 5:7. Next, "He shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof and add unto it the fifth part thereof." The ram of atonement was to be offered, teaching that any forgiveness can only be based on atonement.

These same principles are taught in the New Testament. James says, "Confess your faults one to another." Matt. 5:23, 24 declares, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave thy gift before the altar and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." These are Jesus' words, and they tell us that no one can effectively worship the Lord until he has taken care of an offense against his brother. He cannot continue under the burden of guilt incurred because of his trespass. It must be confessed to the offended party.

The second requirement of this offering: "He shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof and give it unto him against whom he has trespassed." This also has a New Testament answer. The principal is the restoration of the actual and exact damage, but the fifth part more is the unique part of this offering. It could be called the "grace part more" since five is the number of grace. Simply stated, it means that as we humble ourselves and go to an offended brother, we do so through the power of the grace of God. "He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." The offended party becomes a recipient of the power and effects of grace which has been worked in the one who offended him.

Finally, we realize that any forgiveness granted, must be on the basis of the shed blood of Christ - "beside the ram of atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him." 5:8. If the offended party is no longer alive and he had no kinsman, it did not free the person from obligation. His offering was then to be given "to the Lord, even to the priest." God insisted that the

offender acknowledge his trespass and take the proper steps for cleansing. Also, we see from verses 9, 10, the offerings which were given to the Lord became the property of the priest. This was God's method for the support of his servants who were totally dedicated to the service of the tabernacle, and had no other means of sustenance.

God's instruction to Moses continues with a special form of trespass. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside and commit a trespass against him ... and it be hid from the eyes of her husband and be kept close, and she is defiled ... or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him and he be jealous of his wife and she be not defiled." 5:12-14. The situation here calls for a trial. The word "If" used a number of times indicates that there is no clear cut proof of guilt. God is not at a loss as to what to do, and the procedure is filled with spiritual instruction for us.

The woman under suspicion is brought by her husband to the priest, along with her offering which is not one of sweetness and worship, as is indicated by the absence of frankincense and oil, but "an offering of memorial bringing iniquity to remembrance." 5:15, 16. The purpose at this time was to decide if she was indeed guilty as charged. The agent to decide her guilt or innocence is holy water - the Word of God - and the procedure and its effects are especially interesting.

The water was first placed into an earthen vessel, symbolic of Christ, the Word being made flesh. Then the priests put dust from the floor of the tabernacle into the water. This too, describes Christ who came down and was identified with the sinful dust of humanity. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Heb. 2:17, 18. Because He came into this world in such a body, subject to all the temptations and limitations of humanity, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, He is able to judge righteously. (Heb. 3:15). He knows the requirement of a righteous and holy God, but He is also able to feel the tremendous weakness and infirmity of men. He, as the Water of the Word, in this way is able to determine guilt or innocence. The effects of this water leave no doubt as to the truth.

When coming to the priest, the woman is placed before the Lord with her head uncovered. This may seem rather strange, but again, spiritual truth is revealed. The instructions concerning head covering are given in I Cor. 11, and three verses in particular seem to be applicable here. "Every woman who prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered ... is even all as if she were shaven." v. 5. In other words, she stands here as though she were a man. Verses 9, 10, give further insight as we read, "Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause (the fact that she was created for the man and is to be under his authority), "ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels." The word "power" indicates the authority of the man over the woman. So, when the woman stood before the Lord with her head uncovered, she assumes responsibility for herself. She is no longer under the authority of her husband, but is shut up directly before the Lord, responsible only to Him for the outcome.

The offering in her hands, once again very forceably indicates that man cannot come before God, for any reason, except he come with an offering (Christ) in his hands. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," Jesus said. (John 14:6).

Preparation for the moment of truth continues as the priest informs this woman of the effects of drinking the bitter water. If she is not guilty, there will be no ill effects. If she has been defiled, she must bear the consequences of the curse, which are extremely severe.

After hearing all of the possibilities concerning her, the woman acknowledges God's ways for her by saying, "Amen. Amen." v. 22. In Deut. 15, God made Israel as a whole, openly acknowledge the curse of breaking the law, in the same manner. They were not ignorant of what would befall them for violating the law of God. They were without excuse.

"And the priest shall write these curses in a book and shall blot them out with the bitter water." v. 23. This verse seems to be out of context, and meaningless insofar as this woman is concerned in the event she is found guilty. Though the curses are specifically said to be blotted out, there is nothing in the remaining verses to indicate any kind of freedom if the woman is found guilty.

This verse, however, is filled with beautiful lessons of redemption, and casts a bright light of hope against a very black background of despair. Though the woman doesn't seem to benefit at all, we will see from other portions of Scripture that grace is triumphant. We have seen that the bitter water is symbolic of Christ coming in an earthen vessel, indentifying Himself with sinful humanity.

Now we notice that this same bitter water blots out the curse. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. This interpretation of our text is also proven by Israel, who was the unfaithful wife, and absolutely guilty. See Hosea 1:2-5. She is not doomed to eternal barrenness by the law. The prophet Hosea further tells us that God will woo her into the wilderness, speak friendly to her and make her faithful and fruitful. (Hosea 2:14-23). The adulteress in John 8 found exactly the same result. Instead of condemnation and death, she found the joy of freedom and the power of a fruitful life. John 8:11.

In Numbers, we hear the unyielding voice of the law. If the woman is innocent, she may go free, but if she is guilty, she is both hopeless and helpless. She was required to drink the bitter water. If she was guilty, her belly would swell, her thigh would rot, and she would be a curse among her people.

These are the effects of the Word of God today upon sin. It will show the puffed up belly of arrogance and pride. It will reveal the rottenness of a fleshly walk even though it may even be religious. The water is the determining factor. Today, the Word of God is the Standard. It is not simply a matter of measuring up to certain opinions of men concerning Scripture, or trying to keep a rigid set of decrees established by men. It means, rather, that God's Word is actually taken into our system. When we drink deeply of its contents, though it be bitter, it will do the work that it is intended to do. The honest heart does not try to deny the meaning of Scripture in order to excuse himself from responsibility in his own life. He wants to know that "If in anything ye be other wise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Phil. 3:15.

This same Word will also manifest the good verdict. In our study, "if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed." v. 28. The water which exposed the flesh, will also make us free to revel in the merit of His grace, and will give us the ability to produce spiritual fruit unto Him. This procedure declares clearly either guilt or innocence in the law of jealousy. v. 29. Nothing is left to the imagination or supposition of men.

The water is first placed into an earthen vessel, symbolic of Christ, the Word, being made flesh, or taking upon Himself a body of flesh. Next, we read that the priest put dust that was on the floor of the Tabernacle into the water. This too, describes Christ who came down and was identified with the sinful dust of humanity. "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Hebrews 2:17, 18.

Because He came into this world in such a body, subject to all the temptations and limitations of humanity, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, He is able to judge righteously. He knows the requirement of a righteous and holy God, but He is also able to feel the tremendous weakness and infirmity of man. He, as the Water of the Word, in this way is able to determine guilt or innocence; and as we shall see, the effects of this holy water, leave no doubt as to the truth of the matter.

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The offering in her hands (verse 18), once again very forcefully indicates that man cannot come before God for any reason, except he come offering Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14:6.

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ways for her by saying, "Amen, Amen." Later, in Deuteronomy 15, God makes Israel, as a whole, openly acknowledge the curse of breaking the law in the same manner. They were not ignorant of what would befall them for violating the law of God. They were without excuse.

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This verse is filled with a beautiful lesson of redemption, and casts a bright light of hope against a very black background of despair. Though the woman doesn't seem to benefit at all, we will see from other portions of Scripture that grace is triumphant. We have already seen that the bitter water is symbolic of Christ coming in an earthen vessel and identifying Himself with sinful humanity. Now we notice that this same bitter water blots out the curse. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. By coming down and being made sin for us, Christ has blotted out the curses against us. This interpretation of our text is proven by Israel who was the unfaithful wife. She was absolutely guilty - Hosea 1:2-5. She is not, however, doomed to the eternal barrenness demanded by the law. The prophet Hosea further tells us that God will woo her in the wilderness, speak friendly or comfortably to her, and make her faithful and fruitful. (Hosea 2:14-23). The adulteress in John 8 found exactly this same result. Instead of condemnation and death, she found the joys of freedom and the power of a fruitful life in His words, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." John 8:11.

In the book of Numbers, however, it is the unyielding voice of the law that is heard. If the woman is innocent, she may go out free, but if she be guilty, she is both hopeless and helpless.

She is now required to drink the bitter water. If she is guilty, her belly shall swell, her thigh rot, and she shall be a curse among her people. These are the effects of the Word of God even today. Unjudged sin will show the puffed-up belly of arrogance and pride. It will reveal the rottenness of a fleshly walk even though it be religious. The water is the determining factor.

Likewise today, the Word of God is the Standard by which men are judged. This is not simply a matter of measuring up to certain opinions of men concerning Scripture, or trying to keep a rigid set of decrees established by men. It means rather, that God's Word is actually taken into our system. When we drink deeply of its contents, though it be bitter, it will do the work that it is intended to do. The honest heart does not try to explain away the meaning of Scripture in order to excuse himself from the responsibility in his own life. He wants to know that "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Phil. 3:15.

This same Word will also manifest the good. As seen here in our study, "if the woman be not defiled, but be clean, then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed." v. 28. The same water which exposed the flesh would at the same time make one free to revel in the merit of His grace, and also give the ability to produce spiritual fruit unto Him.

This is the law of jealousies (verse 29), and this procedure declares clearly either guilt or innocence with nothing left to the imagination or to the supposition of men.

THE GLORY OF MY BELOVED

The glory of my Beloved
Etched deep within my heart;
Each time I gaze upon Him,
I know we shall never part.
The glory of His countenance
Lights up my inmost being,
From glory to glory - to glory!
Changed into the image of Him.
His glory all around me
And His glory deep within,
Tells heaven above, and earth beneath
That His glory will never dim!
The glory of my Beloved,
Is the glory of God's Son;
The express image, and the brightness
Of the only begotten One!

Another glory for my Beloved
Will be a wife, you see.
We two joined in Holy Wedlock,
Together shall always be!
- L. R. G.

The Laws of the Nazarite Chapter Six

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When either man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazareth, to separate themselves unto the Lord . . . " 6:1, 2. This chapter opens with four laws which describe the requirements for becoming a Nazarite. Spiritually speaking, these people represent the elite in Israel, the epitome of separation. They could well be called the full overcomers of Israel, and this is exactly who they portray. The instructions given to them must be literally and rigorously adhered to, but they have a beautiful application for our spiritual lives as well.

The first requirement is actually the basis for the three remaining ones. The Nazarite "must separate himself unto the Lord." Jesus Himself, is the example of the truth expressed here. He was completely separated unto His Father in every sense of the word. His full surrender and devotion to God are seen in many places in the Scriptures. Psalm 40:8, the "burnt offering" Psalm, declares: "I delight to do Thy will, O God." John's Gospel, which describes Christ as this same offering, totally burnt to God, has Jesus saying, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." 4:34. Also: "I do always those things which please Him." 8:29. "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." 2:17. All of these citations show One who was totally obsessed with living a life of absolute separation to the will of God. God's purpose for Christ, was His reason for living. The heart of the Nazarite today, must also be totally consumed with this desire. His is a life that belongs to the Lord.

The Apostle Paul tells us in I Cor. 6:20 - "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's." There are many other Scriptures which convey to us this same message. God has purchased us and has the right to do with us as He pleases, but it is only he who is of this Christ-like character that not only welcomes, but pursues this separation unto God.

The next requirement is "He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink." This is a result of the first step. Paul spoke of the Thessalonians: "Ye turned TO God FROM idols." I Thes. 1:9. The wine and strong drink tell us not only of the allurements of the pleasure-seeking immoral world, but also of the religiousness of this world, which has an exhilarating and stupefying effect, even on believers. There must be a separation, but it comes as a result of a positive commitment and dedication to God. The only real power we have against the defiling intoxicants of the world is a complete surrender of our will and energies to Him.

The third point of separation is that "no razor shall come on his head." Long hair in the Scriptures is symbolic of dependence and weakness. It is given to the woman who is referred to in Peter's epistle as the "weaker vessel" I Peter 3:7.

Samson was to be a Nazarite unto God from the womb, and the secret of his great strength was in his long hair. Paul interprets this mystery as he shouts, "When I am weak, then am I strong." It is the Nazarite who realizes his own frailty and weakness enough to depend absolutely on the strength of another. He learns by actual experience, "without me, ye can do nothing." John 15. He realizes and glories in the fact, that God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. It is not easy to live such a life of dependence, but it is a victorious life which glorifies God instead of the flesh.

Finally, the Nazarite must not come in contact with a dead body. In the natural, this may seem to be very harsh and unfeeling. He could not even be defiled by close family relationships. The law of the Nazarite in this matter was even more stringent than that for a priest. The priests could attend the burial of his mother, father, son, daughter, or a sister who was a virgin. Not so, the Nazarite. The High Priest had to follow these stringent laws also. Furthermore, there were no allowance for circumstances beyond his control. If one "died very suddenly by him" (6:9), he was considered defiled, and as we will see later, he must go through certain procedures of cleansing and rededication.

The dead body refers to the old creation, or the flesh, which God reckons to be dead. The Nazarite can have nothing to do with it. Paul's gospel is filled with this same message. "Our old

man has been crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth, we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6. There is no reason to be associated with this defiling fellow any more. Romans 7 teaches the same message. Paul uses the illustration of a wife being loosed from her husband by his death. Our "old husband" has no more dominion or rightful control over us. To fellowship such a dead body, or to be controlled by any of the desires and lusts of the flesh, whether religious or immoral, is defiling to the spiritual Nazarite. He has been loosed from the old man through death, and is now freed to be joined to another, even Christ, who has been raised from the dead. Romans 7:3, 4.

When one's separation has been defiled, there is but one way of cleansing, and that is through the blood. 6:10. Notice, however, that the first order of business is to shave the head. Regardless of his good intentions, or the fact that he was not directly at fault, the Nazarite must admit his defiled condition. As we note from verse 12, all the days of his separation are lost. He must begin anew to grow a head of hair. Spiritually speaking, it means that we may have to learn the same lesson of weakness and dependence on the Lord, more than once. We do not actually go through one experience with the Lord and appropriate all the lessons we need, once for all. The Christian experience is a progressive one, but as we shall see later, despite the set-backs, there does come a day when the vows of the Nazarite are fulfilled.

After shaving his head on the seventh day, symbolic of his perfect agreement with God, the Nazarite brings an offering to the door of the tabernacle on the eighth day. This is a new beginning for him, a day of resurrection as a new creation. The basis for it all, is the shed blood of the two turtle doves or two pigeons. His acceptance is through the death of another. This pictures Christ, the heavenly One who came down to offer himself for the sins of humanity. In verse 11, we read that one bird is offered for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering. The sin offering speaks of Christ who took upon Himself the sins of the world, and bore the penalty and judgment of God for them on the Cross. The burnt offering, which was totally burned to God, pictures the total obedience of Christ to the will of His Father. This burnt offering was the basis for all the other offerings; that is, every other offering was laid on the burnt offering. Just so, it was Jesus' total commitment to the will of the Father which enabled Him to fulfill all other aspects of Calvary. In verse 12, we see the trespass offering, which indicates that damage was done, and the loss must be restored in full, as well as a fifth-part more was to be added. By his defilement, the Nazarite transgressed against the righteous government of God and therefore, the trespass offering must be given.

The following verses of our chapter record the events of the ceremony, in which the vows of the Nazarite have been fulfilled. The three offerings considered here, are the burnt offering, sin offering, and the peace offering. The first two have already been discussed, and have the same significance at this occasion. Christ has taken care of the sin question by his own obedience to blood. Note however, that the trespass offering has been replaced by a peace offering. This offering was a fellowship offering - God and man received almost equal portions of it. It tells of God and man coming together and being able to feast together on the basis of a common sacrifice, even Jesus Christ. It is very fitting that the Nazarite should be able to offer it here, for he has been brought into deep and intimate fellowship with God because of Christ's work in his behalf. The practical separation that has been wrought in his life is due to his appropriation of all the laws of the Nazarite.

The beauty of this hallowed ritual further unfolds in verse 18: "The Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation." This time, however, it is not that he needs to shave as a sign of separation from defilement. It is burned in "the fire which is under the peace offering," because the day of weakness is over. Hallelujah! It has given way to the day of literal and absolute fellowship with God. Furthermore, we read that the shoulder and breast of the ram along with unleavened bread, are put upon the hands of the Nazarite who waves them before the Lord. This is done specifically after the hair is shaven, and simply commemorates before the Lord that the Nazarite accomplished these days of separation because of Christ.

It was the shoulder of Christ that he leaned on continually in order to overcome every obstacle. It was the breast, the affections of Christ, into which he entered and learned what it was to know the love of God. The Apostle John expresses this intimacy beautifully as he leaned upon Jesus' breast at the last supper. This man entered into an intimacy and an understanding of Divine Love which the other disciples did not really understand. Likewise, the Nazarite commemorates the importance of feasting on that breast of Divine Love. He truly learned that "in all these things we

are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Rom. 8:37. The unleavened bread simply tells us of the one who has eaten continually of the true Bread from Heaven, Christ, who is without evil in any form.

Finally, after all of this, the Nazarite may drink wine. This is the new wine of the Kingdom, of which Jesus spoke at the last supper. It tells of the ecstatic joy that we really cannot know, or even imagine, until we are with Him there.

As we noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Nazarites represented the full overcomers of Israel. The characteristics of the Nazarite have an amazing likeness to those of the full overcomers of the Church, as depicted by the four cherub faces of Rev. 4:7. "And the first beast (living one) was like a lion, and the second living one like a calf, and the third living one had a face as a man, and the fourth living one was like a flying eagle."

These cherubim are in reality a fourfold manifestation of the life of Christ exhibited by this very elite company of believers. The first living one described here, corresponds with the fourth law of the Nazarite - "he shall come at no dead body." The lion, symbolic of Christ as king, indeed, the "king of the beasts" is seen here as having absolute victory over everything of the flesh. Jesus said of Himself, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." John 17:2. This same characteristic is seen in God's overcoming people. They are not held in bondage, or bowed down by the 'dead bodies' of the flesh. They enjoy a life of freedom as they reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17).

The second living one had the face of a calf, or an ox, and expresses the same truth given by the long hair of the Nazarite. It tells us of complete weakness and surrender, as well as complete dependence upon Another. The ox also represents the life of Christ which was submissive to His Father's will. As the ox is willing to travel the same beaten path, so Christ was willing to become the vessel of supreme obedience and sacrifice. Likewise, Christians who manifest such traits, have surrendered their own wills to Him. They are content to be the weaker vessel and to acknowledge Him as absolute Lord of their lives, moving in His strength alone.

The third living one had a face as that of a man, and corresponds with the Nazarite's restriction of abstinence from wine and strong drink. It was as a man that Jesus understood and experienced all the frailties and limitations and temptations known to man, and yet, resisted them. He did not succumb to the allurements of the world, though He "was tempted in all points like as we are," yet He did not give in to those temptations and sin. (Hebrews 4:15). It is as new creatures that we walk separated from all the intoxicants of this world today. We do not live as though we were no longer human, completely free of all temptations but we do have the power to walk as separate from the ungodly and perverse world.

Finally, the flying eagle emerges as the heavenly character, separated unto God. His domain is the heavens, therefore, we see him as flying, refusing to be bound by any of the captivating powers of earth. He was born to be free, belonging to things above. It is with this thought in mind that Paul writes in Colossians - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." 3:1, 2. We are a heavenly people, having been raised in newness of life with Christ. Ours is now a heavenly realm, and we are to be totally possessed with heavenly desires, completely separated to the will of our heavenly Father.

It is also interesting to note the outcome of these heavenly cherubim. Just as the day of weakness gave way to the day of joy and fellowship for the Nazarite, we see these sublime creatures in heaven, sharing in Christ's day of joy and glory. Their day of weakness and suffering with Christ is over, and they will be one with Him as He comes forth in power and great glory to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. (2 Tim. 2:12)

While we have spoken much of the life of Christ in relation to the Nazarite, we must point out that according to the law, Jesus was not a Nazarite. He was called a Nazarene because He was from Nazareth; and spiritually, He fulfilled all the requirements of the Nazarite, but He violated at least two of the vows.

In Luke 7:14, He not only came near a dead body, but He actually touched the bier with His hand. We also know from John's Gospel, that He turned water into wine, and from His words at the last supper, it seems certain that He partook of the forbidden mixture. "Verily, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God." Mark 14:25. Matthew records Him as saying, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."

The remaining verses of this chapter record a prayer of blessing which was to be pronounced upon Israel by Aaron and his sons. The truth of it reaches us, as it expresses the manifold grace of God. It tells of a God who is ready to bless, with apparently, no responsibility on the part of Israel to call forth His blessings.

"The Lord bless thee." There are no "If's" here, and it is exactly in keeping with the Abrahamic covenant, and also with the covenant of grace which we enjoy today. The Law had a different message. Again and again, we read, "If thou shalt obey me and keep my commandments," etc., then I will bless you." Not so with the grace covenant. God put Himself on record as saying "I will bless you" because of His own marvellous fullness of grace. The only reason we do not enjoy the blessing of this prayer today, is because we either have not heard of them, or we do not believe what God says, is true.

The next strain of the prayer is equally comforting and full of blessing. The Lord "keep thee." The word "keep" means to hedge about, to guard, to protect, attend, and describes the Lord as a true Shepherd. He does have a hedge of protection about us, as is stated of Job, and no one can penetrate it without His knowledge and approval.

"The Lord make His face shine upon thee." Today, this term generally refers to natural blessings, things that are both needed and wanted by men. It is the rain on a dry, thirsty land, which preserves the crops, and the sunshine of Spring which drives away the dreary winter clouds; or perhaps, it might be destructive winds which barely missed valuable areas.

Though all of these things may be true, the meaning of this phrase is much deeper, as it speaks of Christ, shown to us by Divine revelation. It bespeaks a beautiful intimate relationship with Him, which, in reality, comes only by experience. After the intense heat which Job endured in the furnace of affliction, he said, "I have heard Thee by the hearing of the ear, now mine eye seeth thee." He meant that God was no longer afar off, but that he could "see" Him up close and understand and know His ways. The Song of Solomon portrays the growing knowledge and intimacy of Christ and His Bride. She paints a word portrait of Him in chapter 5:9-16. The fine details she describes, could only have come from one who had looked upon Him with great intensity.

It is imperative for us to look full into His face of glory, for as we do, we will be "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." II Cor. 3:18. Figuratively speaking, Moses had this experience in Exodus 33 and 34. It is specifically stated that Moses could not see the face of God and live. This was because he represented the Law which can never allow men to have a full-orbed view of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3). But in spirit, Moses did look deeply into the glory of God's face, and his face literally had beams of glory emanating from it after his experience with the Lord. How blessed we are that His face can shine upon us, bathing us completely in heavenly light. We need not walk in darkness, as one who is blind, any longer.

"The Lord be gracious unto thee." Again we notice that the overall tenor of this prayer is grace. Here, grace is specifically bestowed upon us. Paul's message is filled with the benefits to us for which the grace of God is directly responsible. We read of being saved by grace, built up by the Word of His Grace. We are instructed by grace, and we are the heirs of Divine grace. We grow in grace, are sustained by grace. And Paul learned that although God did not remove the thorn from his flesh, He did promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Actually, every phase of our existence is covered by Divine grace; but it seems that a life time of experience is necessary to discover all the practical expressions of grace.

"The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee." The Lord never repeats Himself unnecessarily. This part of the Divine petition further emphasizes the importance of a very close fellowship with Him. Again, Moses is the example. We read these amazing words in Exodus 33:10: "The Lord spoke to Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto His friend." Numbers 12:6-8 describes Moses as being more than a prophet. "And He said, Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

For those today who desire such a place of communion, God is more than willing to speak plainly and shed abroad the light of His countenance unto them.

Finally, He will "give thee peace." Peace seems to be very rare today, both in individuals and among nations; however, God is able to bring us into such a realm. While the earth will never

know peace until all the kings of the earth have bowed to Christ's authority, we as individuals can have peace with God, and the peace of God ruling our hearts. Despite all the things of the world, the flesh, and the devil, which combine to create such tremendous unrest, God is able to fulfill this final petition, and give us the calm and tranquility which all men desire and need. Such peace seems to be a direct result of His countenance shining upon us.

"And they shall put my Name upon the children of Israel." 6:27. Even though God had threatened to disown Israel (Exodus 32), and had been sorely disappointed again and again when they failed to believe Him, here we read that He does put His own Name upon them. They are His people and though they have failed many times, and will yet fail even more, He cannot deny Himself. This nation belongs to Him, and from the Scripture, we know that one day they will become the nation which God will own, and He will be able to bless them with all the blessings provided through the Abrahamic Covenant.

I've found a little remedy
To ease the life we live
And make each day a happier one -
It is the word "forgive."
So often little things come up
That leave a pain and sting,
That covered up at once would not
Amount to anything.
'Tis when we hold them up to view,
And brood and sulk and fret,
They greater grow before our eyes;
'Twere better to forget.

THE DEDICATION OF THE ALTAR

Chapter Seven

"And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: And they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle." 37:1-3.

The princes spoken of here are the same ones who were commissioned as captains of the men of war in chapter two. They were to be leaders in battle. In our present chapter, we see them as leaders in giving of their substance, thereby, resulting in worship. Both of these qualities are seen in the full overcomers of the Church.

The first offering was to be given to the Levites. There were six wagons given, each prince being responsible for one half of each wagon. Each one also brought an ox. These wagons and oxen were to be used by two of the Levitical families in performing their ministry. Two wagons with their yoke of oxen were given to the Gershonites, while four were given to the sons of Ithamar. 7:7, 8. This was in keeping with their respective jobs. Gershon had charge of the hangings and even though they were undoubtedly rather weighty, they were not nearly as heavy as the pillars and boards which were the responsibility of Merari.

God is still equitable in His dealings today. He gives the strength, the helps, and talents, and provisions, in accordance with the need of the one who ministers. He knows our requirements and is faithful to supply those needs accordingly.

The Kohathites received no wagons or oxen, because the service of the sanctuary, belonging to them, was that they should bear the items upon their shoulders. 7:9. This procedure was specifically stated by God and He was very jealous of it. Years later, when Israel tried to move the ark upon a cart, as the Philistines had done, God judged them for it. II Samuel 6. He refused to let them treat the ark, symbolic of Christ, as a mere idol. His standard is no less today. Christ is to be displayed in a very personal way, borne upon shoulders, and is expressed in a very practical and living way in our lives, instead of being hidden away in a covered wagon as were the burdens of Gershon and Merari.

"And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the

princes offered their offering before the altar." 7:10. The second offering of these rulers was used specifically in the dedication of the altar, a ceremony that lasted twelve days. We would point out that although each offering is identical, as each prince assumed the responsibility for one day, God took the time and space to acknowledge them individually. As overcomers of the Church, we too, bring the same spiritual gifts; but now, as then, God looks upon us as individuals, and the smallest detail of our overcoming and offerings to Him do not go unnoticed.

The offering itself is beautifully symbolic and speaks of the various comprehensions that we have of Christ and redemption. Throughout Israel's history, the offerings of the people were made in accordance with their wealth. The rich gave the greater offerings, those in poverty were permitted to bring only a handful of meal in some cases. Today, men offer according to their wealth, spiritually. As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him, we are able to comprehend, and therefore, glorify God for His glorious plan of redemption in a much greater way than when we were spiritually impoverished as babes.

The offerings in our chapter were from those who, spiritually speaking had come to a great degree of spiritual maturity. Their offerings were quite substantial. Nahshon is the first to offer and he begins by bringing a silver charger which weighed 130 shekels. Silver always speaks of redemption, and the great weight of this charger suggests a great comprehension of redemption. Such truths are not learned in one lesson, but rather over a period of time, as we discover that God's redemption covers every area of our lives - spirit, soul, and body. The more we experience the effects of Calvary in our lives, the more we are able to offer unto God.

The next part of the offering was a silver bowl of 70 shekels weight. The meaning of the silver is the same, but notice that both vessels were filled with fine flour mingled with oil for a meal offering. In Leviticus two, we learn that the meal offering is especially figurative of Christ in His earthly ministry to men. The priest received the bulk of this offering, while only a handful was given to God. When Jesus began His public ministry, He surely did have communion with His Father, but the main recipient of His ministry, was man, as He preached, taught, healed and ministered almost constantly to them.

The meal offering was mingled with oil, indicative of the fact that Jesus was born of the Spirit. Being of fine flour informs us of His perfect even humanity, containing the very essence of resurrection. The meal, made from wheat, the fruit of the ground, had within it the seeds of resurrection. Jesus said of Himself, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and it abide alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." And again, He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." When we comprehend such details in our spirit, we too, begin to grasp the beauty and importance of the meal offering and are invigorated continually by His ministry to us.

Nahshon next offered one golden spoon of 10 shekels weight full of incense. Gold is always symbolic of Deity and speaks of coming into greater intimate knowledge of Him. The incense tells us of the sweetness of prayer and praise. The vials, or bowls, of Revelation 5:8, were filled with sweet odors or incense, which are the prayers of saints. Such praise always directed toward Deity rather than toward the efforts of man.

The next portion of the offering found in verse 15, is "one young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year for a burnt offering." The burnt offering was totally given to God; none of it was given to man. This offering teaches of Christ's total devotion to His Father's will. He was obedient unto death, and only God could appreciate and enjoy such complete commitment and allegiance. The animals also present various comprehensions which we have of Christ. The bullock is the greatest of the offerings, in that he not only presents Christ as the faithful one, totally submitted to the will of the Father, but also has the ability to do the complete work of redemption. The lamb is symbolic of this subjection as Isaiah declared, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." The lamb is contrasted with the bullock, in that it does not possess the tremendous strength to accomplish all God's will in "plowing the field of redemption or treading the mill of harvest." The lamb indeed displays a wonderful characteristic of Christ, but in the case of the burnt offering, it does not express the fulness of redemption as does the bullock.

The ram has a unique characteristic in that he has horns, which in the Scriptures, suggest power. The ram tells of the power of Christ in accomplishing the Father's will; but he too, falls short of the fulness of the work, figured by the bullock.

Verse sixteen records the second of the blood offerings - the sin offering. The goat is the greatest expression of this phase, for it presents Christ as a substitute. We still use this figure of speech to express an innocent party taking the blame for the guilty one. Christ became the goat as "He

who knew no sin, " was made sin for us. He became our substitute as He bore the penalty that was due us.

The peace offering follows. This was a fellowship offering, whereby God and man received almost equal portions. It tells us of God and man coming together on the basis of a common sacrifice; partaking freely of Him, a banquet of love and communion. There were two oxen, two being 29 the number of witness, and indicates God's witness that Christ is available to all who desire Him. The five of each of the lesser animals is expressive of multiplied grace. It is this grace which is the very essence of our deep, intimate fellowship around this peace offering today. The age of the lambs is also pertinent to Christ. They are of the first year which is the prime age. Christ was also in the prime of His life when He died, that we might be brought into this banquet house with God. He did not die of old age, but freely laid down His life for us when He was full of life.

Each prince brought the same offering for the remaining eleven days of the dedication. The offerings are all totalled in verses 85-88, and simply express again that when we understand and appropriate redemption in the manner shown here, all praise and adoration is given to Christ.

"And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him, he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and He spoke unto him." 7:89. The tabernacle spoken of here cannot be the tabernacle proper, for only the high priest could go within the veil before the mercy seat and that, only once a year. We also read in Exodus 40:35 that Moses was not able to enter the tent of the congregation because the cloud abode thereon. The tabernacle in our text is undoubtedly the same as that mentioned in Exodus 33:7, which permitted anyone who sought the Lord, to enter. We do not see the glory of the Lord descending in Numbers until chapter 9:15; therefore, Moses was able to go before the mercy seat.

THE CLEANSING OF THE LEVITES

Chapter Eight

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, when thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick." 8:1-4.

The final step in the setting up and the consecration of the tabernacle was the lighting of the candlestick lamps. This had to be accomplished before Aaron and his sons could carry out their priestly duties. The spiritual application is simple. Before we can enter into a priestly ministry, we too, must have light. The candlestick was composed of seven lamps, which speak of the fulness or perfection of the Light of Jesus Christ. The more we are filled with that perfect illumination by the power of the Holy Ghost, the more able we will be to accomplish our priestly responsibilities. When this final step was completed, we read, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them." 8:5, 6. The Levites had been chosen and numbered, and their responsibilities outlined. Now, they must be consecrated before they could fulfill their ministry. The Levitical ministry is very necessary, but as we have noticed previously, it is a lesser ministry than that of the priests. This fact is now borne out in their respective consecrations. Leviticus 8:6 tells us that the priests were washed, speaking of their full identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The Levites were only sprinkled, showing that the water of the Word is the active cleansing agent upon them, but not conveying the fulness of identification with Christ.

The Levites were then required to shave all their flesh, which is symbolic of cutting away even the most minute defilement. This part of the ceremony is completely eliminated in the case of the priests, and seems to indicate that they were indeed further from defilement of the flesh, than were the Levites. This same shaving process was used in the cleansing of the leper. Leviticus 14:8, 9.

In our present lesson, the Levites were required to "wash their clothes and so make themselves clean." 8:8. This is a cleansing of the habits, or outward appearance before the world. On the other hand, the priests received new garments. This speaks of much more than a simple washing, or a reformation. The garments of the priests express the very character of Christ on display in our lives. The materials of their garments are listed in Exodus 39:27-29. The fine linen

expresses Christ's Divine purity and righteousness. The blue clearly speaks of the heavenly character of Christ, while purple reveals that we are of the royal or kingly line, reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ. Scarlet always tells of the blood of Christ, by which we are redeemed.

All of these characteristics are displayed in the lives, or the "outward clothing" of spiritual priests. There were also details of consecration for the priests which were entirely eliminated for the Levites. Lev. 8:23-26. First, the priests were anointed with blood upon their right ear, their right thumb, and the great toe of their right foot. The ear of the priest is given to hear the call of the Master. His thumb is anointed for service, and the great toe indicates a walk that is separated unto God by the blood of Jesus.

Secondly, an offering was placed in the hands of the priests, who in turn, waved it before the Lord, symbolic of putting Christ on display in priestly service before God.

Following this, these priests and their garments were anointed with oil, teaching further separation to the Lord by the power of the Holy Ghost.

They were then invited to eat of the bread and the sacrifice. They had been called into fellowship with God, to feast upon Christ.

Finally, they were shut up in the tabernacle seven days, for a complete and perfect consecration. This is figurative of our complete consecration to the priestly ministry as we are shut up to the Lord, inside the tabernacle, during the "seven days", or the fulness of this Church Age.

"Then let them (the Levites) take a young bullock with his meal offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering." As with the priests, the Levites could only be accepted before the Lord on the basis of sacrifice. The burnt offering shows their positive acceptance in Christ, while the sin offering tells of Christ becoming their substitute in bearing the wrath of God upon sin.

The entire assembly was invited to participate in offering the Levites unto the Lord, as they were called to "lay hands upon them." 8:9, 10. This is like our present-day ceremony of ordaining men to the ministry, by the laying on of hands. Again, we notice that the Levites were "for an offering of the children of Israel that they may execute the service of the Lord." 8:11.

The Levites identified themselves with their offerings by laying their hands on the animals. With this, they were then ready "to go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." God took the Levites for Himself, instead of the firstborn of every family, and gave them as a gift to Aaron and his sons for the express purpose of service. 8:16-19.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more: But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge." 8:23-26. The years of active service for the Levites were limited to 25 years, as our text reads. However, they were not completely useless, by any means. It seems that they continued to minister, undoubtedly in an advisory capacity, "to keep the charge." They were familiar with the details of God's instructions, and were able to guide the younger ones in the service of the Lord.

KEEPING THE PASSOVER

Chapter Nine

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai in the month of the second year after they were come out of Egypt saying the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season." 9:1, 2.

The observance of the Passover officially marked the beginning Israel's history as a nation. God had said to them in Exodus 12:2, "This shall be unto you the beginning of months: It shall be the first month of the year to you." The remaining verses of this chapter record the many instructions in the preparation of the Passover, whereby Israel escaped the death of the firstborn by placing the blood of the Passover Lamb on their door posts. The Passover is symbolic of Christ, the Lamb of God, giving His life that we might live. As with Israel, this is also the real beginning of months for us. This Passover feast was to be observed year by year in Israel, and so it is here in our chapter in Numbers.

All the rites of this feast were to be observed on the fourteenth of the month Abib, or Nisan, but in verse six, we find a major problem. Certain men had been defiled by the body of a dead man and there was a doubt as to whether they should keep the Passover. They came to Moses and

Aaron. Moses was indeed a very wise man. He did not lean to his own understanding or try to assume that certain things should or should not be done. Instead, he said to them, "Stand still and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you." 9:8.

The instructions which follow from the very mouth of God, are also applicable to us today. At this point, let us notice that the communion service, or the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:20), which we observe today, was instituted by Jesus as He celebrated this very feast with His disciples. "He said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God." Luke 22:15, 16. It was at this time that He took the bread and the cup, declaring them to be His body and blood respectively. Jesus was and is, the fulfillment of the Passover. It was no accident that this feast was the one being observed at the time of His crucifixion. God was saying to Israel, "Here before you is the Passover Lamb."

The Apostle Paul instructs the Church to commemorate this same event in I Cor. 11:23-26. It is important to realize that the same principles given to Israel are to be considered by the Church in observing the Lord's Supper. First, only those who were circumcised were allowed to partake of the Passover. (Exodus 12:48). Likewise, only those who are of the new creation, or believers, members of the Body of Christ, can partake of the Lord's Supper.

God then instructs Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel saying, "If any man of you or your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the Passover unto the Lord." 9:10. God is more emphatic in verse 13 as He announces consequences for not partaking of the Passover. "But the man that is clean and is not in a journey and forbeareth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin."

Some people have taken Paul's words in I Cor. 11:27-29, to mean that there are times when one should not partake of the Lord's Supper because of uncleanness. This is a violation of the instructions for the Passover and is completely opposite to Paul's teaching. Note first of all, when Paul says "whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," he is talking about the manner of what is done and not the condition of the person doing it. This is because the word "unworthily" is an adverb and modifies the verb. The whole purpose of the Lord's Supper is not to determine if we are clean or spiritual enough to take it, but "as oft as ye do it, do it in remembrance of me."

Christ is always worthy of being remembered. When Israel partook of the Passover, they were commemorating God's marvelous grace, as He accepted the blood of the Lamb instead of the firstborn, when He judged Egypt. This same thing is true today as we remember Christ and what He has done. We are accepted because of the blood of the Lamb and not because of our own merit or worthiness. What then, does Paul mean when he says, "But let a man examine himself"? Many Bible teachers assume that every time we observe Communion, we must first examine ourselves whether or not we are clean enough, or whether we feel someone else is worthy. This is precisely the same attitude which prevailed in the time of Moses - because we are unclean, "are we kept back that we may not offer an offering of the Lord?" 9:7. But Moses asked counsel of the Lord and instructed them, "ye shall keep the Passover unto the Lord." When Paul speaks of examining ourselves, he means that our attitudes and actions toward others must be right. When such attitudes are wrong, or he eats and drinks unworthily, he "eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY."

The Corinthians were extremely carnal. Though they had much truth, and some of the gifts of the Spirit were operated among them, there were severe divisions. This condition was actually borne out as they partook of the Lord's Supper - "For in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another is drunken." There was no acknowledging of the One Body. This fact is reinforced by Paul's instructions in I Cor. 11:14-27. The results of such a condition are found in verse 30: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep."

What happened in Corinth has happened in the Church as a whole. Some members have been excluded, not only from the memorial of the Lord's Supper, but also shut out in spirit. Thus the Church is filled with divisions and most certainly is weak and sickly. Paul gave instruction to correct this condition in verse 33: "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another." They were to consider and recognize the other members of the Body. When

men begin to examine their own worthiness or someone else's, to prevent them from taking communion, they are failing to "discern the Lord's body." God's purpose and command was emphatically that the Passover must be kept; that Christ must be remembered, even in symbol. We do a tremendous disservice to Christ and to the grace of God if we fail in this matter today. The ordinances of the Passover were the same for a stranger, or one who was not of the commonwealth of Israel. (9:14). That is, all men may come to God, but only on the basis of the shed blood. As we noted before Exodus 12:48 declares that the only requirement for eating the Passover is that such a stranger must be circumcised.

"And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. So it was always; the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night." 9:15, 16. The cloud by day and the fire by night was a most important part of Israel's history. The cloud was a covering, indicating God's protection. The pillar of fire prevailed at night to dispel the darkness. (Psalm 105:39). This cloud by day and fire by night revealed God's time and direction of travel for Israel

"And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents." 9:17. This is wonderfully expressive of God's Holy Spirit. He has been sent as a covering, a protection, a comforter, one called alongside to help. He gives light in darkness by taking the Scriptures and lighting our pathway. He is our unerring Guide as He not only leads in ministry, but in various paths of experience and growth. It is important that we put aside our own reasoning and follow the leadings of this Divine Personage, regardless of the time involved. "And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle, many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and journeyed not ... or whether it were two days or a month, or a year that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle . . . at the commandment of the Lord they rested in the tents and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed." 9:22, 23.

Sometimes, Christians are of the opinion that the day is so far spent we must spend every moment working feverishly. While that may be God's purpose at times, we must also realize that some valuable experimental lessons can be learned only as we stop and rest. Like Israel in the wilderness, we may feel at times that nothing good can come of just waiting, when there is so much of the journey ahead; but it is imperative that we learn to rest at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. Keeping the charge of the Lord doesn't always mean doing something, but is rather a matter of absolute obedience and submission - oftentimes waiting for Him to accomplish His purposes in our lives before moving on to another lesson.

THE SILVER TRUMPETS

Chapter Ten

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeyings of the camps." 10:1, 2.

These silver trumpets speak beautifully of God's revelation of truth or sounding out the message of redemption, revealing His exact plan and purposes for Israel. There were a number of signals given by them, each differing from the other, but there were only four over-all purposes. (1) - they were for the calling of the assembly. (2) - they were for the journeys of the camps. (3) - they were to be used when going forth to war. (4) - they were used for special feast days. Each person in Israel must know what sound was for himself, even as we today must know how God's voice, or the message of redemption applies to us.

"When they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." 10:3. This is the first purpose as indicated, and there were times when the whole congregation was included in the summons. However, if only one trumpet was blown, the princes, or heads of thousands were to Present themselves - V. 4. When one "alarm" was sounded, the camps on the east were called. The second alarm called for the camps on the south side to take their journeys. As we saw in the beginning of our study, the journeys of Israel had to be orderly. The command as to when and who should move forward was given by the trumpets. Our lives also are to be controlled by the testimony of the "silver trumpet." God makes His will known for each individual through the message of redemption. Not only so, but we also notice a beautiful parallel with the resurrection. We read in I Thess. 5:16 and Rev.

1:10, that that trumpet is the voice of Christ. It is this voice which calls the dead to life, but each in his own order, or rank; Christ the firstfruit, afterward, they that are Christ's at His coming. I Cor. 15:22, 23.

"And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations." 10:8. The responsibility of knowing God's will and then broadcasting it, fell upon the priests. Today, it is no different. Spiritual priests are those who are in constant fellowship with God, and understand what He wants to do. They are faithful to watch the cloud and publish God's message. This does not mean that all of them are ministers in a pulpit, but rather they are able to convey God's purposes to those around them through the Word of God. They are the ones who "exhort one another," and so much the more as they see the day approaching. They well understand the times and seasons, and realize the need to watch and to be sober.

The third purpose of sounding the trumpets was when the people were to go to war. This was not just to call them to battle, but "ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpet and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God and ye shall be saved from your enemies." 10:9. It is the spiritual priests who blow such a trumpet today. They are the ones who stand on God's Word, claiming His promise of victory. Jesus sounded that trumpet three times in Matthew 4, and He emerged victorious over Satan. It is imperative that we follow the same example today, blowing the trumpet in the face of our enemies, that we might be remembered before the Lord.

Finally, the trumpets were used "in the day of your gladness and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months." 10:10. They were to blow with the trumpets over their burnt offerings and their peace offerings. It seems that about every aspect of Israel's activities was associated with the trumpets. When we compare them to the voice of God, it is no wonder that this message is also a part of our experiences. In our glad times, our solemn times, our times of feasting and worship. When the battle rages, or we are called out for a special purpose, or to journey deeper into the wilderness, God's Word must be the overall governor.

"And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony, and Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran." 10:11, 12. Israel made camp in front of Mount Sinai three months to the day after they came out of Egypt. (Ex. 19:1). From that time to this, they remained there as Moses received God's instructions for the tabernacle, the offerings, and all the many other commandments, restrictions, and exhortations found in Exodus and Leviticus, which were necessary for their existence. Those plans had been implemented, and now this large nation was ready to move on to Paran, which means "beautifying." Such is also God's purpose in the wilderness for us.

Verses 14 to 28 repeat the order by which they journeyed, as well as naming the captain of each camp. These are covered in detail in chapter two.

"And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." 10:29. Hobab's name is recorded as being Jethro in Exodus 18:1. He apparently went home for a while at that time, but now had returned to the camp of Israel. He was a wise man and gave some wise counsel. (Ex. 18:17-26) Some have declared that Moses was wrong and yielded to the flesh in following this man's counsel in Exodus 18. We would like to point out, however, that it was this wise advice that God used to free Moses to go into the mount and receive those Divine instructions for Israel. In our present chapter, Moses again calls on this man to assist Israel, and in so doing, he presents some valuable lessons for us today.

"And he said, leave us not I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes." 10:31. Some might think that by this, Moses was wanting to trust Hobab to lead them, rather than the cloud; but such is not the case. Many today may refuse counsel on the same ground, saying that we must follow the Holy Ghost, and not man. Consider, however, exactly what Moses said: "Thou knowest HOW we are to encamp in the wilderness. This man had lived in the wilderness all his life, and he was well acquainted with the ways of the desert. He was well qualified to instruct Israel how to conduct themselves in this very rough wilderness.

It is important that we do not become so "spiritual" that we fail to recognize that God works those things which are good for us, through people who are exercised in certain areas of expertise,

though they may not always be totally exercised in spiritual things. This man could not direct them WHERE to go, but he could be "eyes" to them in avoiding the treacherous pitfalls of the desert.

"And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them."

10:33. It is not stated specifically whether "they" included Hobab; but we do read in Judges 1:16, that these people "went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah." We would infer that Hobab did indeed accompany Israel. In any event, the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them. The three-days journey is a symbolic one. It speaks again of the fact that God is putting these people on resurrection ground. There are many such details in Israel's journeys which depict this same truth, and it is vital that we lay hold of its principle in our lives. It is only as we follow the "Ark" and find our place as being raised up from the grave in newness of life, that we truly find the resting place spoken of here. Furthermore, the ark speaks of resounding victory as well as protection.

"And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." 10:35, 36. Christ is the anti-type of that ark, in our behalf. As He leads in our lives, the enemies are scattered, and during the time of rest, He is the ever-present power of protection against the attacks of Satan.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MURMURING

Chapter Eleven

"And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord, and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." 11:1.

As we have noted in the previous chapter, Israel has now resumed their journeys, after having camped in front of Mt. Sinai for quite some time. With this resumption, there is the re-occurrence of an old problem, and one that we will see quite frequently in the wilderness experience.

Israel began to murmur even before they came out of Egypt, and once they were delivered, those murmurings seem to be even more persistent. Following the marvelous Red Sea victory, we find them murmuring at the waters of Marah, after which God graciously sweetened them. Exodus 15. Soon after this, they again complained of hunger, and God sent them the miracle manna fresh from heaven. Exodus 16. Next, it is water that they lack, and again, their murmurings were answered when water flowed from the rock, after being smitten by Moses. In all of these cases, the needs of Israel were met, with no consequences.

In our present chapter, it seems that God has had enough. There is a price to pay for continuing to murmur and complain, as men fail to believe God. There comes a time when one must "grow up" and realize that such complaints are really manifestations of rebellion, a rejection of what He has miraculously provided. God can endure it for just so long before He pours out judgment. Here, it comes in the form of fire and "consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camps." This is generally where you find the complainers - standing on the outer perimeter, away from the close fellowship of the tabernacle worship. When people are not occupied with Christ and actively pursuing Him as the center of their existence, there is a tendency to criticize and enlarge on things of the least importance. This is characteristic of the wilderness experience. We must learn the way of victory over the flesh, realizing its total wretchedness, as Paul did in Rom. 7:24; and at the same time, learn by experience that our attention must be focused on Christ and the heavenly nature and heritage of the new creation.

As is the case so often in Israel's journeys, the people cried unto Moses when they were in trouble. He, in turn, prayed unto the Lord and the fire was quenched. 11:3. It seems, however, that the reason for this very hurtful incident soon faded from their memory, because almost immediately, "the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?" 11:4.

We infer from Exodus 9:20, 21, that some of the Egyptians were convinced that God was indeed God, as judgments continued to fall upon their land and people, and there was a mixed multitude which went up also with them. Exodus 12:38. While they do express those who possess an initial faith in the blood of the lamb for salvation, they never really find satisfaction in Christ. Their mournful cry is "Who shall give us flesh to eat?" They further show their discontent by saying, "There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." 11:4, 6. They actually despised the

true bread from heaven, concentrating instead on the treasures of Egypt and desiring flesh to eat. It is amazing that every time Israel remembered Egypt, they thought of filling their stomachs with the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. Never do we read that they recalled the bondage of the cruel taskmasters. Often this happens today. When God wants to fill our vision with Christ and teach us that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3), there is a tendency to reflect on the beauties of the world and forget the tremendous bondage there. As a whole, the Church has followed the same path as Israel. They have gotten their eyes off the heavenly riches of Canaan, to which God has called them, and have longingly looked back to Egypt. There is but one way of deliverance from this condition. God took Israel out of Egypt in one night, but it took forty years to get Egypt out of Israel. It wasn't until they crossed the Jordan that God said, "This day have I rolled the reproach of Egypt from off you." Joshua 5:9. As individuals, we must take our place in the heavenlies in order for the world to lose its hold on us. It is imperative that we do not fall prey to the attitudes of the "mixed multitude" and despise what He has graciously given to us.

"The manna was as corander seed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium." 11:7. In accordance with it being likened to hoar frost (Ex. 16:14), it is most likely that this color was white. This indicates, spiritually, the purity of Christ, the true bread from heaven. It seems that Israel learned to prepare this substance in many ways. They gathered it, ground it, beat it, baked it, and made cakes of it. 11:8. In like manner, Christ must be applied in all areas of our lives. Its taste, like fresh oil, doesn't seem to be appetizing, but in Ex. 16:31, we read that it did have a sweet taste; even as Christ is as "sweet milk" to the spiritually young.

"Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased." 11:10. Tears speak a special language, and oftentimes, God is moved with compassion by them; but these tears are the result of unbelief and discontent which at this time, moved Him to anger. Moses is somewhat in harmony with God's feelings. He voices his own complaint as to why God has laid this burden upon him, as though he had conceived them. When God first called him, Moses felt inadequate and once again, he feels unable to bear all the weight of these people, carrying them in his bosom as a father. He is exasperated as to where he can find flesh for so many people, and would rather die than carry on. 11:11-15. Many burden bearers have felt like this, and it is comforting to realize that God turns a deaf ear to requests that are made out of sheer frustration. He had heard the cry of Moses, but rather than relieving him of all responsibility, He gave some to help bear the burden. "And the Lord said unto Moses, gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be elders of the people and officers over them and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation that they may stand there with thee." 11:16.

The qualifications for these elders are found in Exodus 18:21, as they were given by Jethro, and they imply much more than the age of the men. The main purpose of these chosen was in supporting Moses and helping him to bear the burden of all these people. For this reason, they had to have the same spirit which rested upon Moses. This does not mean that all these men had equal authority with Moses because they were anointed with the same spirit. No man can serve two masters, let alone, seventy-one. They were not as an advisory committee to ascertain the will of God for Moses. They were given, rather as an aid to bear the burden of so many people. Instead of one man, falling on his face and trying to intercede, these elders were to share that load. Moses continued to be the one leader, and when God was finished with him, He raised up another, Joshua, to lead them into Canaan. God continued to convey His instructions to Israel through Moses as His chosen leader, and He made that very emphatic, as we will discover in chapters 12 and 16.

"And say unto the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh: for ye have wept in the ears of the Lord, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat? for it was well with us in Egypt; therefore the Lord will give you flesh, and ye shall eat. Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days; but even a whole month, until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you: because that ye have despised the Lord which is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?" 11:18-20. The loathsome feeling which Israel was to have toward this flesh was only part of the severe consequence meted out because of their murmuring. We shall see this in the conclusion of our chapter. It is interesting here, however, to comprehend the message that Israel was sending to God by their murmuring: "Why came we forth out of Egypt?" When men do not lay hold of their

riches in Christ and eagerly accept His provisions, they still see the world as having something to offer. If they do not appreciate spiritual blessings, their only frame of reference is that which comes out of Egypt. This is what God hates. He has made every provision, paid the supreme price to give the choicest of spiritual blessings to humanity, and when these are refused, it most certainly is a tremendous grievance to Him.

Upon hearing of God's "mixed blessing" Moses is still at a loss as to how to provide the flesh for such a multitude as this for a month. "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?" 11:22. Many times, we too, are so limited in our thinking as to how God can meet certain needs. We tend to look only as to what we have before us, but let us learn with Moses, God's delightful and unlimited supply, "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my Word shall come to pass unto thee or not." 11:23. Moses had already seen mighty displays of God's power and when he heard these words, he simply went out and told the people "the words of the Lord." 11:24. God still had not told him how He would provide, only that He would. Moses is surely an example for us to take God at His Word, although we are not always given the secret details of His plan.

The next order of business is to anoint the seventy elders. It appears from verse 24 that all seventy were gathered around the tabernacle, but in verse 26, we are told that two of them remained in camp. Like the rest of them, these two also, prophesied as the Spirit of God came upon them. When Joshua heard of it, he wanted Moses to stop them, because they did not come to the tabernacle. "And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" 11:29. Joshua's request is like many we have heard at various times. If someone does not come into the full fellowship of "the tabernacle," then forbid him to minister. Moses' words remind us of what Jesus said to John, "For he that is not against us is on our part." Mark 9:40. The disciples had seen one casting out devils in Jesus' Name, and forbade him to do so, "because he followeth not with us." It is sad when all men do not fully follow the Lord and come into the depths of Truth and fellowship, represented by the tabernacle; but they are not to be cast out as though they are not members of the Body of Christ. Their ministries are not to be stopped, nor undermined. They can be used of God and all the results and rewards are His business, not ours.

The rest of this chapter records the fulfillment of God's promise and the subsequent misery of Israel. "And there went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quail from the sea." 11:31. This multitude of quail is more than we can imagine. They were, according to our text, piled up two cubits high, covering the space of a day's journey on either side of the camp. Day and night, Israel gathered quail. The least which was gathered, was ten homers, or just over 100 bushels, according to Webster's dictionary. "And while the flesh was between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague." 11:33.

As they were still enjoying the blessing of what they had so desperately wanted, Israel began to feel the ill effects of it. There is a parallel with our own experiences. Sometimes, God gives us exactly what we cry out for, but even while we are enjoying the blessing of it, it becomes an object of hurt and misery. Graves were the memorials of this experience, as the name of it became Kibroth-hattavah, "the graves of lust." God has promised, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," and though believers are eternally safe from the lake of fire, there is always a loss of spiritual increase when murmuring is allowed to rule in our lives, even though God may grant the desires of our flesh.

Israel's next camp is located in Hazeroth, the "enclosure." It tells of our protection in Christ, and is a welcome sight after leaving the graves of lust. We begin to learn of its comfort in the wilderness, but do not experience the fulness of its power until we begin to take our place in the heavenlies and find protection from our enemies. This place of comfort, here in Numbers, is short-lived, for trouble again breaks out in chapter 12.

MOSES' LEADERSHIP QUESTIONED

Chapter Twelve

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman." 12:1.

Never do God's leaders escape without being questioned, resisted, and oftentimes, rejected. As this story unfolds, God will demonstrate just how serious such an offense is, despite the fact that

the criticism came from Moses' own family. The apparent reason for their uprising is that Moses had married an Ethiopian woman, and though there is evidence of previous trouble because of such a union (Ex. 18:1-6), we do not read that God ever denounces him for it. The closest thing to that is Ex. 4:24-26, where we read that God sought to kill Moses because his son had not been circumcised. Rather than lose her husband, Zipporah circumcised the lad, thus demonstrating that she bowed, not only to her husband, but to God.

In our chapter, though, we learn very quickly that the problem is not Moses' wife - "And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it." 12:2. One would wonder if either Aaron or Miriam were among the seventy who were anointed as elders, because of their statement. Perhaps they thought they could assume such a place because Miriam had been a leader in worship (Ex. 15:20, 21), and Aaron had been chosen as high priest. They may have concluded it because they were also of the same family, and that they were older than he.

Regardless of their reasoning, they are travelling on very dangerous ground, because they are challenging God's ordained authority. Moses, himself, becomes a classic example of one who leaves the battle to the Lord when he is personally attacked. Verse 3 tells us that he was the meekest man upon the face of the earth, and we never read that he tried to defend himself. Instead, "the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses and unto Aaron and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out." 12:4.

God takes personal attention to this situation and addresses Aaron and Miriam. "And He said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." 12:6. God declares that Moses is more than a prophet, of which there had been many in Israel. He was God's faithful servant, chosen leader of Israel, and God went beyond the "conventional way" of speaking to him. It is wonderful and exhilarating, as God reveals Himself and His purposes in dreams and visions. These are experiences which are not soon forgotten, but the relationship which Moses had with God, went beyond that. "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" 12:8.

An experience, such as this, is described in Ex. 33:12-23. Moses had been on the mount 40 days and nights, receiving God's instructions for the tabernacle. This "fellowship meeting" was interrupted as Israel had bowed down to the golden calf, carved by Aaron. God said, "I will not go up in the midst of thee for thou art a stiffnecked people; lest I consume thee in the way." Ex. 33:3. For this reason, we find Moses in the tabernacle, interceding for Israel. It is at this time that the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. Ex. 33:11. This is not a contradiction of Ex. 33:20, "No man shall see my face and live." It means exactly what we read of in Numbers.

God did not use "dark speeches," that is, puzzling statements or riddles in speaking to Moses. This man did not have to interpret a dream or vision, but God told him exactly His purposes and intents for Israel. Moreover, he saw the "similitude" of God. It is expressed in Ex. 33:33 as, "thou shalt see my back parts (afterglow), but my face shall not be seen."

God's next question to Aaron and Miriam was a potent one: "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" Neither of them had had such an encounter with the Lord, and neither of them could answer another word.

As the Lord departed, His anger was kindled against them, "and the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous white as snow." 12:10. God manifested outwardly what had already been true inwardly. The glory of God cannot remain in the midst of rebellion and leprosy. It is not stated why only Miriam was stricken with the awful disease. She may have been the instigator of the uprising, since her name is mentioned first in verse 1, and Aaron was carried away by her influence. Another reason may be that Aaron was the high priest, and God respected his office. In any case, Miriam was smitten. This is figurative of what has happened in Christendom, as well as Israel. God-given leadership has been rejected more than once, and the glory has departed, leaving only the unmistakable leprous condition.

It was at this point that "Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned." 12:11. Aaron bows to Moses' authority, owning him as "my lord." He has learned his lesson, and lo and behold, the next time Israel murmurs, it is against both Moses and Aaron. ch. 14:2. It seems that such is the

price of being in harmony with God. Not only so, but Aaron acknowledged that he had sinned and gone in the way of the foolish, which is the way of rebellion. (See also I Sam. 13:13). His plea now, is for Miriam, and Moses is not one to hold grudges. He immediately "cried unto the Lord, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee." 12:13. Though God respected Moses, and certainly heard this frantic plea for healing, He also must give instructions concerning Miriam. For seven days, she is to be shut out from the congregation. This is in itself, symbolic of Israel, who rejected Christ's leadership when He came into this world, and has been set aside during the seven days of this Church Age. When Miriam is restored, Israel will once again resume her journeys into God's promised land.

Afterward, the people moved from Hazereth and pitched in the wilderness of Paran. 12:16. So often, our lives seem to fit this description: out of one wilderness and into another. All such wilderness experiences, though, have their place. When we leave the enclosure of Hazereth, God must lead us to Paran, the "place of beautifying," even though it be a wilderness.

MY RESURRECTION BOUNTY

A. S. Copley

Oh! give eternal glory to the Man of Calvary,
He's the Rock of Ages hoary; but He died for
you and me.

Thru that blessed bleeding Lamb, saved by
wondrous grace I am;

And with Him in realms celestial, I shall surely be.

I find a life eternal in the Man from Joseph's tomb.

He ascended into heaven to prepare for me a room.

Thru His intercession there, I can live above all care,

And be ready for translation to my glory home.

I'm learning in the Christ of resurrection here to move;

And the power and the vic'try of that life I daily prove.

By His buoyant joy within, Jesus keeps me 'bove all sin,

And His resurrection glory, I shall share above.

I'm living in the heav'nlies where my Father seated me,

In the Man of the ascension whom from death

He had set free.

I'm alive forevermore, thru His life my daily store;

And with Him on high I'll surely reign eternally.

Chorus -

I've been raised from the dead, with Christ

Jesus my Head;

I'm alive forever more, O praise His Name!

Free from law and condemnation, free from blame;

For my Savior's faithful, ev'ry day the same,

So I rest on His Word.

THE SPIES SENT IN

Chapter Thirteen

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them." 13:1, 2.

The statements here seem to indicate that sending the spies ahead to search out the land was God's idea. However, Deut. 1:22, 23, informs us that the idea originated with Israel. "And ye came near unto me every one of you and said, We will send men before us and they shall search out the land." This spying expedition is not the way of faith. God already knew what was in the land, both the blessings and the enemies thereof His purpose was that they simply go in by faith and believe Him for the victories to displace the occupants. In our present chapter, we have the permissive will of God; and very often it happens this way in our experience. God has higher goals for us, but condescends and allows us to pursue our own "reasoning" way. We suffer hurt because of it, but sometimes, that is the only way we learn to walk completely by faith.

Every tribe, with the exception of Levi, who received no inheritance, sent a man to search out the land. Of the twelve who went in, only two, Joshua and Caleb, proved themselves to be men of faith. 13:4-16.

As Moses discharged these men (vs. 17-20), he outlined specific points of information for them to obtain. They were to go into the mountain regions and find out the lay of the land. He wanted knowledge of the people whether they were strong or weak, with large armies, or small. Was the land treacherous, or did the people live in strong cities, or dwell in tents or strongholds? Is it a productive land, that is, a fat land, and are forests seen there? Finally, He wanted a sample of the fruits of it. All of this quite simply reflects the questions and interest of Israel as a nation. We reiterate that God had already given them such information both about the goodness of the land and its inhabitants. Not only did He tell them it flowed with milk and honey, but also that the enemies were strong. In the same context, however, He promised complete victory. Ex. 23:20-30.

Nevertheless, "they went up and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob." 13:21. Zin means "thorn" and tells of the way of adversity. Rehob, the "broad place" speaks loudly of prosperity. Both of these are important in our experience and we learn both of them in greater measure as we actually take our place in the heavenlies. The next city is also one that a full overcomer must occupy. It is Hebron where Abraham camped years before and enjoyed the intimate "communion" with God of which it speaks. The parenthetical statement, "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt," has special spiritual import to us. Zoan means "to strike tent," that is, put up or take down, and shows the insecure and temporal life in Egypt. Hebron tells of the lasting and solid fellowship with God. Being built before Zoan, shows that God's purpose for man has always been to have fellowship with Him.

There are obstacles, however, namely, the children of Anak, "the longnecked." They tell of the stiff-necked old creation, and the meanings of the names recorded here, reveal three distinct expressions of fleshly pride which must be conquered before we can have Hebron, "communion" with God.

Ahiman, the first mentioned, means, who is my brother?" and speaks of pride of birth. Sheshai, meaning "white fine linen," indicates selfrighteousness and reveals pride of character. Finally, Talmi "my furrows" represents pride of works. Ultimately it was Caleb the man of faith, who ousted this trio of evil men and possessed Hebron. It is so in our lives. It is only as we believe God that these same evil principles are put down in our experience and we too, have that coveted communion with God.

The manifold bounty of this land is expressed in verses 23, 24. One cluster of grapes required two men to carry it. In addition, they brought pomegranates and figs. The cluster of grapes was so impressive, that a nearby brook, Eshcol, was named after it.

Upon their return to Moses, Aaron and the rest of the congregation, the spies after forty days of searching confirmed what God had already declared. "It truly is a land that flowed with milk and honey, and these fruits are the proof of it." Had these men stopped at this point, perhaps all would have been well, but alas, verses 28, 29, are unmistakable words of unbelief.

"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, the cities are walled and very great: and moreover, we saw the children of Anak there." The emphasis on the opposition, without one mention of God's promise of victory, produced a tremendous unrest in the entire congregation. The voice of faith is heard in verse 30: "Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, Let us go up at once and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

As it is so often today, the cry of the faithful is overruled when the attitude and voice of unbelief rears its ugly head. "The men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we; and they brought up an evil report of the land." Such is always the case with unbelief. When men do not reach out and lay hold of God's blessings by faith alone in Him, the goodness of God's provision for them is destroyed. God's hands are tied by such unbelief.

Notice further what this "evil report" stated. The fruits of the land, the rich bounty and blessing of God's provision, are completely omitted. Instead, they spoke only of destruction. "The land through which we have gone to search, it is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

Herein lies the key to destructive unbelief. It takes our eyes off Christ and puts them on ourselves. Rather than saying with Caleb, "We are well able to overcome it," or as Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," these people saw themselves as grasshoppers as to the flesh. Not only so, but they assumed that the enemy viewed them as such. It is imperative that we know our victory comes only as we realize that we are in Christ and God has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Him. We cannot view ourselves as grasshoppers, shut up to our own strength and wisdom.

What could have been a positive turning point to victorious ecstatic joy, revelling in the unlimited provisions of God's blessing for these people, turned into a devastating and costly experience for them, as we shall see in the next chapter.

BROKEN THINGS

He came to mend earth's broken things,
That Carpenter of old:
God's broken Law; men's broken hearts;
And broken dreams untold.
I often wonder where it stood,
That home of long ago;
Was it beside the great highway
Where crowds passed to and fro?
Watching the burdened oxen pass,
He fashioned "easy" yokes -
And resting places, sure and strong,
For all the weary folks.
I'm sure the door stood open wide,
And near, the children played;
They loved that wondrous Carpenter-
None ever were afraid
To bring their broken toys to Him
They knew as their dear Friend;
They watched His loving smile and asked,
"Good Master, canst Thou mend?"
He came to mend earth's broken things,
To rest each weary soul;
His body broken on the Cross -
Broken, to make us whole.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF

Chapter Fourteen

"And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and people wept that night." 14:1. What should have been a glorious time rejoicing in the Lord at the prospect of going in and possessing such a beautiful and bountiful land, has turned to heartache and misery for Israel, because of unbelief. Sometimes, people think that if they do not believe God, the only consequence is that they do not receive the blessing which they could have had. However, as we shall see in this chapter, there are some negative results which are produced when unbelief prevails.

"The people wept that night." There are many reasons for tears; men may cry because of physical pain. There are tears of joy, tears of repentance, tears of sorrow, tears of frustration and anger; but what we have here, are tears of unbelief, which God never intended that any of His people should shed. Many lives are broken and bruised, and many tears spilled, because men, like Israel, have simply failed to believe God.

"And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron." This is another devastating blow of unbelief. When people do not lay hold of God's provisions, they may blame God's leaders for their troubles. When God sent a famine during the reign of Ahab, because of Israel's wickedness, it was Elijah who was blamed for the trouble. (I Kings 18:17). In Acts 17, Paul was accused of turning the world upside down by the unbelieving Jews who were moved with envy. Many are also blaming Godly leaders today, for their loss of victory when in reality they have simply refused to believe God and lay hold of His promises for them.

The third very damaging result of unbelief is the development of a defeatist attitude - "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!" Neither of

these was ever God's purpose for Israel, but when people do not believe Him, their minds turn to negative destruction. Lost in their conscious minds, were all the wonderful purposes and victory which God ordained for them, and all the provisions which His grace provided.

The fourth lie published by unbelief, is "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword?" 14:3. At first, they only blamed God's representatives, Moses and Aaron; but unbelief and rebellion will eventually find fault with God Himself. It is one thing to take our trials and adversities from the hand of a loving Father, who will work all things for our good; it is another to blame Him for the things that happen to us, and accuse Him of trying to destroy us. We shall see that God will not condone such abuse indefinitely.

The fifth point is, "were it not better for us to return to Egypt?" Unbelief does not behold the grandeur of Canaan. Those bound by it cannot appreciate the eternal blessings of the heavenly land to which we have been called. Their vision was filled only with Egypt - temporal values of the world. Thus, we hear them say next -

"Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." 14:4. They despised and rejected their God-given leader, Moses. Years later, Samuel endured the same heartache when Israel demanded a king to rule over them. When Samuel went before the Lord, God said, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them." I Samuel 8:7. God had chosen Moses to lead them OUT of Egypt, and to be sure, if they insisted on returning, they would need a captain of their own choosing. Neither God nor Moses would be a party to it. When we take this attitude, we are assuming leadership of our own lives. Unbelief will cause us to refuse to acknowledge the authority of anyone else, and our own leadership will take us back to Egypt, even though our conduct may be religious.

The final result of unbelief is death. "And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land, even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord." 14:36, 37. The men who were responsible for stirring up such unbelief and bringing up a slander against the land, even those men died before the Lord. The damage done by unbelief is much more than just the loss of eternal wealth which could have been obtained. It carries with it many painful experiences.

"Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the children of Israel." 14:5. Such is the spirit of a true leader and intercessor. Even though these men had faced such rejection, they fell on their faces before the Lord. But the voices of faith which are so desperately needed at such times as these, are heard. There are four main points presented in this message as Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes and spoke to the unbelieving congregation. One. They tried to turn the eyes of the people to the beauties which lay before them: "It is an exceeding good land." Two. These men stressed the grace of God: "If the Lord delight in us." Faith does not boast of any goodness of the flesh, nor does it give the least hint that God is indebted to us. Our blessing is only because of His Divine Favor toward us. The third strain of this message of faith declares the real definition of unbelief. "Only rebel ye not against the Lord." Men may think it is humble to refuse God's provision on the basis of their unworthiness or frailty. This is really unbelief, which is rebellion in God's estimation.

The fourth point here is that faith does not ignore the enemies. It does, however, put them in perspective as related to God. "Neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them and THE LORD IS WITH US, fear them not." Fear is the first and last disqualification for going to war. (Deut. 20:1, 8). In our text, we learn the way of victory over fear - "The Lord is with us." David learned this same lesson years later as he says, "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear what man can do unto me." Psa. 118:6. Because of this fact, those people "are bread for us." These words of faith fall on deaf ears. The rebellion of which Joshua and Caleb spoke became quite apparent, as "all the congregation bade stone them with stones." 14:10.

Israel had made her decision and through it all, God had been silent. Now, there is a change as the "glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle." We hear God's voice through Moses: "How long will this people provoke me? And how long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs which I have shown among them?" 14:11. The day of longsuffering is past. God warned these people first verbally, and then through judgments. He says, "I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them." 14:12.

What follows is indicative of the type of man Moses was. Immediately after pronouncing judgment upon Israel, God declared "I will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." The same offer had been made previously (Ex. 32:10). We wonder if Moses really heard or understood the meaning of those words - "a nation of Moses"? We do not read that if he did hear those words, that he entertained such a thought for one minute, because he begins to intercede for Israel. His first concern is for God's honor. "Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for Thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that Thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night." 14:13, 14. According to Moses, God had made His presence known to the peoples round about, and it would be a tremendous reproach to Him if He destroyed Israel as a nation.

Moses next intercedes for God's power to be shown. "And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken." 14:17. This is the power of grace. Israel had absolutely no ground on which to stand, and Moses knew it. If they were to continue as a nation, it would only be because of the glorious power of Divine Grace. The next statement reveals the extent of such power: "The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty." Moses had to look forward to Calvary to make such a supplication. God could not sovereignly pardon Israel, purely on the basis of pity. His righteous government is at stake here, as Moses declares, "by no means clearing the guilty." This is the message of redemption. God poured forth His wrath against all this iniquity upon Christ, who was judged as the guilty one. He bore all the penalty of the guilt mentioned here, in order that Israel, as well as all humanity, might go free. Romans 3:23-26.

Moses declares that God shall "visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." Let us notice some of the application of this statement from Scripture. The seeds of sin and rebellion are passed from one generation to the next. Although God provided redemptive coats for the first couple, Adam and Eve saw the effects of their sin in their first two sons, as Cain killed Abel. We read in Numbers 32:14 that the second generation of Israel coming out of Egypt, "are risen up in your father's stead, an increase of sinful men." When such sin is passed down, there is always a consequence.

The unbelief and rebellion of Lot is magnified in the conduct of his daughters. It has been said that what one generation allows in moderation, the next one will take to excess. I believe this to be true, and we can see it in our present society. When men fail to believe God, and fail to set a Godly example for their children, invariably those children will not only continue in unbelief, but become worse, and will bear the consequence in the violence and wickedness which accompanies sin.

Furthermore, we find some generations of Israel reaping the harvest of their forefathers' unbelief, as they experienced the reproach of captivity. Such people as Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, Esther, and others, found themselves in captivity due to the unbelief and sins of former generations. They suffered through no fault of their own. What is so glorious, is that these individuals became mighty men and women of faith, and began to reverse that trend. As a result of their faith, the captivity in many cases was broken. This same thing can happen in the lives of individuals today.

"Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." 14:19. Moses' intercession was effectual, and God was intreated of him. "And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word." He promised not to destroy Israel, the nation, but unbelief always takes its toll. God continues, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." 14:21. Even in the midst of unbelief and rebellion, God will be glorified. He was glorified when He judged Egypt, and we know that He will yet be glorified when He pours out judgment on the nations' in the end of this age. Judgment is called His strange work, and He is always glorified by it.

"Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." 14:22, 23. This is God's decree. Israel had their chance, but ten times they tempted the Lord. This is an actual number wherein Israel tempted or resisted Him, whether the nation, or by certain individuals.

1. Before the Red Sea crossing - Exodus 14:15.

2. At the waters of Marah - Exodus 15:23.
3. They complained for lack of bread and flesh - Exodus 16:2, 3.
4. Their cry for water - Exodus 17:1, 2.
5. They built and worshipped the golden calf - Exodus 32.
6. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire - Leviticus 10.
7. This complaint is not named, but the offense was so great that fire burnt among them - Numbers 11:1.
8. The mixed multitude "fell a lusting" - Numbers 11:4.
9. Miriam and Aaron rose up against Moses' leadership - Numbers 12.
10. Israel refused to enter the land of Canaan - Numbers 13:32.

In all these cases, the same charge is found to be true. Israel "have not hearkened to my voice." In addition to all the devastating results, they were not allowed to enter the land.

There is a shining example of God's just dealings with men, and His faithfulness to reward those who believe. Caleb is singled out - "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it." 14:24. And though he is not mentioned in this verse, Joshua is named a man of faith and rewarded as such, verse 38. "Another spirit" which Caleb had was none other than the spirit of faith. It is this spirit which followed the Lord fully. It is this spirit which will reap the full reward, both to Caleb and to his seed. Just as the sins of the fathers are visited on the children, likewise, the fruits of faith are enjoyed by following generations.

("Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.") 14:25. This parenthetical statement apparently indicates the reason for which God instructed Israel to turn back into the wilderness. These enemies were between them and the promised land, and God could not give victory, because of their unbelief. The only alternative was to let them wander in the wilderness. "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." 14:29, 30.

The same lesson prevails today. When men are "numbered to go to war," (Num. 1:3), and fail to believe God to lay hold of their place in the heavenlies, they too, dry up in the wilderness. They are still saved, but in no wise do they have spiritual victory, and the possessions which God intended for them to enjoy.

"But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised." These little ones are the new generation, symbolic of the new creation. God often uses such an illustration of choosing the younger above the elder, the new creation over the old. These "little ones" also represent a beautiful attitude which we must have. God delights to show His grace to those who are subject to all sorts of predators and destroyers. Such is the heart of the new creation, admitting his own inabilities, and always showing a total dependence on the God of all grace and power. Not only so, but it is this new creation "who shall know the land which ye have despised." It is the old creation which despises God's blessings. Israel was not the first to do so. Esau despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob for a mess of pottage. Gen. 25:34. Men who despise such treasures do not appreciate them highly enough to believe God for them. It is such folks as these, whose carcasses will fall in the wilderness, rather than enjoy a full rich reward for eternity.

"And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness." 14:33. This is another example of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children. Although these children ultimately went into Canaan, they were forced to bear the extremes of the desert for forty years, because of their parents unbelief. God decreed forty years because they had searched the land forty days. Forty is the number of testing. This 40-year testing is somewhat akin to our spiritual experience. We, too, must be perfectly tested in the wilderness before we are able to go into the land of Canaan. We must go through the wilderness experience to learn the total depravity of the flesh. It is here that we cry out, as Paul did, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 7:24, 25. It is only after this testing period that we actually understand how dependent on Him we are, for victory.

"Ye shall bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise." 14:34b. "My breach of promise" is more correctly translated "the altering of my purpose." It tells us that

God's purpose was to take Israel into the land, but unbelief had altered that purpose. This can also happen in our experience. God has very definite plans and goals for each of us, not simply in terms of ministry, but in the overall spiritual growth He wants to produce in our lives. When unbelief prevails, that purpose is altered. He cannot complete the work which He had originally planned for us.

The next verse states that this congregation was evil. They are recorded as being rebellious, that is, "gathered together against me." For such errors, they were to be consumed. The spies who went in died immediately by the plague.

"But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still." 14:38. Faith is never defeated. Though Joshua and Caleb were undoubtedly disappointed that they could not convince the people with their righteous preaching, and turn aside the tide of unbelief, their faith did not go for naught. They received a full, rich reward. The "reward" for the majority of this murmuring congregation was that of "mourning greatly."

"And they rose up early in the morning, and got them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned. And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? but it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies." 14:40-42. We might think that Israel had a change of heart, but Moses said, "because you are turned away from the Lord, therefore, the Lord will not be with you." 14:43.

God always responds to faith, but this is not really faith, nor true repentance. It reminds us of Esau, who cried so bitterly after the choice blessing had been given to Jacob. Paul tells us that Esau found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears. Heb. 12:17. As we consider the record in Gen. 27:36, it seems that Esau's biggest problem was jealousy. "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he hath supplanted me these two times." In other words, Esau did not want the blessing just for the goodness of it. He felt that he had been defeated by Jacob. His ego had suffered a tremendous blow. This situation in Numbers, is somewhat similar. The children of Israel are not wanting to go into the land just for the glorious blessing of it, but rather to avoid the consequences that have already been declared. As far as God is concerned, they are still "turned away from the Lord."

"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14:23. Israel's presumption to go forth to battle, verse 44, is not the result of faith, therefore, God was not among them. "The ark of the covenant of the Lord, and Moses, departed not out of the camp." Israel's going forth to battle, was just a continuation of their rebellion against the Word of the Lord, and of course, it did not prosper even as Moses had said. The Amalekites and the Canaanites smote them and discomfited them even unto Hormah. This place, meaning "destruction," is a fitting expression of Israel's journeys to this point, and is indicative of men today who refuse to believe God. They will be saved, but their works shall be destroyed. I Cor. 3:15.

IF GOD SHOULD GO ON STRIKE!

It's a good thing that God above
Has never gone on strike
Because He wasn't treated fair,
Or for things He didn't like.
If ever once He had sat down
And said, "That's it! I'm through.
I've had enough of those on earth,
So this is what I'll do:
I'll give my orders to the sun
To cut off your heat supply.
I'll command the moon to give no more light,
And run your oceans dry.
"Then, just to make it really tough
And put the pressure on -
I'll turn off the air and oxygen
Till every breath is gone."
Do you know He'd be justified,
If fairness were the game;

For no one has been more abused,
Or treated with disdain ...
Than God. And yet He carries on,
Supplying you and me
With all the favors of His grace,
And everything is - for free!
Men say they want a better deal
And so on strike they go.
But what a deal we've given God,
To Whom everything we owe.
We don't care who we hurt or harm
To get the things we like;
But what a mess we'd all be in,
If God should go on strike!

LOOKING TOWARD CANAAN

Chapter Fifteen

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you" 15:1, 2. This chapter begins almost as if the events of chapter 14 never happened. So often in Scripture, after judgment has been pronounced or carried out, God begins anew. The instructions given here do not concern those who were to be wasted in the wilderness over the 40 years of wanderings, but God's dealings with a new generation, symbolic of the new creation. God's promises are still yea and amen, and He still intends to put Israel into this choice land. The instructions given here were to be observed after they came into the land.

As with virtually all of God's beginnings, Calvary is seen to the front. It is the case here, as instruction is given to any who "will make an offering by fire unto the Lord, a burnt offering or a sacrifice in performing a vow or in a free will offering ... then shall he that offereth his offering unto the Lord bring a meal offering of a tenth deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin or wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb." 15:3-5. Different degrees, or depths of worship, are expressed by the different offerings seen from here through verse 12.

We read first of the meal offering consisting of one tenth deal of fine flour accompanied by the fourth part of an hin of oil and the fourth part of an hin of wine. The meal offering beautifully portrays the perfect, even, humanity of Christ, and it was always offered as an appendage to the blood offerings. In this first instance, it was offered with a lamb, figurative of Christ as the Lamb which took away the sin of the world. The next degree of offering is recorded in verses 5 to 7, where we find a meal offering of two tenth deals (instead of one) of flour along with one third hin of oil and of wine. This is offered with a ram. While depicting the perfect submission of Christ, as does the lamb, the ram is a larger animal with horns, and speaks of Christ as expressing greater power and accomplishing more in the work of redemption.

The next offering is that of the bullock and it stands alone as the greatest of the offerings presented by Israel. It not only tells of absolute obedience and devotion to the Father's will, but being such a large animal, tells of one who was able to accomplish ALL of the work of redemption, which God had planned. Thus, the meal offering is three tenth deals of flour (instead of two) mingled with half an hin of oil and a drink offering of half an hin of wine. These different offerings speak of different comprehensions which men have of Christ and the work of Calvary. The different amounts of oil, tell us of the varying degrees by which men are subject to the oil of the Holy Spirit. In exact proportion, the wine expresses the greater joy of the Lord, to one who has this greater comprehension of Calvary and greater submission to the readings of the Holy Spirit.

The order of these offerings also have a prophetic ring. Not only were they to be offering after the children of Israel are in the land, but the same instructions also apply to the "stranger" who was living among them. 15:14. In other words, Israel will be God's evangelists on earth during the Millennium. When this nation is born again and begins to fulfill purpose and work to which God has called them, they will be the leaders of praise and worship among the nations.

These instructions for Israel continue - 15:19-21: "Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto the

Lord an heave offering in your generations." The firstfruit, even down to the dough, was always given to Lord, and as we note here, it was an heave offering. The word "heave" means to "be high, offer up, exalt," and it speaks beautifully of Christ who was exalted and made high, as the firstfruit of the resurrection. We are to follow the same pattern today as we give the tithe or the firstfruit of our substance to the Lord, as a reminder and token of Christ's own resurrection.

The sin question is considered next. If Israel, as a congregation, failed to observe any of the decrees, even though it was in ignorance, such sin had to be atoned for when it was discovered. This reinforces that all sin, even though it was in ignorance and a direct result of Adam's fall, was still laid upon Christ at Calvary. Sin is sin, and God's government demanded that the sentence of death be carried out. Only on this basis, could God forgive, as we read in verse 26, "And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger that sojourneth among them, seeing all the people were in ignorance."

The next example of trespass is that which is committed by "any soul" or individual. When such a thing is done, even in ignorance, he is required to bring a she goat for the sin offering. The priest shall then make atonement for him and it shall be forgiven him - vs. 27, 28. In all of this, once again, atonement is the only basis for forgiveness, and it is only the priest who could make it. Likewise today, all men, both Israel and the stranger are shut up to the grace of God and the work of THE PRIEST CHRIST JESUS. Men can have no part except to rest in that finished work. This offer of forgiveness is not extended to "the soul that doeth ought presumptuously" - v. 30.

The word "presumptuous" means "with a high hand," that is, deliberately; and it is not just the act itself that is meant here, it is the attitude of heart - "He hath despised the word of the Lord." It speaks of Christ rejectors today, who go on in their deliberate way of rejection, disregarding the Word of God. For such an unrepentant and rebellious attitude, there is no salvation.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath day." 15:32. This incident seems to have happened right in the midst of the instructions Moses was giving to Israel, and would indicate one who was guilty of despising the Word of the Lord (v. 31). The act itself seems insignificant, but again we are referring to attitude. This man was only guilty of gathering sticks on the sabbath day. We are not told why that the judgment was so swift. God said that he was to be stoned, and it was carried out immediately.

This event reminds us again, of the reality of the law. Men have gloried in it, both then and now, supposing that it brought life; but as Paul found, the overall burden of the law was death. (Rom. 7:10). "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments and that they put on the fringes a ribband of blue." 15:37, 38. By these fringes, Israel were to remember several things. First, to remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them. Secondly, they were reminded "not to seek after your own heart and eyes." Thirdly, they were called to be a holy people. Finally, to remember that God had brought them out of Egyptian bondage for the express purpose of being their God. 39-41.

All of these "remembrances" are to be applied to our lives today. The ribbon of blue suggests that we are indeed a heavenly people, as we have been "raised up together and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:6). The rest of these "remembrances" are found in Col 3:1-4. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." These are the new and heavenly commandments we are to heed. "Set your affection on things above." Like Israel, our eyes of desire are to forsake our own ways, and be channeled toward heavenly blessings of His choosing. "For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." Herein is the source of true holiness. Our own lives ended at Calvary, and now we have been given the new and holy life of Christ.

Finally, just as God called Israel out of Egypt, so we "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." We realize that He is our God and has called us to fellowship with Himself; but one day, it will literally be shown forth as Christ brings forth many sons "out of Egypt," to appear in the presence of God - truly a heavenly people.

By all these instructions, we say again that God's purpose was to bring Israel into the promised land. That purpose, however, was not realized for forty years, and it came only after much heartache, misery, disappointment, rebellion, and judgment, as we begin to see in the next chapter.

BY FAITH AND NOT BY SIGHT

I walk by faith and not by sight,

Why seek along the way for light
Beyond today?
The Saviour holds my feeble hand,
And so I follow His command;
He is my stay.
I need not look beyond to see,
I need not know His way for me
Beyond this hour.
For by His grace His will I'll do,
His gracious Spirit leads me through,
And gives me power.

REBELLION IN THE CAMP

Chapter Sixteen

"Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" 16:1-3.

It seems that these men learned absolutely nothing from the previous incidents which we have studied, and here again, it is those who are "famous in the congregation, men of renown" who are the offenders. Korah, a man who should have been a spiritual leader, is the leader of this uprising. The other men also come from good stock. It was Reuben who prevented his brethren from killing Joseph. (Gen. 37:21, 22).

Regardless of what they should have been, these men stirred others to rebellion as they gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron. We should not be surprised, for it was this same class of people who were gathered together in such vehement opposition against Jesus, and for the same reason refused to accept God's leader. Men always have their reasons for doing as they please. Here, we find their reason is three-fold: First, "the whole congregation is holy every one of them," undoubtedly because the law had been given to them. Second, "The Lord is among them." Third, "Ye lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord."

Such is often the language which is used by those who rebel against authority. They were saying, "Moses, who are you to tell us what to do, since all of this congregation is spiritual? God has chosen all of us and is in our midst. Who are you to lift yourself above all the others and instruct them?" Moses, once again, falls on his face before the Lord, refusing to defend himself or argue with his accusers. He leaves his defense to the Lord, and declares that God Himself will "show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto Him; even him who He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him." 16:5.

These men of Korah are then instructed to take censers, put fire therein and incense, and God will reveal who is accepted, who is able to offer the incense before the Lord without dying. Moses then informs the sons of Levi that they have usurped authority - "Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi." 16:7.

Moses was amazed that Korah was not satisfied with the lofty place which God had already given him. He speaks to him: "Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And He hath brought thee near to Him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?" 16:9, 10.

Moses reveals that Korah's concern was not so much for the congregation as it was for himself. It was his own desire for power which motivated him. He was not satisfied with the place to which God had called him, and so began to seek the responsibility and authority of someone else. This selfish ambition caused him to rebel against God's leader, and against God's order for the priesthood, and also that "thou and thy company are gathered together against the Lord." (16:11).

These are serious charges and they carry a heavy penalty. Men may think they can do as they please, against God's anointed, but never does anyone who rebels against Him in this area,

escape paying the price for it. King Saul usurped authority (I Sam. 13), and rebelled against God's commandment (I Sam. 15). At first, there seemed to be no reprisal for Saul except Samuel's burning words against him, but a careful study of his life reveals otherwise. Saul suffered far more than the loss of the kingdom. His last days were filled with hours of depression, anxiety, fear for his life, and finally, an agonizing satanic experience with a witch. "God is not mocked." If we sow to the flesh, we will of the flesh reap corruption. Korah and his band are just about to find out how literal these words are and how devastating they can be.

The other two associates of rebellion are called in, and they, like Korah, only added to the charges already against them by refusing to come to the tabernacle. Their ungodly response is like some today, who have refused God's blessings and insisted on going their own way. They say, "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?" 16:13. The land of which they speak is the land of Egypt where they were slaves, and as we have already seen, it was Israel's unbelief which caused them to die in the wilderness. Yet, these men blamed Moses for it.

Such is the way of the flesh, never at fault for anything. This spirit is as old as Adam who declared "The woman which Thou gavest me," inferring that his failure was God's fault. King Saul made the same mistake, blaming his actions on Samuel, whom he said was not where he should have been at the appointed time. (I Sam. 13:11). A man filled with unbelief will invariably blame others for his rebellion and failure. Moses is also accused of trying to be a dictator. They hold him responsible for their not being able to enter Canaan. They add the charge that he was blinding the people, that is, leading them astray, keeping the truth and the light away from them. 16:14.

"And Moses was very wroth." 16:15. We hear much of righteous indignation, when in reality, it is only anger of the flesh. This scene shows that this was the righteous indignation of a man in harmony with God. Moses does not address these men and lash out at them, nor does he try to justify himself. Instead, he addresses God and calls on Him not to accept their offering. At the same time, he reminds the Lord that he has not been dishonest with any of them. "I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them." We learn a secret about true righteous indignation. It always leaves the vengeance, judgment, and personal defense, to the Lord.

"And Moses said unto Korah, be thou and all thy company before the Lord, thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow." 16:16. The following verses are the fulfillment of Moses' decree, that God "will show who are His and who is holy and will cause him to come near unto him." The one who God has "chosen to come near unto him", is the one who is able to offer the incense without dying. We are taught that all that is offered as worship (or, incense), and is not received as such by God, is therefore rejected. These men were quite confident, as each one took his censers and appeared in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 16:18.

"And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation." 16:19. Korah's self-assurance is almost unbelievable. He is walking on very dangerous ground, but does not seem to realize it. Korah, as usual, takes his case to the people; whereas men like Moses, leave things in God's hands. Rebellious men feel that if they can convince and sway the majority, they are right. It is amazingly true how many times in Scripture, God's will and purposes are expressed in the faithful few.

The glory of the Lord having appeared we hear: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron, saying, separate yourselves from among the congregation that I may consume them in a moment." 16:20, 21. These true intercessors immediately fell on their faces, appealing to God's justice: "shall one man sin and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" 16:22. Rather than separate themselves and escape with their own lives, Moses and Aaron are still very much concerned with the bulk of the people. Their cry of intercession is heard, and immediately God's instruction is for the congregation to separate themselves from these wicked men. 16:24-26.

This is the same message which Paul preached to the Corinthians as he declared, "Wherefore, come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you." II Cor. 6:17. The results today, may not always be as dramatic as they were in the case of Korah, but they are still just as devastating insofar as eternal gain or loss is concerned.

As for Korah, his fate is sealed, and Moses is going to be vindicated. "And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to all these works; for I have not done them of my own

mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." 16:28-30. The moment of truth does not come at some indefinite time. "It came to pass as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them and the earth swallowed them up and their houses and all the men that pertained unto Korah and all their goods." 16:31, 32.

Israel fled, "lest the earth swallow us up also." What of the men who attempted to offer incense before the Lord? "And there came a fire from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty that offered incense." 16:35. Thus, it was proven that God did not accept them, even though they proclaimed to be holy. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me and before all the people I will be glorified." Lev. 10:3. These words were spoken after two other young men tried to offer incense with strange fire. God is going to be sanctified in anyone who comes near Him, though it may be manifested through judgment. Not only so, but anything offered to the Lord becomes His. Because of this, the "censers of these sinners" were to be gathered and made broad plates for a covering of the altar." 16:38. This covering was to be a constant reminder to the children of Israel "that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord." 16:40.

We might wonder what does all this mean in relation to us today? Are we not permitted to worship the Lord? In the spiritual realm, God would have all men to be of the seed of Aaron, as He hath made us kings and priests unto our God. (Rev. 5:10). We are invited to "come boldly to the throne of grace" or mercy seat. (Heb. 4:16). However, all do not enter into that high calling and do not actually know how to offer such incense and minister as a true priest, manifesting the fragrance of Christ. In addition, we are taught that so-called worship out of a heart of rebellion and anger will not be accepted by the Lord.

"But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." 16:41. How blind and foolish can men be? This is another proof that signs and wonders do not cause men to believe. Such phenomenon may at times get their attention, but if men do not believe God's Word, neither will they believe because of signs and wonders. The glory of the Lord again appears in the tabernacle, and again, God conveys the same message: "Get you up from among this congregation that I may consume them as in a moment." Once again, Moses and Aaron fall on their faces in intercession.

This time, Aaron is instructed to take a censer with fire from off the altar and make an atonement in the midst of the congregation for "there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun." 16:46. This action is symbolic of the fact that fire from the altar of judgment, the Cross of Calvary, produced the genuine sweetness of Christ in His perfect obedience to God, and thus became an atonement for those doomed to die from the plague of sin. Aaron, himself, is symbolic of Christ as the High Priest who "stood between the living and dead." This is His ministry today. "He that hath the Son hath life, he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

"Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred beside them that died about the matter of Korah." 16:49. Once again, this book of Numbers lives up to its name, but this time the numbering is for judgment.

"And aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and the plague was stayed." 16:50. Aaron presents a beautiful typical picture of Christ as High Priest, whom after His work is done, and the desired results are obtained, he again returns to the tabernacle of fellowship with the Father, from whence He came.

THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD ESTABLISHED

Chapter Seventeen

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod." 17:1, 2.

Although He does not have to, God is going to prove to Israel beyond the shadow of a doubt, that only those of the house of Aaron have been called to the priesthood. As noted in our previous chapter, this was Korah's main point of contention, even though it had been announced and

recorded that only Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priesthood. (Lev.8). One would think that God's previous statements confirming the house of Aaron, along with the judgment meted out on Korah and his followers would have been enough proof. Nevertheless, all twelve tribes are instructed to present a rod to Moses for a very special sign.

"And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers. And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you. And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you." 17:5. There is a real beauty to this story. These rods were dry, lifeless sticks, and yet God is going to resurrect one of them. This same sign is also true concerning Christ. It was the resurrection that proved Him to be the Son of God. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Psalm 2:7. Paul informs us in Acts 13:30-33 that this passage refers, not to His birth, but to His resurrection from the dead. It was the resurrection which proved His high priestly ministry, as He is now, sitting at the right hand of God, making intercession for us.

This unique sign was designed to quiet the murmurings and contentions of Israel. Likewise, the resurrection of Christ was the miracle to stop the mouth of Satan. This was the reason for the puny measures taken to secure the sepulchre of Jesus with a stone, and a watch set to guard it. (Matt. 27). Even though these men rejected Jesus' words that He would rise again the third day, yet these words made an impression on them. God's Word will never return void. All people knew that His resurrection would be unquestionable proof that He was the Son of God. Today also, marvelous things begin to happen when men believe and lay hold of this great truth of resurrection by experience. Satan's power over them is broken and they are loosed in many, many wonderful ways.

In our chapter, Moses dutifully "laid up the twelve rods before the Lord in the tabernacle." 17:7. What happened next is another expression of how God goes beyond what He had stated. "And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." 17:8. Not only is the blossom a witness of life and resurrection, but there is also fruit. This is true, also in the resurrection of Christ. Because of that mighty display of power, a bountiful harvest of spiritual fruit has been brought forth. This life in God's people is a source of enjoyment and satisfaction to God.

There is also a beautiful personal lesson contained herein. The dry, lifeless sticks are a fitting expression of us being dead in trespasses and sins. When the resurrection power of Christ is unleashed in us, we too, spring forth into newness of life, and then are able to bring forth this fruit of the Spirit unto God.

All of these men are invited to view the results with their own eyes, as each man's rod, with the exception of Aaron's, is returned to him. Aaron's rod is again placed "before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; (or, the children of rebellion), and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not." 17:10. Likewise, the resurrection of Christ need occur only once, but it is an eternal witness of redemption. If men come to Christ, they must of necessity acknowledge not only His death, but also His resurrection, which proved Him to be the Son of God. In fact, the Ethiopian eunuch uttered these very words to obtain salvation (Acts 8:37).

The last two verses of this chapter record a rather subdued and fearful Israel; and after what they witnessed in the last few chapters, it is no wonder! However, they, as well as all men, must know that one cannot intrude into Christ's office of priest, and be held guiltless. The entire plan of redemption is God's masterpiece, and He will not allow men to violate it and rob Christ of the glory which belongs only to Him.

THE RESPONSIBILITY AND BLESSING OF THE TRIBE OF LEVI

Chapter Eighteen

"And the Lord said unto Aaron, thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood." 18:1.

The charges given here are a direct result of the events of 16 and 17. The house of Aaron has been unquestionably chosen for the priesthood, but along with that selection, comes great responsibility. They cannot allow ambitious intruders, such as Korah, to enter into the house of

God and deviate from God's order. Bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary and priesthood, simply means that they are responsible to abide by God's decrees. In the beginning of this book, we noted that the camp of Moses, Aaron, and his sons, was positioned immediately in front of the gate of the tabernacle for the very purpose of keeping this charge of the sanctuary. So we find that they are responsible for the sanctuary and also to carry out all the requirements of the priesthood.

This is reiterated in verse two. The tribe of Levi is to "be joined unto thee and minister unto thee; but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness." Notice further, "they shall keep thy charge." In other words, the Levites were accountable to Aaron and his sons as was outlined previously in chapter four. They were in no wise to enter into the responsibilities of the priest, "that neither they nor ye also die." It is also stipulated that only the Levites do the service of the tabernacle - "a stranger shall not come nigh unto you." 18:4.

In all this, we see that God has given certain responsibilities to certain people, and their authority is not to be usurped. Christendom, today, is in violation of many of these principles. Not only do some seek to take the high priest's office belonging to Christ, there are others, "strangers, unregenerate men, who deny the new birth and other fundamental facts of the Scripture; yet these men are allowed to minister in some churches. The Apostle Paul warned: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20.

The results of such a condition are the same as stated in our present chapter - death. While true believers will in no wise be cast into eternal oblivion, they will suffer the loss of spiritual increase. How it behooves every pastor to "keep the charge of the sanctuary and the charge of the altar." 18:5. It is his responsibility as overseer of the flock of God to guard the worship of the sanctuary and the teachings of the altar of Calvary from would-be wolves, who would tear and destroy the flock of God.

Verse six refers to the Levites as being "a gift for the Lord to do the service of the tabernacle." We have emphasized throughout these lessons, the ministry of the Levites was one of service, which is also a vital part of our experience. The ministry of the priests, however, is the greater ministry as they only are permitted to go within the veil. This speaks of a much closer and intimate fellowship with the Lord. "And the Lord spoke unto Aaron, behold I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel" 18:8. When Israel went into the land of Canaan, all tribes with the exception of Levi received a specific inheritance, or definite parcel of land. Verses 8-19 detail the offerings which comprise a part of the priestly family's inheritance. We will find later that their inheritance of land was a portion taken from each of the other tribes.

In our present chapter, it is evident that these servants of the Lord are not expected to minister without sustenance. The offerings of the children of Israel, given to the Lord, were in turn given as a gift "by reason of the anointing and to thy sons by an ordinance forever. This shall be thine of the most holy things reserved from the fire." Thus we discover that all of the offerings which Israel brought to the Lord were not burned up in sacrifice. Portions of all of them, except the burnt offering, were given to the priest. (Lev. 1:9). These offerings became their food. "In the most holy place shalt thou eat it, every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee." 18:10.

There are also beautiful spiritual lessons portrayed here. Spiritual priests today also partake of such offerings. The meal offering which was but a handful given to the priest, speaks of the perfect, even humanity of Christ. It was made of fine flour (Leviticus 2) which came forth of the wheat, speaking of Christ the Man, whom Isaiah describes as growing "up before Him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground." To partake of the meal offering is to understand and partake of Christ's sufferings as a man.

The sin and trespass offerings were brought because of some specific offense which had been done. As the priest partook of these, he was, in effect, identifying with the guilty party, acknowledging, in type, the judgment which fell on Christ because of sin, and at the same time, realizing abundant grace which frees the sinner. Such is also the case today, as true spiritual priests follow this same pattern of intercession, ministering in behalf of others.

The heave and wave offerings of verse 11 were actually heaved ("to be high, exalted, lifted up") and waved before the Lord. They speak especially of Christ being lifted up in resurrection - the firstfruit of redemption. These too, became the property of Aaron and his family. Verse 12

declares that they reserved the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, "the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord . . . and whatsoever is first ripe in the land shall be thine." For the most part, the firstfruit corresponds to the tithe. They mean the same, that God must receive His portion first. When we give a tithe, we are giving the firstfruit, an open declaration that there will be more; even as Christ's resurrection as the first fruit was an open declaration that more would follow.

Those gifts beyond the tithe or firstfruit, are addressed in verse 15 - "Everything that openeth the matrix which they bring unto the Lord shall be thine." From the time of their exodus out of Egypt, God always received the firstborn. Here, we find that it is given to the house of Aaron, all except the firstling of man and unclean beasts. These latter were to be redeemed or exchanged for money.

Herein is a two-fold expression of redemption. We were of the first-born Adam, the first creation, and must be redeemed even by five shekels of silver, the divine grace of redemption. Unclean beasts also are representative of the old creation. If they were not redeemed with a lamb, "then thou shalt break his neck." Ex. 13:13. What a picture of the unclean rebellious people of Adam, who could only be redeemed by the blood of the innocent Lamb, Christ! Otherwise, death will follow.

Some animals were unredeemable. This is another beautifully painted portrait of Christ and redemption. The firstling of these clean animals, the cow, sheep, and goat, must die. The firstling of the cow or ox depicts Christ being identified with and substituting as the firstborn of Adam, having within Himself the essence of absolute obedience, portrayed by the ox. The ultimate of the submissive sheep is described by the prophet Isaiah as "a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." 53:7. Finally, the goat marks Him as the sin offering, the substitute for all mankind who was made sin for us. II Cor. 5:21. All of these animals were doomed to death, even as Christ was caught in the net of His Father's will, from which there was no escape.

After the blood of the animals was shed and their fat burned on the altar, "the flesh of them shall be thine as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine." 18:18. Once again, deep spiritual treasure is available to one who has ears to hear. These special benefits are given only to the priests, and represent a very select portion for a very select people. The ministering priest of today, after recognizing the shed blood and the inner zeal of Christ, expressed by the burning fat, receives a double portion. The wave breast speaks clearly of entering into the very love and affections of the risen Savior. It is expressed, in spirit, by John, who leaned on Jesus' breast at the last supper and took liberties in asking questions that others dared not. The right shoulder expresses divine strength, which every New Testament priest must discover for himself. This is a power which goes far beyond his own in accomplishing the duties of a genuine priest.

The heave offerings of these holy things are described in verse 19 as a covenant of salt. Salt is a preservative, and this is just another way of commemorating the eternal worth of Christ. His work of redemption will never lose its power. As spiritual priests, we partake of these offerings today and realize that the effect of them is not just for today, but a blessing for eternity.

"And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." 18:20, 21. The instruction given here is applicable to the entire tribe of Levi and not just the priests, as indicated in the previous verses. Herein, we learn that the tenth goes to Levi "for an inheritance for their service which they serve." (18:12).

The tenth today also is to be given to those who serve in spiritual things. As Paul states, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox which treadeth out the corn . . . If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your carnal things?" I Cor. 9:9-11.

"Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance." 18:22, 23. The restrictions and decrees given here are a repetition which we have seen a number of times in these last few chapters. We would emphasize that God does not repeat Himself unnecessarily. Here He simply reaffirms that man is so ambitious in many cases that he will usurp authority and try to take a place which has not been given to him. God discloses in no uncertain terms that sin and death is the result.

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe." 18:25, 26. The Levites who received tithes for their service are now instructed to give a tenth of what they received to the Lord "as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor and as the fulness of the winepress." 18:27. These tithes were in turn given to Aaron - 18:28.

The best of the "fat" of their inheritance was to be given first "then it shall be counted unto the Levites as an increase." The same instruction given to Israel as a nation, is now given to the Levites and to us. The tithe, or the best, is representative of Christ, the firstfruit. When we give a tithe to the Lord, we commemorate the resurrection of Christ as the firstfruit, as the guarantee that more will follow.

As stated here, this tithe was to be given, even before they ate of it. 18:31. When these decrees are observed, "ye shall bear no sin by reason of it when ye have heaved from it the best of it. Neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die." 18:32. This in no wise means that salvation is dependent on tithing, for we are saved by grace through faith alone. (Eph. 2:8, 9). It does mean that men must acknowledge the resurrection of Christ. Insofar as Christians are concerned, death here speaks of the destruction of spiritual increase. He will be greatly impoverished spiritually and naturally, if he fails to honor the Lord by observing this beautiful testimony of resurrection. Proverbs 3:9, 10.

He knows, He loves, He cares,
Nothing this truth can dim.

He does the very best for those
Who leave the choice with Him.

THE WATER OF SEPARATION

Chapter Nineteem

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, This is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke." 19:1, 2.

The Scriptures are filled with beautiful illustrations and pictures of Christ and the plan of redemption. Our present chapter is yet another example of the fact that God always held Christ before the eyes of the people. Herein is much instruction and learning for us today. Throughout these lessons, and all of the Scripture, God insists in sanctification and holiness, a clean camp. It is so very interesting, however, that man is not left to his own ideas as how to accomplish this. Leviticus 28:8 declares, "I am the Lord which sanctifies you." He has made every provision for that full sanctification which is in Christ. Chapter 19 beautifully declares some principles of the sanctifying work of redemption.

The first requirement is that they bring a red heifer. The color red is indicative of that which is of the earth. It is amazing that the name, "Adam" means red earth or red man. Christ was this red heifer, come down to identify Himself with humanity as the second Man, Adam. The heifer or female ox, tells us of an obedient spirit as well as the fruit producer of redemption. The terms, "without spot and without blemish" are easily seen as portraying Christ, who is absolutely holy and without flaws, perfect in every way.

The fact that this animal had never drawn in a yoke, speaks of the fact that Christ was not bound by sin, Satan, or any kind of bondage. He was completely free. It was in this manner that Christ, the holy, righteous, and perfect Son of God, came into the world to be slain. "And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and one shall slay her before his face." 19:3. It was this same Jesus who was taken without the camp, being slain before a holy God, who must pour out judgment upon sin. Atonement is emphasized in verse four as the blood of this animal was sprinkled before the tabernacle of congregation seven times-seven being the number of perfection. Christ's work on the cross was complete and did not require any of the efforts of man.

"And one shall burn the heifer in his sight" 19:5. This burning further enlarges upon the fact that God had to make an absolute judgment upon sin. Christ was made sin during those awful hours on the cross when He cried out in agony, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It was at this time that God saw Him, not as His dearly beloved Son, but as the one offering for all the sins of humanity for all time. All of God's burning wrath was poured out in consuming this offering for sin.

Such judgment was to include all things, from the greatest to the least. "And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer." 19:6. From the most precious and valuable things, expressed by the cedar wood, to the very least, indicated by the hyssop; plus everything in between, pictured by the scarlet. God made provision "by Himself to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." Col. 1:20.

The defilement which accompanied the bearing away of our sins, is set forth in verses 7-10: "The priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water . . . and be unclean until the even ... He that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even ... He that gathers the ashes of the heifer, shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even." This unclean effect of sin which Christ experienced, is reflected by several statements in the Psalms. "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people." (Psalm 22:6). "I sink in deep mire where there is no standing." (Psalm 69:2). "O God, Thou knowest of my foolishness and my sins are not hid from Thee." (Psalm 69:5). "Reproach has broken my heart and I am full of heaviness." (Psalm 69:20). These verses reveal the defiled feeling which Christ experienced as He became both the offering priest and the sacrifice itself.

All of the foregoing instructions refer to the negative side of redemption, as Christ bore all of the guilt and defilement produced by sin. The following verses record our appropriation of this redemption work, thereby producing the positive effects of sanctification and acceptance into God's clean place of fellowship. According to verse nine, the ashes of the heifer were to be laid up in a clean place - "And it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: It is a purification for sin."

The instructions for using this water of purification are very specific, and carry with them spiritual lessons for us. "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." 19:11, 12. Touching the dead body simply means that one has been defiled by the old man or flesh, which God views as dead. There is but one way of cleansing and that is to wash with the water of purification on the third day. The third day speaks emphatically of the resurrection of Christ. The only way to complete cleansing is to appropriate the victory of Christ's resurrection. "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Romans 4:25.

We can never have a complete experimental cleansing in our lives if we do not realize the victory of the resurrection. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Romans 6:4, 5. It is one thing to acknowledge that Christ died for our sins, and that He felt all the horrible fire of God's judgment on sin, and to know that according to God's reckoning, we died with Him; it is quite another thing, however, to realize that we have been raised up together with Him, a new creation. Positive victory over all evil and experimental cleansing from sin are possible only as we appropriate this victory of the "third-day resurrection." We must saturate ourselves with such "water."

"Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean: his uncleanness is yet upon him. This is the law, when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean." 19:13-15. These verses present reasons as to why a person would come in contact with a dead body and be unclean. The circumstances may be beyond one's control, but he is defiled nevertheless. If a person were to refuse the cleansing, he would be cut off. New Testament teachings are the same. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Romans 8:13.

This verse does not teach that a Christian can lose his salvation, but it most assuredly teaches that yielding to the flesh has its consequences. One, he becomes devoid of spiritual increase or fruitfulness, and is unable to claim any spiritual inheritance. Two, if one persists in such fleshly activity, he is in danger of premature physical death. This is the meaning of Solomon's warning: "Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldst thou die before thy time?" Eccl. 7:17. Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away." John 15:2. Again,

we are not talking about eternal destruction; rather, one is taken away from fellowship, or ultimately removed physically. James teaches us the same truth concerning one brother who would minister to another: "let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20. The word "death" used here, is the same word used throughout I Corinthians 15 and refers to physical death. James meant that the one who converts a brother from the error of his way, shall save him from premature death. As in Numbers, there is always a tremendous loss when one is defiled by "dead flesh" and refuses the purifying water of cleansing.

Anything in the surrounding area of a dead body could also be defiled. If one died in a tent, all that come in and all that is in the tent is defiled. "And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean." 19:15. This open vessel speaks mightily of people who are not covered by the power of the Holy Spirit. They are left open to all that defiles, even though it may be religious. Our covering is actually II Cor. 10:3-5: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The next area of defilement is on the battlefield. "And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days." 19:16. Even a grave is defiling, and though it may be beyond his control, the one who contacts such things is defiled. The teaching throughout this lesson is that defilement is all around and we cannot always avoid it. God did, however, provide the way of cleansing, and man is without excuse if he refuses to follow His way. "And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel." 19:17. The heifer testifies of Christ who bore all the judgment for sin, which was due us. The running water tells of the ACTIVE Word of God applied to our lives. Paul claimed it for the Church in Ephesians 5:26: "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word."

Another interesting point concerning this cleansing, is that it must be done by a "clean" person. Quite simply, as we are purified by the Word, we can be the clean person. This does not mean that we are able to point to our conduct and thereby declare our worthiness and qualification for such a ministry. The Apostle Paul sums it up: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual (clean), restore such an one in the spirit of meekness." Gal. 6:1. Consider also the manner and the spirit of Christ, as He washed the disciples feet.

The cleansing water was supposed to be used on the third day and again on the seventh day - verse 19. Without being cleansed by the truth of Christ's resurrection on the third day, there can be no deliverance from practical defilement on the 7th day. Notice also: "He shall purify himself and wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean at even." He is counted pure - a clean conscience - by such cleansing, but he is also to wash his clothes, which speak of habits. So it is, that the inward cleansing of our lives ultimately produces a change of habit also. He shall be clean at even - "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1. The day of defilement for us is past. We have been cleansed by the Word and need not allow Satan to use our defiling experiences against us anymore.

"But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean." 19:20. We have already seen the significance of being cut off, but note here, why he is cut off. It is not because he was defiled in the first place, but rather, because the water of separation has not been sprinkled on him. Today, we must realize that we cannot escape defilement which is in the world. We are not held accountable for that, for we cannot always control it. What we are responsible for, is the cleansing, and it is imperative that we go to the Scripture daily to obtain it.

"And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even." 19:21. This verse may seem strange at first, but as we consider it, we begin to realize the amazing redemptive traits which are presented. The first part declares that the one who sprinkles the water, must wash his clothes. This is exactly what we learn from Leviticus 16:26, where a clean man who released the scapegoat in the wilderness, was defiled by that act. It calls attention

to the defilement which is present due to the bearing away of our sins. Likewise, in our present text. There is a certain defilement when one is identified with another in his state of uncleanness. Daniel identified himself with Judah's defilement, though he personally had done nothing wrong: "We have sinned and committed iniquity." 9:5. Ezra interceded in like spirit when he cried, "Oh, my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to Thee, My God, for our iniquities are increased over our head." 9:6. Like Daniel, he was not guilty, but took defilement of the nation personally, and prayed as though he needed the cleansing. We have other examples in Scripture of those who have manifested the same spirit of intercession. We must realize that ministering to others is not done from afar in a manner to "straighten them out," but rather, getting right down in spirit into the defilement, wherein they are held. In this manner, "holier than thou" prayers are eliminated, and we have the spirit of meekness and fulfill the law of Christ as Paul exhorted in Galatians 6.

The latter part of verse 21 presents valuable instruction for us. While it is not specifically stated that the used water of separation is to be thrown away, it is implied by the fact that defilement would result from touching it. We might wonder how could the Word be defiling? The truth of the matter is, we cannot be cleansed once, and expect that cleansing to last day after day. We are not talking about eternal life, but the incidental defilement which is around us every day. The water which was so gloriously effective yesterday, may not be used again today. We need a fresh application of the Word for today's difficulties. It must not be allowed to become stagnant and be taken for granted.

"And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even." 19:22. This verse reinforces the truth referred to earlier. Defilement is all around us; we cannot escape it, no matter how spiritual we may be. The emphasis is therefore, placed on being cleansed continually by the water of the Word.

A GUIDE THAT NEVER FALTERS

There is a Guide that never falters,
Amidst the storms of doubt and fears-
For He has walked the way before thee,
And He knows the path you see;
His feet have trod the rugged hillsides,
And the valleys of despair-
His life has paved the way to heaven,
Never fear, He'll guide you there;
His soul has tasted mortal anguish,
His eyes have felt the sting of tears,
He's a timely guide, a sympathetic Savior,
So, trust to Him your future years.
-Elizabeth E.S. Williams

THE ROCK WHICH FOLLOWED ISRAEL

Chapter Twenty

"Then came the children of Israel ... into the desert of Zin in the first month . . . Miriam died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron." 20:1, 2.

This chapter reveals a number of things regarding Israel's journeys. It tells of the deaths of two prominent people. There is murmuring, followed by a great miracle. Finally, there is bitter disappointment and humiliation at the hands of an enemy.

We read of the death of Miriam, Moses' sister. She was a great blessing in leading the praises of Israel after the great victory at the Red Sea. Following her rebellion against Moses and the subsequent judgment of leprosy, we read no more of her until now, as she is buried in Kadesh, "a sanctuary." It speaks of that beautiful sanctuary in Christ, both in life and in death.

It seems that Miriam's death is almost completely overshadowed by another crisis in Israel's history. The scene in verses 2-5 is a familiar one. These two worthies of faith are accused of leading the congregation into the wilderness to die. 20:4. They are questioned as to why they have been brought out of Egypt into this "evil place" where there is no fruit or water. 20:5 While the wilderness experience is by no means a pleasant one, and it is not God's purpose for us to

remain there, it is far better than the bondage of Egypt, and is necessary to our spiritual growth. It is here that we learn the weakness of the flesh and the constant need to depend upon Christ. It is not to be disdained simply as an evil place. The first generation of Israel did not learn the lessons of the wilderness, and therefore, did not go into the land of promise. It was not their conduct, but their unbelief which deprived them of blessing. (Hebrews 4:6).

"And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them." 20:6. This has become their custom at such adverse times. Immediately they are given instruction to "speak unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink." 20:8. The instructions given here have a very familiar ring to it. We see, however, one very important difference between this incident and the former one in Exodus 17:5.

The Rock is identified in I Corinthians 10:4 as being Christ from whom all blessings flow. Moses is specifically instructed in this chapter to SPEAK to that rock. The man of the hour went beyond that: "Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as He commanded him . . . and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also." 20:9-11. It may well be that Moses was filled with frustration and lashed out at the people in anger, but that is not his real failure here. His error goes much deeper than that, and tells us of deep, spiritual truth.

When we read here that "he smote the rock twice", it does not mean necessarily that he hit it two times, but rather that he smote it for the second time. (Exodus 17:5). All of this is a testimony of redemption. Christ the Rock, was smitten by Moses, representative of God's broken law, once and for all, at Calvary. Christ took the full impact of God's wrath and the waters of blessing flowed freely as a result. Now, however, the ONLY REQUIREMENT is to speak to the rock. There is no need for Christ to be smitten again. Moses is severely reprimanded - "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." 20:12.

God has always been protective of His plan of redemption. It cost Him His most priceless possession, His Son. He will not tolerate men who detract from it. Moses failed to "sanctify" Him by intimating that one smiting was not sufficient. Spiritually, it would mean that Christ must return and once again bear the judgment of God's righteous law. He omitted the simplicity of the Grace Message by his refusal to speak to the rock. Today, men must realize that further blessing does not come through the law. We can be blessed only by speaking to Christ. Anything short of this, is to fall from grace. (Galatians 5:4).

We do not read of Moses' response to God's decree here, but we do find several references to it in Deuteronomy. Three times he declares that God was "angry with me for your sakes." Deut. 1:37; 3:26; 4:21. Although God used Moses' act as the literal reason as to why he could not go into the land, there is a much greater spiritual reason. Moses had not fallen from God's favor. He was, in fact, rewarded, for while we do read that "God buried him in a valley in the land of Moab" (Deut. 34:6), that was not his final resting place. He is seen on the mount of transfiguration with Jesus. We are not told when God raised him from the grave, but he did go to be with the Lord, which is far better even than leading Israel into Canaan.

Now let us consider the real reason that Moses could not enter the land. He represented the Law, of which he was the mediator. Like the law, he was old, 120 years, "yet his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." (Deut. 34:7). Moses did not die of old age, but rather, that God wanted to take him out of the scene. The law which is holy and just and good, did not pass off the scene because it was weak in itself. We read only that it was weak through the flesh. (Rom. 8:3). There was nothing wrong with its strength and standard. The law was done away with because, like Moses, God was through with it. It served as a school master until Christ came. Even as Moses, it cannot bring men into the promised land. "Cast out the bondwoman and her son (law and her children), for the son of the bondwoman shall never be heir with the son of the freewoman." (the children of grace). Galatians 4:30.

"This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and He was sanctified in them." 20:13. Being sanctified, simply means that God was glorified and shown to be righteous, even though their actions were wrong. His standards were not compromised in any way.

"And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us" 20:14. Edom descended from Esau and he had not improved in his relationship to God, nor to the descendants of his brother Jacob. Moses reiterates a brief history of Israel's bondage in Egypt and God's deliverance of them. His request to Edom is simple: "Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells." Their request is turned down, though no reason is given. Moses sent a second appeal, and it too, is denied. "And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand." 20:20. In view of other victories which God has given, and will yet give to Israel, we might wonder why Edom is allowed to be so impudent with no apparent consequence. We know from other Scriptures that God did not want Israel to inherit any of the land of Esau. Deut. 2:4, 5. We can only speculate that with a victory over the king of Edom, Israel may have tried to possess their land. We shall see later that some of them did, in fact, insist on claiming their inheritance in the wilderness, rather than cross over Jordan. Sometimes, we too, may suffer some humiliating experiences at the hands of the flesh for the same reason. God does not want us to settle short of our inheritance in Christ. Like Israel, we may have to turn away. 20:21.

Israel continued their journeys from Kadesh to Mount Hor by the coast of the land of Edom where a very solemn announcement is made. "Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah." 20:24. It is no accident that Aaron died on Mt. Hor and Eleazar became the high priest there. The word Hor means "progenitor" which literally means to "bring forth, to beget." Aaron and Eleazar are pictures of Christ. Aaron shows Him as the dying priest, who did not go into the land. In addition to that, his close relationship with Moses, typifies the fact that Christ took the Aaronic priesthood, with all its decrees and ordinances, down into death with himself. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first (covenant) that He may establish the second." Hebrews 10:9.

Eleazar depicts the living Son of God, begotten of God, true to the name of Mt. Hor. It is this risen Christ, who came forth out of the grave in absolute victory and blessing - "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:6, 7. So, it was that "Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron died there in the top of the mount." 20:28.

"And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel." 20:29. Thus ends the life of a man who had been used of God, who knew by experience what it was to fail, and who learned to be a real intercessor for the people who murmured against him. He is gone, but God's purposes for Israel continue. Israel's wilderness experiences of victory and failure go right on, as we shall see in the next chapter.

WILDERNESS CONQUESTS

Chapter Twenty-one

"And when king Arad the Cananite, which dwelt in the South, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies; then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners." 21:1.

In our previous chapter we learned that Israel did not even join in battle against the king of Edom, and as was intimated, perhaps it was because God did not want them to partake of Edom's territory. Here, the story is different. The land in question is a part of the land promised to Abraham. Though the nation of Israel is not given possession of their inheritance at this time, God does fight for them.

Israel's part of the vow is "I will utterly destroy their cities." 21:2. All of this is most interesting when viewed in the spiritual. It tells of our own experience when we begin to reach out and lay hold of heavenly treasures. When Satan finds that one is interested in this heavenly land, he comes forth in great fury, even making prisoners of some. It seems that some Christians are bombarded with troubles when they begin to yield their lives to God and attempt to take the inheritance provided for them. Many become bound by the chains of the enemy. Though full enjoyment of their possession, and victory over the enemy comes only after crossing the Jordan, these are beautiful foretastes of victories yet to come.

Israel cried unto the Lord, willing for the cities to be destroyed. The Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites to them. A remembrance of that victory is made by

calling the place Hormah, "utter destruction." The annihilation of this enemy is only one of a number of victories won by Israel before they went into the land of promise, which attests to the fact that God would have brought them into Canaan forty years earlier if they had only believed Him. It is typical of the experience of any Christians who only "skirt around the southern tip of the land." Even though there is a measure of victory, we must realize that this is only a start. No one can fully conquer Canaan without crossing the Jordan River, figurative of experiencing the practical resurrection power of Christ.

Fresh on the heels of this victory, a new pitfall comes to Israel; and once again, the events of this chapter are typical of the up and down experience of the wilderness, encountered by those who are on their way to the promised land. This time, the culprit is discouragement as "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way." 21:4. It is evident that they had not learned to glory in tribulation. Their eyes were not fixed on the land of promise, nor on the purposes of God for them. "And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." 21:5.

Discouragement is common to the entire human race, but it must not be permitted to gain control of us and accuse God of being a destroyer. Israel's resentment is further manifested as they declare "there is no water and our soul loatheth this light bread." The food of which they speak is the miracle manna which typifies Christ, the true Bread from heaven. (John 6). God had also proven time and again that there was water, even in the desert. Men travel on dangerous ground when they ignore God's provisions in Christ, or openly disdain them.

"And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died." 21:6. This is only an outward expression of what had happened inwardly to Israel. Spiritually speaking, they had already been injected with Satan's venom of unbelief and rebellion, which results in death. As usual, however, God is not taken by surprise. He had the plan of redemption in mind before men even needed a Savior. Here, his mediator, Moses, is immediately on the scene, ready to pray for the people - "we have sinned, we have spoken against the Lord and against thee; pray unto the Lord ... And Moses prayed for the people." 21:7.

God's remedy for the plight is the story of redemption. "And the Lord said unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." 21:8. This object lesson is a perfect portrait of II Cor. 5:21: "For He hath made Him to be sin (as a serpent) for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Jesus commented on this same incident in John 3:14, 15: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth (looketh) on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." It was Jesus who felt the fiery judgment of God's wrath on sin, as He was lifted up upon the pole on Mt. Calvary. The result is the simplicity of the Gospel; for everyone has been bitten, and "when he looketh upon it he shall live." The only effort required is to LOOK AND LIVE. Sin's power over him is annulled.

The devastating results of Israel's murmuring over, they resume their journey. The first camp is Oboth (21:10), meaning "holes dug for water or water skins." It tells of the life-giving water which God has provided for all. Ijeabarim is Israel's next stop. It means "heaps, or ruins of the regions beyond" and speaks of the downside of the wilderness experience. One day there is the feeling of refreshment at Oboth, and next, all that one can see are the ruins of the regions beyond. This is the time when people look only at their immediate situation without eyes of faith. All they can see are worthless heaps, and they assume that all regions beyond are the same.

How important it is for us to go on to Zared. It means "exuberant in growth" and tells us of a certain growth even in the wilderness. It seems that only shrubbery grew there, that is, this is not the abundant fruit found in Canaan, but it does tell us that we are headed in the right direction. Arnon, "the perpetual or brawling stream" is next on the circuit, and it too, removes us farther from the depressed area of Ijeabarim. It is actually a part of the land of Canaan and tells us of our experiences in gradually laying hold of the abundant wealth given to us in the heavenlies in Christ.

According to our text, Arnon also seems to form a bridge between the exodus from Egypt and the battles of Canaan. "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, What He did in the Red sea, and in the brooks of Arnon. And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab." 21:14, 15. We can rest assured that Satan's

forces are battling any attempt to cross the Red Sea out of Egypt into the wilderness and eventually into Canaan. Thus, there are the wars spoken of here, but be it ever remembered they are the "wars of the Lord." He will fight our battle and lead us into the land of promise if we only follow Him.

"And from thence they went to Beer: that is the well whereof the Lord spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 21:16. The resumption of Israel's journeys brings them to Beer, "a well." It speaks of the well of which Jesus spoke in John 4:14, "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Such are the wonderful blessings of redemption given to us in Christ, an eternal bountiful supply. Notice this song of praise as "Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it: The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves." 21:17, 18. As we see here, Christ, the everlasting source of blessing also becomes the object of our song of praise.

The manner in which God gave Israel water is noteworthy. We have seen various ways in which He met that need since they left Egypt. At Marah, the miracle tree was thrown into bitter water to sweeten it. Later, they came to Elim where twelve wells of water already existed. Twice, water miraculously poured from the rock. But here at Beer, the people were instructed to dig a well. This corresponds to the less than spectacular ways in which God delivers us as we begin to grow. As a matter of fact, there are more miracles performed in the wilderness than in Canaan. As we believe God and learn to walk by faith, we are not dependent on signs and wonders to sustain us. We learn to "dig the well." Our attention is focused on the well itself, wherein we learn to "strive to show thyself approved unto God, a workman (well digger) that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word (well) of truth." II Tim. 2:15.

Mattanah, meaning "a gift" is the next stop in Israel's journey. It is easily interpreted as referring to Christ. Nahaliel follows and then Bamoth. 21:19. These two places combine to show a balance in our experience. The former means "torrent, or valley of God," and tells us of the valley experiences ordained by God for us. Bamoth presents the time of reprieve when we are taken up to the "heights." In verse 20, it is referred to as Bamoth in the valley. Even in times of discouragement and trial down in the valley, God lifts us up. Though we are not completely delivered, we are given an encouraging ray of hope. He does not put on us more than we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it." I Cor. 10:13.

Pisgah is the last in the series of steps recorded in these verses. It means, "survey," and according to Deut. 34:1, was the mountain from whence Moses surveyed the land of Canaan before he died. It speaks of that place in our lives when we begin to get a glimpse of the land before us. Like Israel, however, we must realize that there are many battles to fight before we actually take possession of our inheritance. The remainder of this chapter records the overwhelming victories which Israel won over those who would resist them.

The first opponent is Sihon king of the Amorites. 21:21. Israel's request of verse 22 is like the one made to Edom in our previous chapter. Like Edom, Sihon would not let Israel pass through, but gathered all his people together and went out against Israel into the wilderness and fought against them. 21:23. The outcome of this confrontation, however, is different. Israel smote him with the edge of the sword and possessed his land. The land ultimately became the inheritance of the two and a half tribes who chose to settle on the wilderness side of Jordan. Such an inheritance is by no means of the flesh, as was Edom's land, but neither does it represent the best that God has for those who would cross over Jordan. These victories are those which are won in our wilderness experience.

Sihon, "sweeping or scraping away," represents the flesh which could overwhelm us and keep us from victory. Arnon, the first landmark of which he would deprive us, means "brawling stream," or "I shall shout for joy." It speaks of that exhilarating, effervescent, exuberant feeling which comes to be such a delight to us when we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The next possession, however, is Jabbok, "he will empty out." Both of these are necessary experiences on our way to Canaan, as we go from the high spirit dictated by Arnon, to the emptiness of Jabbok. It is typical of life in the wilderness and though such victories are a beautiful earnest of heavenly experiences, God does not intend for us to continue forever in this roller coaster experience. We are to learn from them. God desires us to know the exhilarating power of the Holy Ghost and His unspeakable joy. We must also learn the emptying-out experience to realize that He alone can fill

the void. It is not his plan for us to take up permanent residence here.

Heshbon is the next conquest. It means "reason," and in the hand of Sihon, speaks of all the fleshly reason of man which is against the knowledge of God. It must be taken, that every thought may be brought into the obedience of Christ. Verses 26-29 declare that Heshbon had been a city of Moab, steeped in idolatry to the god of Chemosh. Religious wickedness gives way to the uncontrolled flesh of Sihon; and to the moral man, that would probably represent an improvement. However, victory comes only when Heshbon is controlled by the true man of God.

Dibon is the next portion following close on the heels of Heshbon. It means "sufficiency of knowledge" and further tells of a mind subject to Christ. From here we go to Nophah, meaning "breathing or blowing." It too, tells of the power of the Holy Spirit, the rushing mighty wind which empowers us to victory. Finally, Medeba meaning "quiet waters" falls to Israel. These quiet waters are expressive of the quiet workings and power of refreshing offered by the Holy Spirit. All of these victories are necessary in our lives, but again, they do not represent the fulness of inheritance provided in Canaan. Like the two and a half tribes who settled here, many Spirit-filled saints are satisfied with this foretaste of blessing, but come far short of the complete blessings of Canaan.

Israel's triumphs continue in 21:32, as they spy out Jaazar, taking the villages and driving out the Amorites. Jaazer means "helpful," but in the hands of the Amorites, is a detriment to the message of grace. It tells of those who would help God with redemption by adding their own works and thus denying the need of Christ.

Og, king of Bashan, is the next enemy, but he too, goes down in defeat. Og, meaning "hearth cake" from the idea of heating or baking, tells of the fiery trials and opponents in our lives. He and all his host, however, are no match for God. Note God's instruction. "Fear him not; for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites which dwelt at Heshbon." 21:34. It is in the wilderness that we hear His voice promising victory. As we reach out by faith and cling to those words, they become stepping stones to greater victory and a greater inheritance in the heavens. This particular battle was fought at Edrei, a choice place of blessing. It means "goodly pasture" and tells of those pastures which God has provided for the sheep who will follow Him.

"So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they possessed his land." 21:35. Such must also be written of us today.

THE STORY OF BALAAM

Chapter Twenty-two

"And the children of Israel set forward and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho." 22: 1.

In the previous chapter we noted some of the mighty victories with which God blessed Israel. The next four chapters record battles which are far different. And in these battles, we begin to get some insight as to the activities in the unseen spirit-world. It is powerfully expressed that Satan is the real enemy and is doing his utmost to defeat God's purposes for Israel and us. Balak is the king of Moab who openly opposes Israel, but he is motivated by Satanic forces.

In view of the recent success of Israel against the Amorites, "Moab was sore afraid of the people." 22:3. Moab is a descendant of Lot, through the incestuous relationship with his elder daughter (Gen. 19:36, 37). Not only do we see the corruption of the flesh in them, but they became arch enemies of the true people of God. Because of their fear of Israel's masses, they decide to battle this people in a different way; thus Balaam is called in. His commission and credentials are found in 22:6: "Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed."

When considering Balaam's career, it is important that we realize how close a counterfeit Satan makes of the things of God. Blessings and cursings were both a part of the law (Deuteronomy 28), and Balaam seems to have a reputation of bringing both to pass at will. He was not, however, a true prophet of God despite some apparently righteous comments. Scripture never mentions anything good about him. Peter warns against going the way of Balaam (2 Peter 2:15). Jude 11 denounces the error of Balaam. Jesus denounces the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14). We read plainly the words: "the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand." 22:7. The word "divination" means to "determine by lot or

magical scroll; oracle; witchcraft." Balak knew exactly to whom he was appealing and it was not God.

We may wonder if Balaam was truly on speaking terms with God as he said unto them, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam." 22:8. Furthermore, we read in the next verse that "God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?" God's instructions to Balaam in verse 12 is irrevocable and uncompromising - "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed." Had Balaam adhered to this, he would have saved himself considerable anguish.

Despite his attempts at piety, he continued trying to find a way around God's statement. He very dutifully sent the princes of Balak home with the message: "The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." 22:13. Apparently he did not convince Balak that the matter was closed. Another appeal is relayed to Balaam by a larger and more honorable group than the former one. It too, is met with strong resistance by Balaam. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." 22:18. If Balaam really believed those words and considered God's emphatic decree, he never would have shown that small, but sure crack forming in his dike of opposition. He said, "Tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what the Lord will say unto me more." 22:19. There was no need for another message from God, but Balaam was not a true prophet of God, nor subject to His Word and Will. As this story continues, we marvel at the grace of God to such a one as Balaam. He appeared again to Balaam with this instruction, "If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." 22:20. God had not changed His mind, but only reinforced what He had said earlier. If Balaam had known the ways of God, he would have realized that this was simply God's emphatic "NO" signal to him, for we never read that the men called him. We read only that "Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab." 22:21.

This action brought forth God's anger. We read in Psalm 7:11 that "He is angry with the wicked every day." For this cause He withstood Balaam. "The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him. And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way." 22:22, 23.

The next few verses are laughable, and they bring out the facts that God never intended for Balaam to curse Israel, and it proves also that Balaam was indeed, a false prophet, going contrary to God. The angel of the Lord continued to stand in the way and as a result, the ass "crushed, Balaam's foot against the wall." The angel went further and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn, either to the right or to the left. (22:25, 26). These verses tell us about the progressive dealings of God. His warnings become more pronounced when they are not heeded. First, the angel stood in the way. Then the way becomes more narrow and physical pain is inflicted on Balaam as his foot is crushed. Balaam is boxed in, but despite such warnings, the wicked never learn.

Balaam again smote the ass, this time for falling down. But God cares for the ass. "And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times?" 22:28. Such a phenomenon as a talking ass is surely strange, but it is even stranger yet that Balaam talks back to the ass. "And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee." 22:29. Such stupidity on the part of Balaam is rather humorous, but this whole incident is also sobering for it tells us that God can use even a dumb animal to accomplish His purposes. It surely leaves no room for us to become conceited and puffed up just because we are used of God. Neither is it always an indication of spirituality. Later on, we will learn that just as God sovereignly used the ass, so He sovereignly made Balaam speak His mind. We never read that Balaam was rewarded for such "forced" obedience.

After his conversation with the ass (one ass talking to another), Balaam's eyes are finally opened and he too, sees the angel of the Lord standing in the way with his sword drawn in his hand, and "he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." 22:31. Such action by Balaam is not an act of worship, but rather a fulfillment of Scripture - "every knee shall bow." (Phil. 2:10). Balaam bowed before Him because he was forced to do so, and not because he would worship out of a heart of

love. The angel said to him, "I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me." 22:32. He indicates that the ass was aware of His presence when Balaam was not, and had it not been for this dumb beast who had sense enough to turn away, "surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive." 22:33.

At this point, Balaam seems to be very meek and subdued as he acknowledges his sin and his inability to see the angel. He further declares willingness to return unto his place. What more could one ask for if we were looking for repentance? Balaam's life later on belies these words, and we will notice some clear indication that he did not have a change of heart at all. His eyes were still on the reward offered by Balak and he eventually found a way to obtain it.

In this chapter, Balak comes forth to meet him, chiding him only briefly for his tardy response. Balaam said, "Lo, I am come unto thee; have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." 22:38. This is surely the truth, and Balaam spoke truth in the following chapters simply because God forced him to do so, and not because of his love for the truth or for the people of God. He is content to follow Balak from one place to another; the first being Kirjath-huzoth, "city of broad ways." It reminds us of the broad way which leadeth to destruction, as opposed to the strait and narrow. (Matthew 7:13, 14).

The last two verses of this chapter show us the counterfeit of Satan, as oxen and sheep are sacrificed. It is a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, for the intent of Balak to curse Israel, is contrary to the will of God. Furthermore, it is done from the "high places of Baal," the stronghold of idolatry. As we will see later, this vantage point of being able to see "the utmost of the people" is in keeping with Satanic reasonings concerning witchcraft.

The Christian life is never represented as a picnic, but as something strenuous: a race, a contest, a journey. The promise of a soft life would appeal to very few, for it could not be productive of nobility and heroism: it would only make invalids. Christ is still saying, "Get out ... and go in."

-W. Graham Scroggie

BALAAAM'S PARABLE

Chapter Twenty-three

"And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

The language sounds as if Balaam is really planning to worship the Lord. The number "7" in spiritual language is the number of completion; however, in case of the seven altars, it is completely out of place. God recognizes only one altar and that is Calvary. Not only so, but as we already know, the purpose of such rituals is to curse the people, which is entirely contrary to God's way of pronounced blessing, through the preaching of sacrifice. This is an expression of Paul's warning to Timothy: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." II Tim. 3:5.

As we continue, Balaam's piety seems to come forth, but again it falls far short of spirituality, as he tells Balak to "Stand by thy burnt offering, and I will go: peradventure the Lord will come to meet me." 23:3. He said something right in that the offering is Balak's and not God's. Also, Balaam left it. This is contrary to the Scripture concerning sacrifice, for we learn that God meets us at the place of sacrifice. Blessing and communion comes as we linger around the altar of Calvary.

Paul declared, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Christ and Him crucified." I Cor. 2:2. In Hebrews 4:16, he shouts, "Let us come boldly to the throne of grace." Concerning the same mercy seat upon which the blood of the sacrifice was placed, God said, "And there will I commune with thee from above the mercy seat." Exodus 25:22.

Even in spirit, Balaam did not go to this place; rather, he went to an high place. Such an "high place" speaks of our lofty place in the heavenlies, at times, but not here. Throughout the book of Kings, it is always spoken of in relation to idolatry. Our next chapter categorizes it as enchantment. When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, "he went not, as at other times to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness." 24:1. The word "enchantment" means to "whisper a magic spell," and it is a term of witchcraft. All of the many ploys which Balaam uses in this chapter, are nothing more than the tools and rituals of idolatrous witchcraft.

Certainly God is not impressed nor pleased with such wickedness, but we see that He did meet Balaam, who rehearsed all of his religious preparation before Him. 23:4. God's response in no way indicates the righteousness of Balaam. He overruled Balaam's desire, and forced him to speak only blessing concerning Israel.

Balaam returned to the king and his sacrifice, but the curse which he was commissioned to deliver, was not forthcoming. He declared, "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" 23:8-10.

What a blessing! First, it speaks, dispensationally, of the past of Israel wherein God chose them and separated them from among the nations. In fact, according to Deut. 32:8, "He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Furthermore, this blessing is in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant: "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Gen. 13:16.

Finally, God's purpose is for a righteous people and their end is not to be one of destruction. Balak is very perceptive. This man whom he has hired to curse his enemies has blessed them altogether. Balaam, in turn, declares that he had no choice in the matter; God forced him to pronounce such blessing.

The flesh, however, does not give up easily. Balak is insistent that there must be a way to get the job done. In accordance with Satanic and idolatrous thinking, he wants to try another in the long list of the rituals of enchantment. "Come I pray thee, with me unto another place from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them: thou shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence." 23:13. The logic in his thinking is that perhaps viewing them all together, their "magic" is too strong. If we set out face against only part of them, our powers of cursing will increase.

So it is that Balaam is brought to this field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah. Pisgah, meaning "to survey" tells of surveying the beautiful land of promise. Zophim means "watchtower." Both of them are out of context with cursing. It is blessing which abounds from Pisgah, and the watchtower represents the forces watching over and defending Israel. Balaam, however, proceeds in like manner as before, with seven ritualistic altars and their sacrifices. It is also noteworthy in all of this, that despite the fact that Balaam apparently submitted to God, he is very willing to follow Balak. His instruction to Balak is the same as before, and he leaves the offering to meet the Lord. Once again, God sovereignly filled the mouth of Balaam with blessing.

"God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless. and He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them. God brought them out of Egypt; He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion: he shall not lie down until he eat of the prey, and drink the blood of the slain." 23:19-24.

This blessing refers to the present justified Israel - "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel." Even though Israel, as a nation, is in unbelief, yet God still reckons them as a new creation, insofar as His purposes for them are concerned. God sees the end from the beginning, and knows that they will eventually bow their hearts and knees in adoration and love. For this reason, His promises to them, are still yea and amen. He does not lie; there is no reason to repent of His decree to bless them. He will make all promises good to a repentant and restored people. Verses 23 and 24 are a hint of the greater future blessing which Israel as a new creation will enjoy. No nation, enchantment or divination, has been able to stop them, nor will they ever be annihilated. They will rise up as a great lion and spoil those who would dare to resist them.

Once again, Balak is sorely disappointed. Balaam defends himself, is content to follow Balak to another place, even to the top of Peor which looks toward Jeshimon. Peor, meaning "a gap" and Jeshimon meaning "desolation" are places more in keeping with pronouncing a curse of witchcraft, but of course, even from here, Balaam is absolutely unable to curse them whom God

has blessed. The seven altars are again erected and the offerings placed thereon; but to no avail, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The Lord is risen indeed;
The grave hath lost its prey;
With Him shall rise the ransomed seed,
To reign in endless day.
The Lord is risen indeed;
He lives, to die no more;
He lives, His people's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame He bore.
The Lord is risen indeed;
Attending angels, hear!
Up to the courts of Heaven, with speed,
The joyful tidings bear:
Then take your golden lyres,
And strike each cheerful chord;
Join, all ye bright celestial choirs,
To sing our risen Lord.

-Thomas Kelly

SUGGESTED LABELS TO BE PUT ON ALL BIBLES

Warning: This Book is habit-forming. Regular use causes loss of anxiety, decreased appetite for lying, cheating, stealing, hating.

Symptoms: Increased sensations of love, peace, joy, compassion.

GOD HAS THE LAST LAUGH

Chapter Twenty-four

"And when Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness." 24:1.

Balaam had been seeking enchantments all along. His offerings were only religious counterfeits. Also, we see by this verse, the very rebellious and stubborn spirit of Balaam; for though he saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he persisted in finding other ways to accomplish his ungodly purposes.

The Spirit of God sovereignly prevailed as He gave him a vision. Balaam describes himself as the "man whose eyes are open." 24:3. The revelation which he saw is in the same context of blessing as the previous messages which God had given him. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! As the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river's side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters." 24:5, 6.

These verses beautifully reflect God's future purposes and blessing for Israel. Their flimsy tents refer to the time of God's protection over them while they are just "passing through" and have no permanent dwelling place. The tabernacles, however, indicate a permanent abode in full fellowship and communion with God. Israel is next likened unto a "garden by the river's side, indicative of the fact that they are constantly encamped by God's riches of grace and power. The trees speak of that which has deep roots and is solid and steadfast; while the aloe reflects their fragrance unto Him. Cedar, a most precious wood, signifies glorified humanity. These two verses reveal Israel's relationship, growth, and maturity before God.

The next part of blessing reveals Israel's relationship with the nations after they have been restored. "He shall pour the waters out of His buckets and his seed shall be in many waters and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted." 24:7. It is Israel who will pour out the "buckets" of the water of blessing as they go forth to evangelize the nations in fulfillment of Jesus' commandment to them. (Matt. 28:19). "His seed shall be in many waters," tells the same story, since the nations are likened to waters. (Rev. 17:1, 15; Isa. 8:7, 8). Furthermore, Jesus "the Jew" will be exalted and emerge as King of kings and Lord of lords with absolute victory over "Agag" the flesh. His kingdom shall indeed be exalted as Israel will advance to the head of the nations under His leadership.

"God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of an unicorn: he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows." 24:8. God brought Israel forth out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses, but that was just a hint of the greater deliverance Israel will yet have, as God separates them from the rest of the world. It was God who did it before, and He will do it again, as Israel receives the strength of the unicorn, to literally "eat up the nations." No one can touch the mighty Lion of verse nine, for Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The latter part of this verse - "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee," is in fulfillment of one of God's promises to Abraham. (Genesis 12:3).

Balak is furious at this point as he smites his hands together, informing Balaam that he has done just the opposite of what he was hired to do. This man who was greeted with open arms is now expelled in fury. In his final address to Balaam, Balak gives some valuable information: "I thought to promote thee to great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." 24:11.

Whether Balak realized it or not, this statement is exactly true. If we go God's way, we, too, are going to go just opposite the purposes of the world, and are thus not going to attain the honor offered. Paul declared, "God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake ... we are made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things unto this day." I Cor. 4:9-13.

Indeed, He does keep us from the temporal honor of the world, but God's eternal reward can never be equalled. Balaam immediately makes his defense, asserting that he had informed Balak from the beginning, that he must speak the Word of the Lord, regardless of the proffered reward. Balak has had enough and does not ask for any further comment from his hired prophet. But God is not finished with either of them. With Balaam as His mouthpiece, He instructs Balak concerning the "latter days." 24:14. This time, Balaam's vision is specifically of Christ. "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth - ("children of tumult"). And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city." 24:17-19.

Such is all the inclusive victory of the heavenly STAR out of Jacob, who shall rule in due time. No enemy will escape. He will have absolute dominion over all these nations who have dared to fight against Israel. It reminds us of Psalm Two where we read, "Why do the heathen rage (or, "tumultuously assemble") and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed ... He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure."

Balaam continues his prophecy as he now looks on Amalek. They are said to be the first of the nations in their beginning, but according to God's decree, they shall perish forever. Amalek means, "a people that licks up," and speaks of the uncontrollable lust of the flesh. He was a descendant of Esau through Eliphaz. (Genesis 36). Esau proved he was profane, as he sold his birthright for one morsel of meat. (Heb. 12:16). God later said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Rom. 9:13). Amalek followed closely in father Esau's footsteps, as he laid wait for Israel when they came out of Egypt proving that he had no respect for God, His promises, or His chosen people. As a result, God has actually declared perpetual war against this evil nation. The Kenites are next in this sweeping judgement pronounced from the lips of Balaam. They are to be wasted, even though their dwelling place is strong and "thou puttest thy nest in a rock." This phrase seems to indicate a figurative place, rather than their natural habitat. These people seemed to have put their confidence, outwardly at least, in Israel's Rock. Nevertheless, according to God's Word, they would be carried into captivity along with Israel, by Asshur, or Assyria. In turn, ships come from Chittim, or Cyprus, to "afflict Asshur and shall afflict Eber and he also shall perish forever."

What a contrast we see with the expectation and hope of Balak! Instead of Israel being cursed, they are altogether blessed and the curse of destruction is leveled not only against Balak's country of Moab, but also against any other nation in view of Balaam. God has had the last word. He is through with Balaam, the puppet, who simply rose up and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way, quite disappointed and grieved, I am sure.

WHO CAN DARE?

Who can watch the rising sun
Or see the wonders God has done,
Who can count them one by one-
And say, There is no God.

Who, the orchard's gifts can share
Can taste the fruit that ripens there
Can watch it grow, and yet declare,
That God is dead.

Who can see the wonders done
By missionaries' efforts spun,
Or count the souls their works have won,
- and claim, there is no God.

Who can look upon the grain
The clouds above that bring the rain,
To nourish crops on field and plain,
- yet dares infer, that God is dead.

Who is so blind he cannot see
The wonders wrought in Galilee,
By Christ who came for all to see
- and know, There is a God!

- Ronald Eyrich

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM

Chapter Twenty-Five

"But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." Revelation 2:14.

Our present chapter is the scene from whence this decree against the church at Pergamos is taken. We read, "And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab." 25:1. The word "whoredom" means to commit adultery, idolatry. It goes far beyond the literal meaning of fornication. The physical act is but a small type of the deeper spiritual error which was committed. To commit fornication is to take a place of aggression, or bow to the authority of another; to enter into a union which God has in no wise ordained. This is what Israel did.

Hosea describes her as a nation who played the harlot, denying God as her husband, in going after other lovers who would give her bread, water, wool, flax, oil, and drink. Hosea 2:1-5. Israel looked to other nations, or "lovers" to meet her needs, when they would have been supplied by God. She gave her allegiance to someone else, rather than to her Husband. In the book of Numbers, "Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel." 25:3. The word "joined" means to link, gird, or serve. Israel was to have no other God before them. The Lord had instructed them, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." Ex. 28:3, 5.

Baal-master, husband, owner, took the place which belonged to God, and Israel submitted to this false god. Idolatry is substituting God's leadership for that of another. Paul denounced the Corinthians for having bowed to this same spirit. They had taken headships of man - "every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" I Cor. 1:12, 13.

Throughout his writings, Paul emphasizes that Christ is the One Head of the body, and condemns the divisions which result from taking headships other than that of Christ. The church at Corinth is only a small picture of the conglomeration which prevails in Christendom today, because men have not adhered to the Headship Christ.

As Israel looked to others for the needs that would have been supplied only by God, so also many in Christendom rely on an organization to solve their problems and give them direction. They depend on the name of a denomination for the security of both doctrine and finance. The voice of boards and committees is substituted for the voice of God, speaking through His Word,

by His chosen pastors and teachers. Some feel that if they are not accepted by a certain religious denomination, they are not accepted by God. While all "headquarters" should be in heaven, there are many of them on earth. Such sectarianism also goes beyond denominationalism. It is a spirit which prevails to shut out part of the body of Christ, and is a breeding ground for a "holier than thou" attitude; because men concentrate more on separating themselves from others, rather than believing God to separate them unto Himself. The secret of true separation is the preeminent love for Christ, which causes us to be willing to go without the camp bearing His reproach. It is a deep and intimate relationship which concentrates our attention on going TO Him rather than just separating ourselves FROM something or someone.

Israel was not defeated by the curses of Balaam, but they did succumb to his subtle action of drawing them away from absolute separation to God. Likewise, many in Christendom have bowed to the religiousness of this age and the organizational democratic structures of men, rather than accepting and heeding the Voice, or Word of God. Those of Pergamos, the "much-married" ones, are those who denied their first, or preeminent love for Christ, by claiming the headships of other husbands.

"The Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel." 25:4. God went after those in authority. By this we can infer that it was the leaders who were responsible for Israel's actions here. Likewise, it is the leaders in Christendom today, who will receive the greater judgment for failing to point men to Christ, but instead, to themselves and their organizations. Paul sought to hold Christ before men and to teach them to cultivate a personal relationship with Him. He wanted no man to look with awe upon him, as we read: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." I Cor. 3:6, 7.

During the atmosphere of judgment and mourning, we read of a man who blatantly exploits the flesh. "And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." 25:6. This was an act of rebellion, not one of ignorance. "And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel." 25:7, 8. Phinehas is commended for this act in Psalm 106:30, 31. He speaks of spiritual priests today, who wield the javelin of God's Word against such unrighteousness. This doesn't mean that we can "straighten out" all of the evils in Christendom, but it does mean that as we use the javelin of the Word in our own sphere, against this very devastating doctrine of Balaam, we can turn the plague of judgment from ourselves and those around us, who will listen.

The faithful priest receives further reward for his actions. "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." 25:11-13.

True priests, of whom Phinehas is typical, will qualify for special rewards. We see them in Revelation Four as the living ones, full of eyes, before and behind, and within, who rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come." Rev. 4:6-8. Those eyes behind, have been opened to all the principles, dealings, and operations of who God was. The eyes before, see future purposes of Him who is to come. The eyes within, refer to Him who is, and they are able to comprehend the depth and beauty of His workings in the present. In all of it, they are in absolute agreement and harmony with God. They have bowed wholeheartedly to the headship of Christ, denying all others, and thus fall down before Him, giving Him glory, honor, and thanks. Their reward for such zeal is also a covenant of peace; an everlasting priesthood, as they will reign with the Prince of Peace.

"Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites. And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he was head over a people, and a chief house in Midian." 25:14, 15. How often in Scripture do we read of those in high place

(or, their children), who get into trouble. Such a place, at times, seems almost to be a curse. James says, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation (judgment)." 3:1.

It is also the pattern in other occasions, when leaders rose up in open rebellion against God or His ordained leader, such as Miriam, Korah, and the men of renown in Numbers 16. It is also illustrated by Eli and his sons (I Samuel 4), as well as King Uzziah in II Chron. 26. Surely, we realize that these people are more the target of Satanic attack than others, even as Jesus told Peter: "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:31, 32. Satan knew, as did Jesus, that Peter could have a tremendous effect on his brethren, and so he went after him.

It is not difficult to imagine that even the families of such leaders would also be a greater target for Satanic attack. Paul spoke expressly to bishops and deacons - those that rule well (i.e., "stand before, preside, practice"); "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." I Tim. 3:5. If such a ruler neglects his own house, because he is too involved with ruling others, the enemy will most assuredly attack this neglected area. So, it is surely with reason that we find trouble in the houses of many of God's leaders, and must continually be on guard against this very deceitful and devastating foe.

The consequences were severe in our chapter, but once again, it shows that God will not overlook such blatant rebellion, and most assuredly, the spiritual fornication. Immediately the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, "Vex the Midianites, and smite them: For they vex you with their wives, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake." 25:17, 18.

In due time, judgment will be as swift on those who are guilty of taking a place that belongs only to Christ, as we read in the letter to the church at Pergamos: "Repent, or I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Rev. 2:16. The final demise of this whoredom is found in Revelation 17 and 18.

THE CREATOR

He takes the scent of the softening ground
Where the first green blade pricks through,
He takes the reddening maple bough
Aslant against the blue,
He takes the cheer in the robin's song
And the flash of the bluebird's wing,
The joy of prisoned things set free -
And of these He makes the spring.
He takes the sheen of the waving wheat
Where the slow cloud-shadows pass,
He takes the brook's soft rippling tune
And the daisied meadow grass,
He takes the swish of the mower's scythe
In the noontide's hot, white glare,
The joy of labor and growing things -
And makes the summerfair
He takes the years - the old, the new,
With their changing scenes and brief,
The close-shut bud and the fruiting bough,
Flower and fading leaf,
Grace and glory and lack of loss,
The song, the sigh, the strife,
The joy of hope and the hope fulfilled -
And makes of the years a life.
He takes our lives and the sum of them,
His will and the will of man,
Evil and good and dream and deed,

His purpose and our plan,
The thwarted lives and the crippled lives
And the things that give them worth,
The joy of life and the pain of life -
And makes the heavens and earth.
- Annie Johnson Flint

THE SECOND GENERATION NUMBERED

Chapter Twenty-six

"And it came to pass after the plague, that the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel." 26:1, 2.

We will see later in the chapter, all but two of the first generation have passed off the scene, of whom God had said, "Your carcasses shall die in the wilderness." It seems that the plague of chapter 25 took all that remained of that original generation which had come out of Egypt. God's purpose in taking Israel into the land of Canaan has not changed, however. It is always so. God is never taken by surprise. He was not caught unawares when Adam fell and plunged all of his progeny into sin and destruction. Likewise here, God is not at a loss.

The new generation which is now numbered, speaks of the New Creation, the actual recipient of the promises given to Abraham. We note, once again, as in the first chapter, that it is the men of war who are numbered. We, too, must be numbered for warfare as we begin to take our place in the heavenlies. Like Israel, it is given to us by promise, but we must war a good warfare to actually inherit and enjoy it. We note, too, that Israel was numbered for such inheritance BEFORE their going over. We also, lay hold of our land by faith in order that we may enjoy it for eternity, after all enemies are literally displaced.

Reuben was the first tribe numbered, totaling 43,730. Reuben had four sons, Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. It is these families which are numbered here. The meaning of their names have great application to our lives. Hanoch, meaning "dedicated," speaks of full dedication to God's promises. Pallu, "wonderful," tells of such wonderful blessings and purposes in the man of faith. Hezron, "the enclosed," speaks of our place of absolute security. Carmi, "my vineyard," represents the fruitfulness in our lives. With these characteristics present, the tribe of Reuben had the potential to boldly go in and possess the land. God has also given us the power to take what He has provided for us. However, just because the potential is there, men do not always believe God - 26:8, 9. Dothan and Abiram, two of those mentioned in chapter 16, were the grandsons of Pallu. Their grandfather may have been wonderful, but these two, who were famous in the congregation, were filled with rebellion, and strove against Moses. As previously noted, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them at the same time the 250 who offered incense, were consumed with fire. 26:10.

The next verse tells us that children do not always follow in the wicked ways of their fathers. "Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not." Evidently these children heeded Moses warning in Num. 16:16 - "Depart from the tents of these wicked men . . . lest ye be consumed in all their sins."

Simeon is the next tribe considered, numbering 22,200. (26:12-14). The names of his five sons are also freighted with meaning for the warrior. Nemuel, meaning "they were made to slumber of God," tells us of the perfect sleep, or rest, which God can give, even in the midst of ferocious enemies. Jamin, "the right hand," tells of power, even of Christ, the right hand of God, who ministers victory to us. Jachin, "He will establish," shows God's intention for the man of war to be established in the truth, even as a tree planted by the rivers of water. Zerah, "a rising, or sun rising" definitely puts us on resurrection ground, the dawning of a new day of victory. Shaul, "asked for," implies that we are no accident, but rather, asked for; wanted and prepared by God through redemption.

Gad, numbering 40,500, was the father of five sons, who also describe some characteristics of one given to warfare in the heavenlies (26:15-18). Haggi, "my feast," expresses the sweet communion with God, feasting on His Word, which must be ours to sustain us through long hours of battle. Shuni, meaning "my rest," again describes the coveted place of security and rest found at the throne of grace. Ozni follows and has a close relationship with Shuni. His name means "my

hearing," and tells of one who is always alert to the voice which comes from between the cherubim covering the mercy seat, or throne of grace. Eri seems to be the result of all this. His name means, "my awakening or stirring," and describes that dynamic force which comes to us as we wait on the Lord. Following this, is glorious victory represented by Arod, which means, "I shall subdue."

The sons of Judah are recorded in 26:19-22, and a portion of their history is recalled. Judah is of special interest, for it is this tribe from which our Lord sprang. Sometimes, we may tire of names and genealogies, but God has gone to great lengths to preserve them, and surely He has a purpose in doing so. At least part of the reason for such recording is to preserve the lineage of Christ.

The lineage of Judah is one which men might have hidden, but God uses all things to glorify His name and magnify redemption. Er, "awakening, or stirring" and Onan, "their iniquity," indicate by their conduct in Genesis 38 that they were stirred up against God because they were controlled by wickedness. Wherefore, God slew them, leaving only Shelah, "quietness, request." Shelah's name speaks of the quiet and restful spirit which we may have in Christ, making known our petitions to Him; but this is not the line from whence Jesus came.

Shelah, the third son of Judah was to be given to Tamar, Er's wife. However, Judah, fearful that this son would also be slain by the Lord, as his brethren were, refused to give Shelah in marriage to Tamar as he had promised to do. Tamar played the harlot, deceived her father-in-law, and became pregnant by him. The two sons of our present chapter, Pharez and Zerah, were products of this union. How interesting to note that Tamar is one of five women in Jesus' genealogy (Matt. 1:3). It is amazing that it was her sin which brought her to this place. This is the glorious story of redemption. It was our sin, not our righteousness, which brought us to Christ.

Insofar as Pharez and Zerah are concerned, the meanings of their names have an application to our lives. Pharez, "breach, or breaking forth," was so named because he broke forth ahead of his twin brother when all indication was that Zerah should be the firstborn. As recorded in Genesis 38, a scarlet thread was tied around Zerah's hand to mark him as the firstborn; however, his hand was quickly withdrawn and Pharez was born. All of this has beautiful application to Israel and their relationship with Christ. Zerah, "a rising (of light)," shows Christ momentarily at His first advent when He accomplished the work of redemption, figured by the scarlet thread. Because of Israel's rejection, however, Pharez, broke forth and Israel as a nation has been set aside. Zerah will ultimately be "born" and the Sun will arise upon this nation.

The individual sons of Shelah and Zerah are not mentioned, but Pharez' line is, and gives us instruction. Pharez may represent the breach of the flesh, or old creation, but hope springs eternal. Out of this Chaos, God will bring forth Hezron, "the enclosed one," and also Hamul, "pitted." It is when we, like Paul, recognize that "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing ... O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" that we are enclosed in the loving arms of Christ, and come to know the greater depths and joys of Divine Grace. The number of the tribe of Judah is 76,500, and as seen in Joshua, they need a sizable army to take their inheritance, which was the largest.

Issachar is the next tribe. 26:23-25. They number 64,300. Issachar has four sons, which speak of two sides of our experience in laying hold of our place in the beavenlies. Tola, meaning "worm" (used in dyeing crimson), and Puah, meaning "scattered" and also, "pained" (as a woman in travail), speak of the adverse, humbling side of our experience. It represents those painful devastating times in our lives, when we, like many of God's worthies of faith, are delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. The two other sons tell us of our place of comfort in Christ. Jashub means "he will return," and refers to those times after severe testing and heartache, when we see the Christ who has been hidden for a time from our view. Shimron reinforces this application, for his name means "guardian," and tells of one who is an ever-present help in time of need, whether we can see Him, or not.

Zebulun, "dwelling," is the next tribe, numbering 60,500. All three of his sons are in perfect victorious harmony with their father, dwelling in the land of promise. Sered, "the trembling one," is the perfect background for Elon, "might;" for we learn that "when I am weak, then am I strong." It is then that we find genuine strength in Christ. Jahleel is next, meaning "the hope of God," and it is in Him that such a dwelling tribe discovers, by experience, that there is always hope and victory in Christ.

The sons of Joseph are listed next, and as important as this man was in Israel's history, there

was not a tribe of Joseph among the twelve. Each of his sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, are announced as heads of their respective tribes. It is interesting to note, however, that in Revelation seven, where we read of the 144,000 being sealed, Manasseh and Joseph are given, rather than Manasseh and Ephraim. In our present chapter, Manasseh's lineage is traced, first through his firstborn, Machir. Machir, meaning "salesman" through the idea of selling one's self into slavery, signifies a full surrender, which is what God must have from us today. His son, Gilead, means "heap of witness" and is representative of all the witness of God's promise to one who is totally surrendered to Him. Next follows Jezer, the son of Gilead. His name means "helpless" and again, signifies one who is shut up completely to the grace of God. Jezer is the father of six, and it seems that all of them spring from one who knows the grace of God in truth, insofar as experience is concerned. Helek, "portion;" Asriel, "I shall be prince of God;" Shechem, "shoulder;" and Shemida, "my name He knows," all tell of the glory side of our experience as we perceive the portion which is ours because of redemption.

The prospect of being a prince of God almost overwhelms us at times, but such a place is ours for the taking. The shoulder, in Scripture, always speaks of strength, meaning the strength of Christ. Finally, it is by grace that we come to realize that we are so intimately known of Him. The next two sons, however, picture the adverse side of the way of grace. Hopher, "a pit, or shame," expresses the humbling experiences which God uses in our lives to magnify His grace in us. Zelophehad, "shadow of fear" reminds us that we are still in a body of limitation and subject, in part, to the human emotion of fear. We note it is only the "shadow" of fear, and therefore, we are not to be controlled and devastated by it.

Zelophehad had no sons, but had five daughters. As we will see later, these daughters were very persistent in seeking their inheritance. One half of the tribe of Manasseh settled on the wilderness side of Jordan, which is figurative of those who settle far short of their blessing, in the heavenlies. The daughters of Zelophehad were of those who went on into Canaan, and desired the choicest of God's provisions for themselves. The names of these daughters present the two contrasting sides of our experience when we purpose to lay hold of all of God's blessing.

Mahlah, meaning "to be afflicted, or sick" and Hoglah, "the feast has languished," call to mind that the experience of the overcomer is by no means a bed of roses. These are offset, however, by Noah, "rest" and Milcah, "queen," and Tirzah, "she will delight." These three tell us of the grace which is sufficient, even when we are not always delivered as we would like. Our spirits soar beyond the suffering, to behold God's purpose of making us a queen who will reign with Jesus and delight His heart. We must maintain such characteristics, if we are going to take our full inheritance in the heavenlies. Manasseh had many more families than some of the other tribes, but their overall number was only 52,700. (26:34)

Ephraim is the next tribe named. 26:35-37. Three sons and one grandson head the families of this tribe. Shuthelah, meaning "freshly appointed, resembling rejuvenation," is a fitting name to represent the invigorated new creation going into Canaan. His son, Eran, continues the thought along this line, meaning, "awaking, or stirring up," and shows one who is excited about the blessing of God. Becher, the next son of Ephraim, is easily seen as one being associated with his fruitful father. His name signifies "dromedary" (a camel with good speed). He shows to us one eager to produce the fruitful works of righteousness, which accompany the overcoming Christian life. Finally, Tahan, "thou wilt encamp," tells of one with whom God has encamped in full fellowship. The families of Ephraim comprise 32,500.

Benjamin continues the genealogies recorded here, numbering 45,600. 26:38-41. He is often called "little Benjamin," yet at this point, he does outnumber Ephraim. Benjamin means "son of my right hand," and is typical of the reigning tribe, sharing closely with Christ in His glory. His sons and grandsons point out the many varied experiences which accompany such an overcoming walk.

Bela, "swallowing, or devouring," and Shupham, "their barrenness," both tell of some very devastating times that happen along the path to glory. Sometimes, we feel as did many of the worthies of faith, that we are being "swallowed" by certain situations. We feel the barrenness of our experiences, and wonder where the fruitfulness and refreshments of God's blessings are. Ashbel, "a man in God," Ahiram, "brother of lifting up," and Hupham, "their covering," all indicate the positive side of our experience. It is during the depressing times that we soar away in spirit, knowing that we are a "man in God" despite outward difficulties. We are lifted up by Ahiram and covered comfortably by Hupham. The two sons of Bela complete the tribe of Benjamin. Their

names, Ard and Naaman mean "I shall subdue" and "pleasantness," respectively. Both tell of the victory which emerges from the "swallowed up" experience expressed by their father.

Dan occupies the tenth spot in this numbering process, with only one son recorded. Shuham, "their pit, humbling," sounds almost like a prophecy for the tribe of Dan. He is nowhere to be found in Revelation seven, and in Judges 18, we find that these people were still seeking an inheritance, because they had never laid hold of that which had been allotted them. In fact, according to judges 1:34, the Amorites had forced them into the mountains and would not let them come down. We can see the value of Shuham in our spiritual experience, when we take the times of humbling from the Lord; but apparently, Dan was never an overcoming tribe.

Asher is our next consideration, with five sons and one daughter. It is Asher, "the happy one" whose offspring beautifully express Rom. 8:18 - "for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Beriah, "in evil," is the only one who describes that from which we would recoil. Jimna, "right handed," speaks of the strength given to us. Jeshui means "He will justify me." Heber, "beyond, the other side as having crossed over," tells of that beautiful land of promise which is ours to enjoy, as though we had already possessed it. Malchiel, "my king is God" and Sarah, "princess," both tell of reigning with Christ in glory. There were 53,400 numbered of Asher.

Naphtai concludes the numbering with a total of 45,400. All of his sons are in keeping with the meaning of their father's name, "wrestling." Jahzeel, "God will divide" (apportion the inheritance). Guni, "my defender," Jezer, "imagination, form, purpose" (speaking of God's purpose to lead them into the land), and Shillem, "recompense," all tell of the glorious rewards awaiting those who are willing to wrestle against principalities and powers for their inheritance.

"These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names." 26:51-53. The men of war were those who were numbered, but as we see here, it was not simply to determine the size of their army; it was also for the purpose of allotting their inheritance. "To the many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him." 26:54.

It would be foolish to give more land than they could possibly care for, and equally foolish to crowd a tribe into a portion too small to bear them; but even with these considerations, the land was to be divided by lot, meaning that God would select the inheritance of each tribe. He knew their needs and capabilities for attending to the land and He could divide accordingly. In relation to ourselves, the whole land is before us. We have been blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in the heavenlies. God has allotted all of it to us, for He has made every provision that we should be more than conquerors.

"And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families " 26:57-62. The tribe of Levi was excluded from war. There were three sons born to Levi, but according to verse 58, there were a number of families that originated from these three. Their line is not given completely here, but according to Ex. 6:17-19, the Libnites were of Gershon. Kohath was the father of Amram and Hebron. The Mahlites and Mushites were of Merari.

Moses' genealogy is given in verse 59, and you will note that he was of the family of Kohath, the very tribe which rose up against him, Amram being his father. His mother, Jochebed, was actually his father's aunt, as we read in Ex. 6:20, that Amram married his father's sister. Of that union, Aaron, Moses, and Miriam were born. Aaron begat four sons, two of which died when they offered strange fire before the Lord..

The Levites numbered 23,000 males, and were numbered from one month of age instead of twenty years, as were the men of war. It is again stipulated that they had no inheritance given to them, but we shall see later that they received cities and suburbs from all of the other tribes.

"But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. For the Lord had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun." 26:64, 65. These who fell in the wilderness, had the provision and the opportunity, but were robbed of their inheritance, only because of unbelief. God has also set this glorious "Canaan" before us and only a lack of faith will deprive us of its blessing. Joshua and Caleb are both proofs of the fact that faith is the victory.

- * A sharp tongue is no indication of a keen mind.
- * It is nice to be important. but it is more important to be nice.

A NEW LEADER CHOSEN

Chapter Twenty-seven

"Then came the daughters of Zelophehad . . . and they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, Our father died in the wilderness . . . and had no sons. Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father. " 27:1-4.

The first eleven verses are really a continuation of our former chapter, the subject of inheritance. As is documented, all inheritance passed from father to son. The problem here is that Zelophehad had no sons, but five daughters. They have a tremendous appreciation for and a great desire to possess the land of their father. We learn that their father was not in the company who perished with Korah. By this, we can only infer that those who were a part of that rebellion lost their inheritance. At any rate, these five ladies have a very legitimate query - "Why should the name of our father be done away because he had no son?"

Moses is indeed a wise leader. Not knowing what to do in this unique case, he "brought their cause before the Lord." 27:5. Rather than appointing a committee to study the issue, he enquired of the Lord. God was intreated of these daughters. He always appreciates and delights in those who are willing to take their inheritance. He loved Jacob and hated Esau, because Esau despised his birthright and also the inheritance which went with it. Jacob, on the other hand, went to great lengths to obtain the choicest of blessings.

The daughters of Zelophehad seem to have that same spirit of appreciation for their inheritance. Wherefore, God said, "The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them." 27:7. God's answer is simple and to the point. However, the case is not completely closed. Another question arises later in this book, but once again God has the answer, and it too, is of great spiritual benefit to us.

In our present study, God takes this opportunity to give a very detailed review of inheritance. Verses 8-11 tell us that a man's inheritance is given to his daughter in the event no son is born to receive it. If he have no children at all, his brethren are the beneficiaries. If he has no brothers, his next of kin is the recipient.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, get thee up unto this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered." 27:12, 13. In one sense, we have reach a very sad time in Israel's history, but be it ever remembered that God does not do things as man does. His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts. As we saw earlier in this book, chapter 20, we receive much spiritual insight from Moses' "apparent judgment." He is typical of the law and can never lead anyone to the promised land. The closest he can come is to survey its beauty from Abarim, the regions beyond.

As for Moses himself, he was, in reality, promoted. Not only that, but his response to God's decree gives us important insight into the character of this great shepherd of Israel. He does not bow to human or fleshly weakness of self-pity. The predominant concern of Moses is for a new leader for the children of Israel. It was not God, but Moses who first suggests this: Moses spoke unto the Lord, saying, "let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh set a man over the congregation." 27:15, 16. He reminds us of David who was not allowed to build the temple, but this great king and man of God, spent much of his later years in gathering the materials and financing this glorious project. (I Chronicles 22). God is not surprised by such a request from Moses, for He most assuredly imported this desire to Moses. Neither is He without resources to answer the cry of Moses' heart.

Joshua, whom we have seen before as a man of faith, is now declared "a man in whom is the Spirit." 27:18. He has been associated with Moses and has been in training for many years. In his earlier years, he mistook Israel's singing and dancing around the golden calf, for a noise of war. (Ex. 32:17, 18). He was unable at that time to distinguish between the sounds of the "flesh and the spirit." Later on, it was Joshua who advised Moses to forbid Eldad and Medad from prophesying, because they refused to go into the tabernacle. (11:26-29). Despite such mistakes,

Joshua was maturing. God is now ready to use him.

He should be an encouraging example for us. The mistakes which we make, are stepping stones to greater purposes that God has for us. Joshua has come of age, in the spiritual sense, and an awesome responsibility is now placed upon him. "Lay thine hand upon him," is the instruction given to Moses. It meant then what it means today - to ordain him. Paul warned Timothy, "lay hands suddenly on no man." No man is to be ordained too soon in their Christian walk. Joshua has been in training forty years - the number of testing - before he is finally ordained.

"Set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight." 27:19. For all practical purposes, Joshua is to be a political leader - "to go in before them and who may lead them out and who may bring them in." 27:17. Eleazar is the spiritual leader "who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of the Urim before the Lord." 27:21. It is interesting to note that although a priest is present, there are no sacrifices offered here when Joshua is ordained. However, when we realize that at the time of which Joshua is figurative, the cross is past. When Joshua assumed the reins of leadership, we are indeed put on resurrection ground, as we have been raised up together and seated with Him in the heavenlies. (Ephesians 2:6).

"And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient." 27:20. The transition from the leadership of Moses to that of Joshua, is undoubtedly the smoothest in Scripture. Moses' honor is no doubt the reason. We do not read of any uprising against Joshua. Throughout the history of the kings, when new leaders came to the throne, it seems there were always dissidents who would not accept the new leader. Even Solomon's peaceful reign had difficulty in the early years. In his son's tenure, he lost ten tribes. When Saul, the people's choice, was inaugurated, there were some who despised him and refused to bring him presents; even though Samuel's leadership had already been rejected. It happened also in the lives of spiritual leaders, as when the mantle of Elijah was transferred to Elisha. This "new prophet" had not been in office very long, until the mocking children appeared, and Elisha called down judgment upon them. As far as we have recorded, Joshua had to contend with none of this. He was regarded as the leader, and Israel was obedient to his command. If men are going to take the inheritance given to them in the heavenlies, such blind obedience, such absolute honor, must also be placed upon Christ.

Moses was faithful to carry out all the requirements regarding his successor. He Placed him before Eleazar the priest, (his connecting link to the will of God), and before the congregation. He ordained him and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded. 27:22, 23. The exact charge is not given here, but in light of verse 21, there were specific details of going forth to battle - "at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." 27:21. This is also intimated in Deut. 3:28: "But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him: for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see."

IN THE VALLEY

I walked one day down a mountain path
Pondering my troubled life,
Not seeing the beauty all around
Just thinking of the care and strife.
My head was bend, my mind was low,
My eyes were on myself alone.
I stumbled on that lonely path,
I stumbled on a stepping stone.
I stopped, I looked, my eyes beheld
The beauty all around me.
I cried, "Oh Lord, Oh how I need
To get my eyes upon Thee!"
Now I walk up the mountain path
My eyes to God above.
The care and strife are long since gone
Since I'm covered by His love.
- Gretta Viney

ORDER OF THE OFFERINGS FOR THE NEW GENERATION

Chapter Twenty-eight

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, and my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season." 28:1-2.

Chapters 28 and 29 record the various offerings and feast days which were to be observed by Israel during the year. These offerings are covered in detail in Leviticus, but are repeated here because the first generation to whom they were given, has perished in the wilderness. These instructions are given to the new generation which, as previously noted, speaks marvelously of the new creation. God never repeats Himself unnecessarily, and so it is here. He wants no mistake or misunderstanding concerning His purposes for Israel. He is especially jealous of these offerings because they typify Christ and His work of redemption; therefore, everything must be as perfectly ordered as possible.

The first offering considered is the daily burnt offering. "And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even." 28:3-4. This offering was to be continually burning on the altar and is the basis for all the other offerings. Since it was always burning, all other offerings were laid on top of it. This offering, being completely burned to God, speaks of Christ's complete obedience unto death. That perfect submission to His Father's will, was the basis for all the other accomplishments at Calvary, figured by the meal, peace, sin, and trespass offerings.

If Jesus had not been totally consumed by His zeal for His Father's will, He could have in no wise accomplished all the different aspects of redemption. The fact that it was offered both morning and evening, speaks of the fact that the Cross is continually fresh before God. It was not allowed to "burn itself out" and tells us that it is an "eternal offering"- as sweet today as when Christ was offered on the Cross 2000 years ago.

The lamb itself portrays the meek and submissive spirit of Christ. He was not a wild animal which required skill to capture, but rather, a meek and lowly individual, readily available to all who would simply lay hands on Him. The other requirements in these lambs are also noteworthy. They must be without spot, indicative of the perfect unblemished character of Jesus. They must also be of prime age, of the first year, even as Christ was in the very prime of His life when He gave it up. He was not so young and naive that He was unaware of what He was doing, nor was He so old that He was ready to die a natural death.

The meal offering is considered next. It was not a blood offering, but rather, an appendage to the burnt offering. According to verse five, it was composed of a tenth part of an ephah of flour. The meal offering expresses the humanity of Christ because it comes forth out of the ground. It was mingled with oil to portray the fact that Christ was human, but born of the Spirit. Both of these offerings were to be "for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord." 28:6.

Such fire, in Scripture, is always figurative of the fiery suffering which Christ endured in His obedience to His Father's will.

"And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink offering." 28:7. The drink offering was presented on various occasions and is symbolic here of a complete pouring out unto the will of God, with no offer of resistance. In this place the liquid is strong wine which simply tells of the invigorating, intoxicating life of Christ, which Jesus so freely poured out to His Father. Such a spirit of obedience is the greatest form of worship and communion; therefore, "in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord." This same procedure was to be repeated morning and evening; again, reminding us that such an offering was never to become stale or meaningless.

"And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof." 28:9. It seems that while all Israel was required to rest on the sabbath day, the priest was given double duty, in offering two lambs and their respective drink offerings. This is also significant, for the sabbath tells of absolute rest in Christ. The lambs, the priest, and the day itself, are all symbolic of Christ, and serve to remind us that He offered Himself unto God and all work of redemption was accomplished by Him. He needed no help from men; therefore, on this sabbath of rest, all but the priest were privileged to

rest.

"And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt offering unto the Lord; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot; and three tenth deals of flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth deals of flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil, for one ram; and a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meal offering unto one lamb; for a burnt offering for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord." 28:11-13. This particular burnt offering was evidently offered twelve times a year, at the beginning of each month. (28:14). The special emphasis in these verses is on the three grades of offering allowed, and their respective meal offerings. The bullock which was the greatest of the offerings, is a picture of Christ in His absolute and complete surrender to His Father's will. In addition, this larger animal tells of a greater capacity to accomplish the work of redemption. Both the ram and lamb are figurative of Christ's obedience unto death; however, the size of the animal is indicative of their respective abilities to accomplish the full work of redemption, planned by God.

These animals tell of our respective comprehension of what He has accomplished. As we grow in grace and knowledge of Him, we gain a greater revelation and appreciation of Christ as the bullock, which was so capable of performing all the provisions of redemption. By way of contrast, our first comprehension of Him may be only of "the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." This is wonderful, but Christ accomplished so much more than that. The ram is also figurative of complete surrender, but again, being larger than the lamb, shows a greater comprehension. The meal offering for all of these is different. For the bullock, it is composed of three tenth deals. The ram required two, and the lamb, a several tenth deal, or only a portion of a tenth deal. So it is. The greater our comprehension of Christ and His work of redemption, the greater revelation we have of the fact of His humanity. Jesus experienced the emotions of a man, the weaknesses, anxieties, and frustrations of man. He knew what temptation was, as He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. He overcame all these things while being a man. He performed miracles, as a man with faith in God.

Verse fourteen follows this same pattern, as the drink offering was given in direct proportion to its respective burnt offering. The bullock was accompanied by half an hin of wine, the drink offering for the ram was the third part of an hin, and with the lamb was offered the fourth part of an hin. The larger the offering, the more wine presented with it. Wine, in Scripture, not only speaks of Christ's own refreshing and invigorating life poured out unto the Father, but also of the great exhilarating joy we receive as we are able to comprehend greater aspects of the work of redemption. Leviticus records a fourth grade of the burnt offering which was that of a bird. This speaks of Christ as a heavenly being.

"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto the Lord shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering." 28:15. We infer that this sin offering was also offered at the beginning of every month along with the burnt offering. The sin offering was for the most part offered to atone for some specific sin which had been committed. It is most often a goat which is offered, teaching us that the death of the goat substituted for the actual offender. Thus the goat becomes a symbol for Christ's substitutional death on the cross. He became the "goat" for all mankind, dying in their stead and feeling the awful guilt and judgment of God upon sin.

"And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the passover of the Lord." 28:16. Through the year, seven feasts are recorded on the Jewish Calendar. The passover is the first one, for it was in this month (Abib) that the nation of Israel actually began, while they were yet in Egypt. God brought them into blood-relation with Himself, as He commanded the passover lamb be slain and its blood be put upon the door posts. God had sent the judgment of the death of the firstborn upon Egypt, but "the blood shall be to you a token upon the houses where ye are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt." (Ex. 12:13). When Israel observed the passover, they acknowledged that it was only the blood which protected them. It was not because of their heritage, nor their righteousness, but their faith in the blood of the lamb. Such is still the lesson for us today.

"And in the fifteenth day of the month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten." 28:17. This is the second of the yearly feasts observed by Israel, known as the feast of unleavened bread. Israel partook of the Passover and was immediately thrust out of Egypt on their way to the new land. "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened; because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry,

neither had they prepared for themselves any victual." Exodus 12:39. From this verse, it might seem that the only reason God instructed them to eat unleavened bread is because they had not time to prepare otherwise, but in reality, this was only another circumstance used to advantage, to present spiritual truth. Just as the passover is symbolic of Christ who shed His blood to redeem us, the unleavened bread is also figurative of a very important part of our lives. Leaven, in Scripture, speaks of evil practice and doctrine, and such was absolutely not found in Christ. The seven-day diet of unleavened bread immediately following the Passover, tells us of our journey into God's glorious riches and being sustained only by this "unleavened" Christ. Just as Israel put blood on the door posts and set forth on their journey, feasting only on unleavened bread, so we also must find our all sufficiency in Christ. The number seven, in Scripture, is the number of perfection. It did not mean that only 7 days were required to reach Canaan, but rather tells us of the perfect acceptance and appropriation which we must have, of the work of redemption and the holy life of Christ. The daily manner of this feast is described in verses 18-25. It begins with a holy convocation, meaning a public meeting or assembly. That is, all Israel were called out and must observe it as a day of rest wherein no servile work is done. Instead, "ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering." 28:19.

This lesson is the same as we have seen a number of times before. Man can in no wise help with the work of redemption. He must rest and depend upon the all sufficient work of the priest, shut up entirely to the grace of God. The offerings of the unblemished bullock, ram, and lambs, along with their respective drink offerings, are figurative of the perfection and holiness of Christ and teach spiritual lessons. The sin offering is also included in this feast of unleavened bread, and the goat, the animal of substitution, is offered. 28:22. This tells us that the sin question must be settled, atonement must be made on the sins of man, covered by the blood, before there can be any feasting on the holy life of Christ. The order of these offerings was repeated daily, but it seems, according to verses 18 and 25, that a holy convocation was held only on the first and seventh days of the feast.

The third and fourth feast are covered in the remaining verses of this chapter. The feast of firstfruits is symbolic of Christ the firstfruit of the resurrection. This is the time when the earliest fruits of harvest began to come in, and like the resurrection of Christ, is the evidence of more to follow. The "new meat" offering also mentioned in verse 26 is, in reality, a part of the feast of weeks (Pentecost), which occurred 50 days after the feast of firstfruits. (Lev. 23:15-16). This new meal offering consisted of two wave loaves baked with leaven, and are figurative of the Day of Pentecost which came 50 days after Christ's resurrection. The "two wave loaves" of Jew and Gentile were baptized into one body by the power of the Holy Ghost. We note that they were not unleavened loaves, such as those used to portray the holy, sinless life of Christ, but rather, "baken with leaven." Leaven, or sin, was present, but being baked means that its power had been stopped in the lives of this new creation. These new loaves were then offered unto God. The holy convocation, the burnt offerings, meal offering, the goat of the sin offering, have the same meanings as seen earlier. It seems that many of the offerings were repetitive, but this only serves to show that God would continually hold redemption before men. None must ever be allowed to forget that entrance into God's blessing comes only through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

THE FEASTS, CONTINUED

Chapter Twenty-nine

"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you." 29:1.

Israel's feasts began in the first month of their year, with the Passover occurring on the fourteenth day of the month. The feast of unleavened bread began on the fifteenth day and lasted seven days. The feast of firstfruits undoubtedly occurred during the time of unleavened bread. It was the time when Israel brought the firstfruit of their harvest, which would have been barley. According to Exodus 9:31, the barley was in the ear, ready to be harvested about the time that Israel observed the passover and departed out of Egypt. The feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the feast of firstfruits, would have occurred in the third month.

Our present chapter records the feast of trumpets which came to pass in the seventh month, and speaks beautifully of the coming of Christ "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God." (1 Thess. 4:16). The four month interval between these last two feasts is

symbolic of this present church age, which began on the day of Pentecost and will culminate in the "seventh month" with the return of Christ.

As with the other feasts, they were to "have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work."

This cessation of labor is especially interesting here. This stipulation which accompanies virtually all of these feasts, tells us that only God can produce the changes in our lives wrought by redemption. However, it seems that men do not always rest in that finished work; some are continually trying to produce changes by their own efforts. In the day whereof we speak, however, it will be distinctly manifest; for only God can change the body. Over the years, man has made great strides in the field of medicine, and he continues to try for immortality; but he never has and never will, be able to glorify the body. As Paul declares in Phil. 3:21, we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, "who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby HE IS ABLE even to subdue all things unto Himself." And in I Cor. 15:51-52: "We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall all be changed." Thus we see the tremendous significance of doing no servile work during this day of blowing the trumpets.

"And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish." 29:2. Verses 3 and 4 are for the most part a repetition of instructions for the burnt and meal offerings which accompanied the previous feasts, and they signify the same teachings. However, the sin offering found in verse 5 is especially beautiful at this point. It was offered during other feast days, but since it was specifically offered for sin, we might wonder why it should be offered during such a day of gladness, as represented by the feast of trumpets. Here we are viewing the outward result of the sin offering. It shows that death has been annulled - "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:55). Today, we enjoy the victory over sin and many of its effects on the physical body, but in that day when we have a new body, changed like unto Christ's body of glory, the full victory of this sin offering will be realized.

LITTLE THINGS

Thank you, God, for all the simple things
That each day brings -
From sunshine in the morning,
That pushes back the dark as day is dawning,
Till twilight falls.
All through the busy hours we trace Thy hand,
Yet sometimes too dull to understand,
We think the gift too small.
Help us, God, to see Thy love that crowds
Each busy day,
And thank Thee more for simple things
We find along the way -
For little children romping round,
For birdsong, gay and happy sound,
Through sun and rain.
Friends to greet you, loved ones near,
Songs to share - perchance a tear,
For strength to work, for gift to play,
For fireside at the close of day.
- Eleanor Frey

"Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meal offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meal offering, and their drink offerings, according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord." 29:6. The offerings on these special feast days did not replace the daily sacrifice, and in this case, the offering at the beginning of the month. The daily sacrifice is a continuous reminder of the eternal sacrifice of Christ. The offering at the beginning of each month tells us that all beginnings must be based on Calvary; and so there are no shortcuts, even on these special days of celebration.

Israel's sixth feast was the great day of atonement ten days following the feast of trumpets. "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein." 29:7. This was, perhaps, the most important feast concerning Israel as a nation, for it was on this day that Israel's existence for the next year depended. This is the day of which Paul speaks in Heb. 9:7: "But into the second (veil) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people." In effect, this offering rolled the sins of Israel forward for one more year until the coming of Christ, when He atoned for all the sins of mankind for "by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12. The intricate details of this day as recorded in Leviticus 16, are omitted here. It is important to note, however, that along with the offerings, we shall note that two goats were presented alive before the priest. Lots were cast and the Lord's lot was slain. This figures Christ as our substitute, died before the Lord. The other goat was called the scapegoat and was let go into a wilderness uninhabited after all the sins of Israel were confessed upon his head. This shows us the fact that man's need was met, as Christ bore our sins into "no-man's land" never to be found again. "As far as the east is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Psalm 103:7. "And their sins will I remember no more." Heb. 10:17. Isaiah declares, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." 38:17. So it is that on this great day of atonement, the righteous demands of a holy God are satisfied and the sins of His helpless creatures are removed. "And ye shall afflict your souls." 29:7. The word "afflict" used here, is not given in conjunction with any of the other offerings. It is peculiar to this solemn day of atonement and literally means "to depress, or look down, even to the point of browbeating." The same word is used to describe Israel's treatment by those who oppressed them. Here it means that they must be in absolute and total submission, doing nothing for themselves. They are to have no mind or motivation or ambition of their own on this day. All must be completely surrendered to the will and authority of God, who alone can accomplish such a work of redemption.

Likewise today, men must realize that salvation is of the Lord. They must literally "beat down, or browbeat" their own impulses to help Him in the matter. It is all of grace to be sure. The offerings, along with their meal offerings and drink offerings, are described in verses 8 to 11, and are identical to the other feast days. The only exception is that "one kid of the goats for a sin offering" was offered "beside the sin offering of atonement." This is undoubtedly the special sin offering for the Lord, which we described earlier.

The seventh and final feast of the Jewish year is recorded in the remaining verses of chapter 29. These instructions are much different than those given in Leviticus 23. There, the emphasis seems to be on Israel's seven-day stay in booths, made from boughs of trees (Lev. 23:40-42). This simply signifies that God did not need walled cities and sturdy houses to protect them. They were shut up to God's power, and during the Millenium Age, after they have confided in the "strong" protection of the nations, which have failed them, they will realize that they are preserved only by the power of God.

The record in our present chapter emphasizes the offerings which were offered during an eight-day period, and once again, we see that Numbers lives up to its name. From the first day through the seventh, there is a daily offering of fourteen lambs and two rams, one kid of the goats for a sin offering, beside the continual burnt offering. All of these are offered, along with their respective meal and drink offerings. Each day is identical with the exception of one prominent detail. Beginning with the first day, there is a count down in the number of bullocks which are offered. On the first day 13 are sacrificed. Each day thereafter, one less is offered.

God does not do such things unnecessarily and so it is here. This seven day period seems to represent the seven dispensations in which God has expressed the story of redemption. On the first day, corresponding with the age of innocence, "ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord thirteen bullocks." 29:13. Thirteen according to men and their superstition, is supposedly an unlucky number. According to the Hebrew language, however, it is made up of two words; one meaning "ten", the other "three."

"Ten" in Scripture, means responsibility according to ability, and we often think of it in a rather negative way, of men being shut up to their own strength and ability. This is evident in the ten commandments. The first four commandments outline man's responsibility to God. The other six, his obligations to man. In our chapter, three are added and this most assuredly casts a different light on things. "Three" is God's number, and we can see clearly that He has come to the aid of

man with this glorious plan of redemption. The number "thirteen" is found in the same context in the book of Esther. Haman sought to destroy all the Jews in the Medo-Persian empire. He cast Pur, a gambling device, and decided by such divining, that the thirteenth day of the month Adar would be the most advantageous time to accomplish it. It seemed indeed, to be a very unhealthy day to be a Jew.

In Esther 9:1 we read of God's intervention in the matter: "Now in the twelfth month that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them)." In the age of innocence, man was placed in a beautiful garden with only one restriction. The beauty of this is that God was on the scene with redemption before His frail creatures violated this one decree. God knew that man would fall and He had already come to his aid. On the second day, twelve bullocks were offered. This second day corresponds with the Age of Conscience which began immediately after Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. "And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew they were naked." (Gen. 3:7). The number twelve is God's number of perfect government, and we notice this righteous Government must be satisfied. The decree from this Government was: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." So it was that in Genesis 3:21, we read: "The Lord God did make coats of skins and clothed them." Christ was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world and this is the first expression of it. The blood of animals was spilled to satisfy God's righteous Government. The coats, typical of Christ's righteousness, were made to cover man's nakedness.

The third day corresponds to the Age of Human Government. This day eleven bullocks were offered. Eleven, in this respect, becomes the number of substitution. We have seen that the goat is the animal of substitution by the fact that God required 11 curtains of goats' hair in the tabernacle (Ex. 26:7). The age of Human Government commences immediately after the flood and in it, we see that man is left to govern himself. Here the number eleven could represent the failure of man to achieve perfect rulership, as God does. He falls short of the perfection of 12. Noah begins as the one in authority, being the father of three sons. As time progressed, it was from these three sons that the nations and governments of the world were formed. (Gen. 10:32). Noah the first "governor" quickly loses control and was not able to govern his appetites. He became drunken. The attitude of Ham and his son resulted ultimately in a curse being pronounced on Canaan and his descendants. From this time on, things continued to digress as the age culminated in an attempt to build the tower of Babel "whose top may reach unto heaven and let us make a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11:4). In reality, man desired to become independent of God. Man would like to possess heaven, as it were, but he does not want to go God's way to get there, but establish his own way and make a name for himself. God would have none of it stopped his endeavor by confusing their language.

The truth of substitution can be seen in this account, though it is somewhat veiled. We must realize that Genesis 11:1-9 is only typical of the greater judgment to come, not only of the political world, but the religious world which will culminate in the fall of Babylon the great. After this, God will indeed substitute the Kingdom of His Son for all those unrighteous governments. "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign forever and ever." (Rev. 11:15). The truth of substitution is also seen directly from Genesis 11, as God continued His dealings with the line of Shem. Shem is the eleventh from Adam. Enoch is said to be the seventh generation (Jude 14), and four generations later, Shem appears symbolic of a new beginning, a new creation substituting for the old creation.

It is through this son of Noah that the genealogy of the Redeemer (the real Substitute) is traced (Luke 3). This same pattern of substitution also occurred in Genesis 5 after Abel had been slain and Cain judged for it. Instead of trying to salvage something from that corrupt Cain-line, God began afresh with Seth. His name means "appointed" and he, too, is symbolic of this glorious new creation. Of course this substitution is because of Christ, who offered Himself in our stead, a substitute dying for the sins of all humanity.

The requirements on the fourth day of the feast of tabernacles were ten bullocks. The fourth dispensational day is that of Promise, and it might seem at first to be out of context, since ten emphasizes responsibility and the Age of Promise is all of grace. All is in order, however, for we see God meeting all responsibilities Himself. While ten speaks of responsibility, it also speaks of

severe testing, or proving, even as we read of the Smyrna saints who were to have "tribulation ten days" (Rev. 2:10). This testing is also expressed by the ten commandments. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no." Deut. 8:2.

Abraham, the chief character of the Age of Promise, was in no wise under the law, but he was most severely tested in the command to offer Isaac as a burnt sacrifice. That test is beautifully symbolic of Calvary where God prove Himself. Isaac was spared because God proved Himself able for all responsibility and equal to any test. Abraham believed God to be able as he said, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." There was a ram caught in the thicket, but all of this scene was only a type of the real test and greater fulfillment where He provided Christ, the Lamb of Calvary. It was also in the Age of Promise that God declared Himself the responsible party in the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant: "I will . . ." Genesis 12. Today, these promises are still valid, because God ordained their fulfillment to be in the Seed of Abraham, which is Christ. Gal. 3:16.

On the fifth day of the feast, nine bullocks were offered. This also seems to be out of context, for the fifth dispensation is that of the Law. Five is the number of Grace. There is no mistake, however, for nine is 3X3 or God multiplied by God. It was indeed, all God's day, even as the Age of Law came to an end at Calvary. Where sin abounded because of the Law, Grace did much more abound (Rom. 3:20; 5:20). The Law exacted all its penalty against sin upon Christ; but note also, that the Godhead was represented here. Christ was the offering, but He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). It was grace which ultimately prevailed in the fifth dispensation.

Day six of our chapter is easily interpreted. The sixth dispensation is that of Grace or Church Age. Eight bullocks were offered. Eight is the new creation number, the resurrection number. Christ was raised from the grave on the first day of the week, or an "eighth" day - a new beginning. In the Old Testament, God refused any offering that was not at least eight days old. All male children were circumcised on the eighth day. Fittingly enough, it was in this sixth dispensation that Christ emerged from the grave, the Head of the new creation. It is in this Church Age that we lay hold of all the heavenly spiritual blessings with which we are blessed in Christ (Eph. 1:3). Number 8 is indeed a victorious number.

Like the sixth day, number seven is easy of interpretation, as seven bullocks were offered. Seven is the number of Divine completeness and perfection, There were seven days of creation; seven dispensations; seven churches in the book of Revelation, which describes Christendom. The final dispensation shows the perfect results of a perfect redemption. Christ completed all works required of Him and will be seated on His throne, ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords over a perfect kingdom for one thousand years.

The eighth day of the feast of tabernacles was a holy convocation or solemn assembly as was the first day. On this day, only one bullock, one ram and seven lambs were offered beside the goat of the sin offering, the continual burnt offering and the meal and drink offerings. All of these have the same spiritual significance as seen throughout these studies. Being on the eighth day, symbolic of the new creation, the one bullock and one ram seem to emphasize the effectiveness of the single eternal offering of Christ in behalf of the new creation. Seven lambs inform us of the perfect offering of the Lamb of God which took away the sins of the world. By contrast, the 14 lambs on the previous seven days are double witness throughout each age of that same fact. The two rams also speak of the double witness of truth as to Christ's work of redemption.

"These things ye shall do unto the Lord in your set feasts, beside your vows, and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for your meal offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings." 29:39. God is always specific in His requirements in all these offerings, for all of them are figurative of His great masterpiece of redemption.

THE LORD IS COME

For in the east a glorious sign appearing -
Behold the star that shines o'er Belthlehem!
It tells the world the Saviour's birth is nearing
And beckons us to come and worship Him!
The birth of Chirst, O what a wondrous story

Naught but an angel tongue could ever tell
How He who shared His Father's throne of glory
Is born the virgin's Son - Immanuel.
High overhead angelic choirs are singing,
"Glory to God and joy to all the earth";
Beyond the stars the bells are sweetly ringing
As heaven proclaims the wonder of His birth.
The wise men kneel in silent adoration
While humble shepherds leave their flocks behind;
Great is the mystery of incarnation -
The Lord is come to dwell among mankind!
- Wallace G. Kerr

DECLARATION OF VOWS

Chapter Thirty

"And Moses spoke unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded. If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." 30:1-2.

This chapter is a very weighty one and it is important to understand the meanings of some key words. The word "vow" means "to promise to do, or give something to God." To swear means to complete, or "seven oneself" by repeating seven times, while an oath refers to that which sworn. The word bind means "to hitch yoke, or fasten, join, imprison."

The vow, or swearing of an oath, is very much in keeping with the age of law, for such an act always places responsibility directly on man. In the day the law was given, Israel very emphatically declared, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Ex. 19:8). Such is the wording of verse two concerning the man who would swear an oath to bind his soul. Peter later described such a commitment, or binding, as a "yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." (Acts 15:10).

Our present chapter also indicates that God was well aware of the hardships and complications that could arise from making such vows. If a man made the vow, "he shall not break his word." However, for the woman who would make such a vow, there is an escape clause. If she is still at home under the authority of her father, and he does not object to her vows, they would stand; she is responsible to keep them. If her father hears the vow and forbids her to keep such a commitment, "the Lord shall forgive her because her father disallowed her." 30:5. The next verse gives another example of a woman being released from her responsibility. If her husband hears of it and forbids her to follow through with such a commitment, once again, "the Lord shall forgive."

The widow, however, or her that is divorced, has no ground or excuse for not keeping her vows. Such vows "shall stand against her."

Spiritually speaking, Israel, as a nation, came under the jurisdiction of the escape clause. She made a vow to do all God had said, yet "her father" the old man, Adam, forbade her to keep it. It was impossible for Israel to keep her vow because of that old nature; thus God could continue dealing with her, only because of His mercy and forgiveness.

The Apostle Paul uses the same analogy in Romans 7, where he describes the old man as a husband. As long as one is joined to that old husband, it is impossible to keep a vow unto God. Such vows and swearing of oaths were very much in keeping with the age of law which placed responsibility squarely upon the shoulders of men. When Jesus came into the world, however, He had a different message: "But I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; not by earth, for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the king. Neither shalt thou swear by the head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matthew 5:34-37.

Jesus instructed men not to take such oaths, for they actually necessitate self-effort and a power that no man can guarantee. They assume things which are actually beyond man's own control, as is evidenced by the words of Jesus above and also the situation in Numbers. James adds his testimony by saying, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by

the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." (5:12). Both James and Jesus tell us of the consequences of making such vows. Jesus said that anything more than yea or nay cometh of evil.

These things are so because even though man would like to exercise self-control and establish himself as self-sufficient, he is unable to do so. If someone makes vows or commitments (and some of these can be rather ridiculous) and fails to keep them, of course he will feel condemnation and guilt. Some seem to think it is all right to make vows and then just do the best they can to keep them; but no where in Scripture do we read of such a provision. Solomon declares: "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither say thou before the angel that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice and destroy the work of thy hands." (Eccl. 5:4-6).

All of this points out how frail we humans are, and to the fact that we cannot depend upon our own strength and initiative to bring forth such righteousness. God, who created man, knows the frailties and limitations of His creature, and His masterpiece - Redemption - is designed so that no flesh can glory in His presence. "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom . . . that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." (I Cor. 1:30-31). All our responsibilities to God are met, not by our self-assertive vows, but by abiding in Christ and allowing His righteousness to be reproduced in us.

In our present chapter, the atmosphere is not so gracious. Verses 13-15 declare that the husband is the responsible party. He could establish the vow or make it void. If he held his peace, his silence obligated the wife to keep her vows. "But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity." Undoubtedly this verse would apply if Elkanah had refused to let Hannah give the child Samuel to the Lord; for God did have special plans for a special child, and Hannah was in perfect harmony with the will of God. It also has a special meaning as it pertains to us and Christ. It was the first husband, Adam, who prevented men from bringing fruits of righteousness to God. When Christ came into the world, he assumed all of the responsibilities of our old husband Adam, and did indeed "bear her iniquity" on the Cross.

"These are the statutes which the Lord commanded Moses between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father's house." 30:16. It seems by this entire chapter that God reinforces the fact that the woman is in need of a protector and head. If she is unmarried and at home, those roles are filled by her father. When she is married, she then comes under the authority of her husband.

AN OLD SCORE SETTLED

Chapter Thirty-one

"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:19. "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people." 31:1-2.

Israel's forty years of wandering are about over. As seen in Chapter 26:65, all but two of the first generation had died in the wilderness, including Aaron and Miriam. Moses, himself, is to depart shortly, but before being dismissed, he is to take care of some unfinished business. There is always a day of reckoning and that day has come for Midian, who beguiled Israel and caused them to commit spiritual fornication (Chapter 25). Some enemies of the Lord may seem to do as they please and get by with it, but such is not the case.

Midian, as well as Israel, were judged in part at that time, but now the decree comes forth to complete the vengeance of the Lord upon them. Only twelve thousand men of war are chosen, a thousand from every tribe, along with Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest. 31:4-6.

Interestingly enough, Phinehas seems to be in charge of this operation, and that is rather fitting, for he was especially instrumental in executing judgment and also in stopping the plague in chapter 25. Now he was to take along the "holy instruments and the trumpets to blow in his hand." All of this tells us that our battle today is fought with our "High Priest" ordering the battle against His religious foes. Such warfare is a result of Calvary; the holy instruments, and the trumpets are testimonies of the Word of redemption.

"And they warred against the Midianites, as the Lord commanded Moses; and they slew all the males." 31:7. Israel was very successful in this campaign, thus armed. "And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, five

kings of Midian: Balaam the son of Beor they also slew with the sword."

These kings represent some very formidable and deceitful religious foes today. Evi, meaning "My desire," expresses strong religious desires to please God; but they are not based on Calvary. Cain expresses this same desire, as he brought the fruit of his own hand. Such an offering was rejected, and immediately there was strife and contention seen in Cain. (in fact, Midian means "strife"). Cain was angry with God and eventually, slew his own brother Abel.

Rekem is the next opponent, and he too, speaks of idolatrous religion. His name means "embroidery, to diversify in different colors." Rekem tells of the counterfeit of religion. God presents the thought of embroidery in Psalm 45:14: "She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework." This is accomplished a stitch at a time, in our lives. Paul tells us that we are God's "workmanship" - a product, or fabric (Eph. 2:10). Satan, also, weaves a very impressive multi-colored fabric, pleasing to the religious eye. Zur, "a rock," tells us also of a counterfeit. Christ is the only real Rock. Religion offers only a false security, as men strive in vain to reach safety by their own efforts. Hur, meaning "white," is also a religious replica of true realities. Religious endeavors can never create the true white righteousness of Christ. Only through Christ can we possess and manifest the genuine righteousness of God (Phil. 3:9). Reba, the last of this coalition, reveals that such religious endeavors are world-wide. His name means "a fourth part, or four-sided," speaking of the four "corners" of the earth. God redeemed those "four corners," but Satan has set out to deceive and destroy them. Here in our lesson, all of these kings were slain, even as we must defeat them in our own lives by the Sword of God's Word. Balaam is next to be conquered. It seems that he had ingratiated himself with the king, and was enjoying the reward originally offered by Balak. This wicked king had promised to "promote him to honor," and he seems not only to be living among the Midianites, but mentioned as slain with the kings.

"And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods. And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles, with fire. And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and beasts. And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho," 31:9-12.

A victorious battle results in spoil to the victor; however, Moses is not pleased with all of the wealth, as he said unto them, "Have ye saved all the women alive?" 31:15. "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord." 31:16.

Balaam was the mastermind of this very effective plan to seduce Israel. He has been given his just deserts, but now a new problem presented itself -- what to do with those whose lives have been spared.

Moses was angry, and rightfully so; for it was this "pretty flesh" which caused the earlier problems. Women throughout the Scriptures are used to portray religious bodies, both good and bad. God uses women to depict the Bride of the Lamb. The false church and her associates are described as a mother of harlots and her daughters (Rev. 17:5). So we learn of Satan's counterfeits. God hates such religious flesh, even though it may be pretty and seemingly innocent, as represented by these "little ones." The instructions of Moses are that the males and any woman that is not a Virgin, are to be killed. Religion has much that is outwardly beautiful, but it is also defiling. Even small things carry potentially damaging seed, and must be destroyed.

"But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves." 31:18. We are not told whether they could marry these girls, or if they were used as servants. Thirty-two of them were given to Eleazar the priest as an offering to the Lord, but we are not informed as to where they lived or what they were to do. Perhaps they, like the Gibeonites later on, became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God (Joshua 9:23).

Although this spoil of both substance and persons were taken, all had to go through a purifying process before coming into the camp. Both the captor who touched a dead body, and captive, must be purified on the third and seventh day. The third day speaks of resurrection, the seventh day of perfection. As to the spiritual application, there is no experimental cleansing on the seventh day, unless we take our place with Christ on the third day.

"And purify all your raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood. Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean: nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation: and all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water." 31:20, 22-23. These verses dictate a further purification of the spoil taken in battle. They speak literally of the material things of the world which we may possess, but which also must be cleansed by the Word of God. There is also deep, spiritual truth contained herein, for the battles which we have noted, are spiritual ones and can produce spiritual treasure in our lives. These spoils, or truths with which we are enriched as a result of battle, must be purified by the fire, or the water, or both. Many of the spoils we recognize as spiritual treasure, for they were used in the building of the tabernacle, and teach glorious truth about Christ and redemption.

The raiment and skins tell us of being clothed with His righteousness. The goats' hair, the animal substitution, expresses Christ as our Substitute bearing our guilt and judgment at Calvary. Gold represents Deity, while silver proclaims redemption. Brass was used to overlay the wood of the brazen altar, whereon the offerings were laid and burned. It was the brass which held the fire, and thus is a dynamic symbol of the judgment which fell upon Christ. Iron and tin are by no means precious metals, but they will stand the test of fire. It seems in some cases, they are refined out of the silver, and would tell us of lasting riches that are a part of Christ's work of redemption. All of these things were a part of the idolatrous religions of Midian, and for this reason they must be purified. All taint of Midian must be removed, because we must realize that such riches can never come from a heathen country.

Men would like to suppose that all their religious sacrifices, sufferings, and works will produce the knowledge of God and fruits of redemption, represented by these treasures. All such experiences must be measured and tried by the fire of the Holy Ghost and the cleansing power of the Word of God. Only then can they be claimed as our own.

"And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp." 31:24. The needed cleansing indicates that these warriors have been in an atmosphere of defilement. Such is also true today. We must live in a world that is very defiling, and when we join battle against evil forces, we are subject to even more defilement. There is but one way to remedy this condition and that is to wash our clothes in the water of the Word. Only then are we able to "come into the camp" of fellowship with God. The next few verses reveal yet more numberings in this book. This time, the "living" spoil taken in battle is numbered, and again, God has a very specific purpose for doing it. First, the entire prey is divided in two equal parts; half of it given to the congregation, and half to the men of war. Spiritually speaking, this means that the battles which we face are not just for our benefit. Our victories produce a definite advantage to others.

The second numbering is a tax unto the Lord, placed on those who went out to battle as, "one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep." 31:28. This was given to Eleazar the priest for a heave offering. 31:29.

The third numbering of the half which was given to the congregation, is likewise taxed. Here, one portion of fifty of the persons, beeves, asses, and flocks is levied and given to the Levites which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. Not only are others benefitted spiritually as we take victories over the enemy, but let us consider that these verses are also speaking of natural substance, even as Paul stated, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9:11).

When God ordained the priesthood and the Levitical service, He also provided for their physical welfare, and they were the recipients of the tithes and offerings of the rest of the congregation. Here we marvel at the equitable way in which God distributed this "special bonus." The families of the priest would have numbered only two at the most. Of the four sons of Aaron, two of them were smitten for their wickedness and they left no children (Num. 3:4). We are not informed whether Ithamar was yet alive or not. Eleazar went into the land of Canaan and was eventually succeeded by Phinehas, his son. Since Eleazar and Phinehas are the only ones mentioned in this chapter, and only Eleazar is recorded as receiving an offering, it may well be that the entire offering was given to the one family. We do read that the line of Ithamar was continued (I Chron. 24:3). At any rate, the five families of the Levites were given ten times as much as that given to Eleazar. We cannot but help see the parallel today. It seems that the "servants" in Christendom, pictured by the Levites, far outnumber the spiritual priests; and there is a corresponding difference in their respective offerings. It is important that we realize that all our wealth is

ordained by God.

"And the officers which were over thousands of the hosts, the captains of the thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses." 31:48. These men are beautiful pictures of the attitudes displayed by full overcomers. As noted in verse 28, a percentage of their spoil was required to be given to the Lord's tribute. The offering of verse 50 is freewill. These officers and captains state that not one soldier under their command was lost. "We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord of what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord."

The full overcomers of today realize also that their overcoming is because of the Lord; therefore, they give not out of duty, but love. Such an offering is brought "into the tabernacle of the congregation, for a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord." 31:54. This memorial tells us clearly that God does not forget such offerings. They will be remembered by Him for eternity.

LITTLE BO PEEPS SHEEP

A Sunday School teacher, named Little Bo Peep
Discovered one day that she'd lost all her sheep.
She ran to the Pastor and cried, "Alas,
Not one of my sheep has come to class.
The Pastor spoke sternly, "Not just in one day,
Have your little sheep all gone astray.
You've noticed for weeks that some were not here,
But you didn't seem to care.
You carelessly said, "Just leave them alone,
Those naughty sheep, let them wander and roam
They'll come back some sunny day,
There will be time to teach them God's way."
You weren't concerned about their needs,
And now you have no lambs to lead. "
"Oh Pastor, " she cried, "I'll do better next time.
If you'll just help me my sheep to find. "
The Pastor spoke gently, "The first thing to do,
Find the break in the fence,
Where the sheep went through.
So together they checked back a month or so,
And discovered a great big ragged hole.
Across the top were the words, "No Prayer."
"Why, I did know that hole was there,
But I intended to mend it before too long."
"Here's another hole, " the Pastor said.
"How long has it been since your Bible you've read?"
"Well, I've been weak there too," said Little Bo Peep,
"But I thought it was strong enough to hold the sheep."
"And here's a hole beyond realization.
Simply because you've done no visitation."
"Oh, it's true, it's true! How neglectful I've been.
While all my sheep strayed in sin,
But I'll pray, and I'll read, and I'll look for them,
Then it won't be long 'til they're attending again."
So little Bo Peep went after her sheep,
And found them one by one.
She is happy today, as she teaches God's way
For on Round Up Day they did come.

STOPPING SHORT OF CANAAN

Chapter Thirty-two

"Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for

cattle; the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation ... Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan. " 3 2:1-5.

Many things may be said concerning these few verses and their relation to us today. From the time they came out of Egypt, God's purpose for Israel was to reach Canaan and settle there. They did not realize this hope until forty years after they left Egypt, because of their unbelief. In our present chapter, we see that distractions and reasoning minds kept some of them from obtaining God's best.

They had a great multitude of cattle and they saw that the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead was a place for cattle. Sometimes today, people will look on the "convenient way" as the will of God. It reminds us of Lot, who beheld the plain of Jordan and decided that it looked just like the garden of the Lord (Gen. 13:10). Likewise, Reuben and Gad let circumstance rather than the Word of God dictate their decision. They tell of Christians who have a measure of spirituality and enjoy a certain amount of spiritual inheritance, but they do not enjoy God's full provision and purpose for them.

Consider some of the spiritual benefit portrayed by the names in verse 3. Ataroth means "crowns," but being on the wilderness side of Jordan, reflects the crown of the world, not the heavenlies. People may be more concerned with reward in this present world that they lose sight of the eternal Ataroth-Addar, "crowns of glory" (Joshua 16:5). There are a number of places mentioned here which are also named in Canaan. The difference is that these are on the wilderness side of Jordan.

Dibon, "sufficiency of knowledge," expresses only a great depth of man's worldly knowledge, rather than the deep spiritual knowledge of Christ. Jazer is the next place desired by these two tribes, which means "let him help." It describes Christians who do indeed know that the Lord is my helper; however, so much of the desired help is strictly natural. Nimrah is next and describes an overall attitude found in the wilderness, for it means, "he was rebellious" or "leopardess," a very ferocious animal. This place could well depict the Corinthian condition of biting and devouring one another.

Heshbon, "contrivance, reason," is a tremendous adversary of faith. It describes one who would try to reason out the Scriptures and destroy the goodness of God's provisions and blessings. Elealeh, "God is ascending," describes those in the wilderness who believe in the ascending God of the universe, but do not have a close, intimate fellowship with Him as a heavenly Father. Shebam means "their hoar head" and describes the departing spiritual strength of those who find their place in the wilderness. Nebo is at least part of the mountain from which Moses saw the land of Canaan before he died (Deut. 32:49). It means "his prophecy," but again, its location tells us that it is not a part of the heavenlies. One can look only from afar; such prophecy never becomes a living reality of God's choicest blessings. Finally, Beon appears and its meaning is "indwelling" and seems to refer to the habitation or dwelling of Baal. Surely such is always the case. If men do not lay hold of the goodness of Canaan, they are in some measure, subjected to the influence of another lord.

Moses is actually incensed by this request, and there are a number of reasons for the way he feels. "Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?" 32:6. There is much work to be done and Moses does not approve of these men wanting to take their ease, thinking only of themselves while the rest of Israel must fight for their inheritance. "Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" 32:7. This great leader was concerned with the impact which the conduct of these brethren would have on the others. People are so like sheep, and this is one example. They are very much influenced by others. "A little leaven leaveth the whole lump."

Throughout these lessons in Numbers, we have seen very small groups able to influence the majority, and always in a negative way. Moses reminds them of the twelve men who were sent to spy out the land at the beginning of their journeys, and the evil report of ten was sufficient to "discourage the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the Lord had given them." In this context, we wonder about the half tribe of Manasseh. At the first, it is only Reuben and Gad who approach Moses; however, in verse 33, Moses gave inheritance on this side Jordan to Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. They could have been influenced by their brethren.

Moses continues to voice his displeasure by reminding them that "the Lord's anger was kindled the same time, and He swore, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the Land . . . because they have not wholly followed me: save Caleb . . . and Joshua . . . for they have wholly followed me." 32:10-12. It seems that Moses was fearful that God would be so angry with Israel this time that He would bar them from the land completely.

Moses' most scathing words are recorded in verse 14: "And behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the Lord toward Israel." The rebellion of their fathers had been passed on down to them. Some may take lightly their refusal to lay hold of God's blessings, but Moses calls it "an increase of sinful men." This is a serious charge. We, like Moses, must realize that we cannot make other people overcome and possess their inheritance.

From the record here, it would seem that much of Moses' words did not penetrate their hearts. Their only comment is, "We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones, but we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them into their place." 32:16-17. These 2 1/2 tribes declare an important fact - believer cannot claim the promise, "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." His inheritance is received now - "For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward." 32:19. Their own mouths uttered it, and so today, men must, and do, make their own decisions.

"And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him, and the land be subdued before the Lord: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord." 32:20-22. These men agreed voluntarily to accept less than the best. They were duly informed of the hardships of war which they must endure before returning to their inheritance, yet they persisted. Moses added, "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out." 32:23.

We have a responsibility to other believers. It is imperative that we support them and do battle against the enemy in their behalf. Reuban and Gad boldly declare, "Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth." 32:25. They made provisions for their families in the wilderness, and then proceeded to accompany the rest of the army into Canaan. 32:26-27.

The next verses are decrees given by Moses to Eleazar, Joshua, and the chief fathers of the tribes. He must give instructions to be implemented when he was gone, when the battles were completed and these men were eligible to return to their inheritance. It is rather interesting that all inheritances on the wilderness side of Jordan were given by Moses. Anything given on the other side of Jordan, in Canaan, was given by Joshua. This simply means that the law can never give a spiritual inheritance, Moses being typical of the law, and Canaan typical of spiritual blessings. Moses is also typical of Christ in death, the deliverer from Egypt. Christ in resurrection is pictured by Joshua. Until we realize that we have been delivered from bondage and death by Jesus our Redeemer, can we come into the practical realization and enjoyment of our spiritual inheritance in "Canaan." "Blessed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). "And hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 2:6).

"And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the Lord hath said unto thy servants, so will we do. We will pass over armed before the Lord into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours." 32:31-32. They once again forcefully acknowledge that they will accept all the battles and be rewarded with a lesser inheritance. Sad to say, many today have their vision filled with only natural treasure and blessing from the Lord. Their lives are oftentimes too filled with their many battles, but the end result will be only a temporal inheritance.

The inheritance is given formally by Moses. It is land which was, indeed, taken in battle by Israel, battles which were fought before entering Canaan. As Christians, we most assuredly have battles in the wilderness and do receive somewhat of a spoil for our trouble, but such battles and victories are to be only stepping stones for our greater inheritance in the heavenlies. The temporal bounty can never compare with the eternal benefit of spiritual treasure which is yet to come for the spiritual warrior.

The land taken and the cities built, recorded in verses 34-42, express the same spiritual truth as noted. There are a few additional names given here which are noteworthy. Atroth and Shopan listed here as being two, are actually one place, meaning "hidden, or concealed crowns." They describe hidden treasure, or more valuable treasure; but again, it is on the wilderness side of Jordan and doesn't depict the deeper spiritual wealth found in Canaan. Jogbehah means "he will be elevated." It tells of a higher place than that of the sinner or the world, but does not propel one to the highest exalted place of a mature son of God.

The prefix "Beth" which is part of many names in Scripture, means "house." Bethnimrah means "house of the rebellious" or "house of the leopardess," both showing ferociousness and lack of quietness and submission to the Lord.

Bethharan is the next city and signifies "house of the joyful shouter." It tells of a certain victory that even carnal Christians enjoy and shout about, but does not speak of the continual deep joy of the Lord Himself, which is ours in the heavenlies.

You will note that these are fortified cities, which is also in line with man's thinking, but is not necessarily in harmony with God. It tells of a trust in the protection of walls rather than in God. When Israel went into Canaan, they conquered some of the greatest fortified cities and burned them with fire (Joshua 10). When Lot was delivered from Sodom, God's purpose for him was to go into the mountains. Lot's choice was to go to a city, "only a little one," he said; but nevertheless, a city. It is thus in the lives of carnal Christians. Their eyes can become entranced with the protection offered by the world and fail to see that "God is my Shield and exceeding great reward."

Kirjathaim is next, meaning "double city," and seems to be a double enforcement of the cities above. Baalmeon is undoubtedly the name from which Beon of verse three is derived. It means "lord of the dwelling." The name for lord, master, husband, owner, comes from a Phoenician deity. As was the case with Israel in later years, it indicates submitting to one other than God. Shibmah speaks of "spice, or fragrance," and while it can speak of the fragrance found in Christ; here on the wilderness side, it tells more of the fragrance of the world, enjoyed carnally.

"And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havothjair. Jair, "enlightener," had the potential of a much greater light in the promised land. He settled, instead here, content with Havoth-jair, small hamlets or towns of Jair.

Nobah follows and he took Kenath, "possession," changing its name to his own, Nobah, which means to "bark as a dog." Sometimes today there are those who go through this world changing the "possessions" of the world by leaving their own name or mark on it; and undoubtedly, some good is done. The very best that can be obtained in the wilderness cannot approach the beauty and glory of Canaan Land.

In all of this, we would point out that there are many wellmeaning Christians doing great outward works in the world today. They have a measure of outstanding victories, even as Israel and the 2 1/2 tribes had, in conquering these enemies and possessing their land. Some believers are extremely dedicated, but they do settle short of God's full provision for them and they never experimentally cross the Jordan and take their place in the heavenlies, living in the resurrection power of Christ.

Lessons in Numbers Israel's Journeys Recounted Chapter thirty-three

"These are the journeys of the children of Israel which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron. And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord; and these are their journeys according to their goings out. " 33:1-2.

Israel's 40 years of wandering have almost come to an end. Our present chapter is a summary of their encampments from the time they left Egypt to this present time. It may seem that the genealogies and name studies of the Scriptures become rather tedious, and we may wonder if they are worthwhile. Notice that Moses was commanded by the Lord to keep this diary of Israel's travels.

In verses 3-49, is a list of 42 places showing each move that Israel made. Surely God had a reason for such a command and we can, indeed, see the spiritual value of them in our own lives. Israel departed from Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover.

Verse 4 tells us that they left with a high hand, or exalted, raised above Egypt; for as they left, the Egyptians were burying their firstborn. We are also informed that the judgments which fell upon the land were a direct execution of judgment of the Egyptian gods.

Israel's journeys are a picture of the believer in his deliverance from the bondage of the world, figured by Egypt, and the "up and down" wilderness experiences which depict the battle between the two creations. There is a conflict between the flesh and spirit in a believer. The wilderness experience is by no means, one which we can avoid, but neither does God intend that we should dwell there forever. It is to be a learning experience, where we, like Paul, can declare, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). It is in the wilderness that we learn to cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24-25). No one can enter Canaan in victory without going through the Red Sea and the wilderness; but it is imperative that we continue to move through the wilderness and not set up camp indefinitely.

"And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth." 33:5. Rameses, or Raameses, was a city in Egypt built for Pharaoh by the children of Israel (Exodus 1:11). It means "evil of the standard bearer" and is easily interpreted as the evil of the world. Israel was in tremendous bondage here, even as many people are in the bondage the evil and hardships of the world. Just as God delivered Israel from this place, literally, He wants to lead all men out from under such oppression, in the spiritual sense. From this encampment in Rameses, Israel is conducted on the initial leg of their journey to Succoth. True to its meaning of "booths," or "huts," it tells of the somewhat stripped experience men go through when they are delivered from the walls of Rameses. There are no great enclosures for them to shield from the weather, wild beasts, or men. This is exactly what God intends, however, for we are to find our protection in Him.

Ethan is a further reinforcement of this truth, for it means "with them, or their plowshare." These are some of the first lessons one learns when delivered from Egypt. God is with them and will account for their natural needs, indicated by the plowshare. They have no fields, but He finds a way to sustain them anyway. Pihahiroth is next and coincides with Israel's next experience. It means "the mouth of wrath kindlings," and tells of the wrath of Pharaoh against the children of Israel (Exodus 14). He intended to annihilate them, but God had some surprises for them. This camp of Israel was located before Baal-zephon and Migdol. The former means "Lord of the north, or winter," and tells us that God is Lord of all the northern blizzards, or adversities. Migdol means "tower" and is indicative of the fact that the Name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe (Proverbs 18:10). God shows the power of such names, many, many times in our early Christian experience.

"And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah." 33:8. In Exodus 14, it is recorded that Israel passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground. The Red Sea experience expresses our realization that we came through death without dying. Christ bore all the penalty and judgment due us, and we did not even get our feet wet. The special emphasis here is our death with Christ. Death prevailed everywhere as the Egyptians were found dead upon the seashore, even as our "old man" was taken down into death. As for us, resurrection is intimated here, for they went three days' journey into the wilderness of Etham and pitched in Marah, which means "bitter." Newborn Christians are so thrilled to be free from the bondage of Egypt, and amazed at the tenderness of God's supernatural care of them outside those city walls and vast storehouses, that they are rudely awakened when bitter experiences come into their lives.

Jesus promised freedom from slavery, but not from adversity; for the waters at Marah were bitter. However, from the account in Exodus 15, this adversity is seen as yet another opportunity for God to exalt Christ. Moses was instructed to cut down a tree and cast it into the waters, thereby, making them sweet. Jesus was cut down at Calvary to sweeten our lives which had been made bitter by sin. We learn very early in our wilderness experience, that only Christ can make our lives worthwhile. We are repulsed by what we see and feel in this world, and it is only Jesus who is able to add sweetness to the journey.

The next stop is Elim, meaning "mighty ones, or strong palm trees." This is an enlargement of the truth learned at Marah, for there are twelve wells of water, sufficient for all Israel, and also palm trees, symbolic of spiritual prosperity (Psalm 92:12). At Elim, we view Christ as the unlimited

source of living water, and we realize that we can prosper and flourish in Him.

"And they removed from Elim and encamped by the Red Sea." 33:10. They were not to cross the sea back into Egypt; but they, even as we, must remember the victory that was won at Calvary. None of their other experiences in the wilderness and Canaan would have been possible without this great miracle. The Christian also continually remembers the basis of all God's dealings with us, and it must not be just a casual thought. It is important that one camp before the Red Sea for a time to reflect on its meaning. This encampment will prepare us for the next one.

"And they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of sin." 33:11. Thorn, clay, or mire, is the meaning of the wilderness of Sin, and we soon discover in our experience that the old man may be gone, in so far as God's assessment of him is concerned, but sin, a thorn, clay, and mire, may still be real in our lives. God's provision has been made and He counts it so, but there must be a practical application in our personal experience. Thus we read in Romans 6:11: "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The word "likewise" refers to the previous verses of this chapter, which record God's view of the flesh; and He tells us to count as God does. Only by such counting and believing can we overcome the mire and thorns of the wilderness.

Dophkah is our next station. It means "thou hast beaten" and seems to describe the way we feel in our early experience. These "beating" experiences are of God. They are not intended as a beating in punishment, but rather, they show us the insufficiency of the flesh.

"And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush." 33:11. Alush is a further example of the same experience, as it means "I will knead" (bread). There are some crushing events in our lives which bring forth the reality which Paul experienced when he wrote the words in Romans 7:18: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth good thing." As a matter of course, Rephidim becomes the next camp. It is defined: "to spread as a bed," or, "refreshing," or simply, "supports." It illustrates God's principles of operation in our lives: "the Lord killeth and maketh alive ... The Lord bringeth low and lifteth up." I Samuel 2:6-7. He beats and crushes first, and then brings us the refreshing, comforting, supporting waters of Rephidim. It was here that Moses was instructed to smite the Rock, and it brought forth water abundantly for the children of Israel.

"And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai." 33:15. Israel was at Sinai perhaps longer than any other. Numbers 10:11 declares that they removed from here on the "twentieth day of the second month, in the second year." Undoubtedly, the time started from their exodus from Egypt, and that would mean they were at this particular camp for two years. At any rate, it was while they were camped here, that the law was given, including all the instructions listed in Exodus and Leviticus.

In our experience, the Sinai camp teaches us the purpose of the law. This is where we learn that all the ordinances, washings, and ceremonies, were to enhance our view and appreciation of Christ. Such is Paul's intent in writing to the Hebrews, to turn their eyes from the shadow of the law to the reality in Christ.

From Sinai, Israel journeyed to Kibroth-hattavah which means "the graves of lust." As noted in Chapter 11, this is the first place in which Israel suffered consequences for their murmuring. There comes a time in our spiritual experience when we must "grow up" and believe God, rather than murmuring against Him. The graves of lust are a reminder that God will not continue to allow the attitudes of the flesh to prevail indefinitely. There comes such a time in our lives when we have taken in enough truth to gain victory over the old man, and God will hold us accountable for it.

After Kibroth-hattaveh, Hazereth is a welcome and attractive site, meaning "enclosure" (a feminine noun), and speaks of the tender loving care of Mother Grace. Rithman is the next stop, and it too, presents a positive experience in our lives. It means "binding, or to yoke up (as the yoke of a vehicle)." Spiritually, it tells of being joined together with Christ and being joined to Him in spirit. Rimmonparez follows, and in meaning, is a result of such joining. It means "pomegranate of the breach." Pomegranates speak of fruitfulness, which can be produced, even in the midst, or, because of a breach. Negative experiences can produce spiritual fruit when we continually abide in the vine.

Following such fruitfulness is Libnah. 33:20. It means "white" and speaks of the purity of Christ's righteousness. When we are joined to Him, we will produce fruit regardless of the circumstances in our lives; and the purity of the righteousness of Christ is also produced in us. This leads to Rissah -- "moistening." Not only are we refreshed at this juncture in our experience, but we

become a blessing, or a "moistening" to others.

"And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah." 32:22. The latter name means "assembling together, or convocation," and reminds us of Paul's admonition in Hebrews 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is " It is by thus assembling that we will be conducted to the next camp, Mount Shapher. This name means "goodliness" and reflects the spiritual benefit of standing together in these last days.

Haradah is next, and true to the wilderness experience, represents one of the many negative experiences encountered. It means "fear," and speaks of an attitude which is entirely contrary to faith, and is the controlling factor of many actions in the wilderness. As noted previously in these writings, fear is common to all men, but we cannot be controlled and motivated by it; for destruction will soon follow, as is evidenced throughout this book.

The next two camps seem to be connected with this one. Makheloth means "congregation" and comes from the same word as a previous camp -- Kehelathah. Here, however, this is not a holy convocation, or a victorious congregation, for the next place is Tahath, meaning "depressed, or bottom." This is one of the by-products of fear, if it is allowed to continue. It is no wonder that God instructed Israel to eliminate those who feared, from going to battle, "lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart" (Deut. 20:8). Fear will eventually bring a person into the throes of depression and will affect an entire congregation, as seen in chapters 13 and 14 of this book.

After these depressing camps, Tarah gives us a much needed reprieve. It means "thou mayest breathe" and tells us of the new breath of life which we have in Christ. He is the answer to the foregoing experiences, and it is imperative that we come here. The next camp of Mithcah is a further upward experience, for it means "sweetness" and tells of the sweet experience enjoyed by those who breathe deeply of the life of Christ.

LESSONS IN NUMBERS

Chapter Thirty-three

"And they went from Mithcah and pitched in Hashmonah." 33:29. Different sources list other meanings of this place, but the definition in Strong's Concordance seems to be in keeping with the trend of our recent journeys. The meaning of Hashmonah which we chose is "fertile, wealthy, spacious," and indeed, follows the path begun at Tarah. As we grow in Christ and partake of His life, we come to realize such fertile ground and wealth. David described it -- "He brought me forth also into a large place; He delivered me, because He delighted in me" (Psalm 18:19). Such promises are for the most part, fulfilled in the heavenlies; but as we have seen, we do get glimpses of such experiences in the wilderness.

From Hashmonah, Israel removed to Moseroth which means "bonds," and is certainly no surprise as to the overall wilderness experience. This is one of the primary lessons taught by the wilderness experience: we are bound by the flesh and must learn the way of victory over it through an experimental knowledge of Christ.

From Moseroth, it doesn't appear that the journey gets any easier. Bene-jaakan means "sons of one who tortures," or "one who will oppress them." It is a further demonstration of the bondage of the flesh. Listen to the cries of a tortured man, held in the throes of bondage to the flesh: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). This was Paul's dilemma before he learned of victory in Christ.

"And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad." 33:32. This is the same place as Gudgodah (Deut. 10:7), and both of them have rather harsh meanings. Gudgodah means "incision, cutting;" while Horhagidgad is defined as "the slashing hole." According to Deuteronomy 10, it was in this particular area that Aaron died and was buried. Our text in Numbers indicates that Israel was encamped at several places after this, and before Aaron died in Mount Hor. The thought here is that this was a difficult time for Israel. It was in this area that Miriam also died. Spiritually, this slashing hole reminds us of the devastation caused by the flesh, and tells of adverse times. It is a time when we need Jobbathah -- "a place of goodness." Deuteronomy 10:7 describes it as a "land of rivers of waters." We must have such refreshing waters in the wake of such troubles and tests as Israel experienced here.

The next three camps seem very closely connected with our experience in the wilderness. We must keep in mind that Israel is nearing the end of their wilderness journeys, and the time for decision has come. Will they go over into the land? As we already know, some of them did not. Ebronah means "crossing place, to cross over," and it indicates decisions concerning our own

purpose which must be made before the actual crossing over into the land.

As always, Satan is there with his logic; for Ezion-gabor means "counsel of a man," and such knowledge and counsel is contrary to the counsel and wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:18-31). Further differences are provoked in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kedesh. It seems here that we may take our pick of calling the camp either Zin ("thorn"), or Kedesh ("Sanctuary, to set apart for a purpose"). God's purpose is for us to go into the land, but some, it seems, would choose the adversity of the thorn.

"And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom." 33:37. Some sources say that Hor simply means "mountain;" while others define it as "progenitor." In any case, it is in Edom and is not a place for an inheritance. God has said before, "meddle not with them, for I will not give you of their land" (Deuteronomy 2:5). Edom belonged to the descendants of Esau and is representative of the things of the flesh. According to Numbers 20, Israel was not even permitted to join battle against their king, but "turned away from him" (Numbers 20:21). So it is today. We may have close encounters with the flesh, but never does God give us of its possessions.

Upon leaving the camp and "backing down" from Edom, King Arad, heard of the coming of Israel. 33:40. This was a Canaanite king and we note from Numbers 21 that God did approve a battle against him, and Israel was victorious. This is an earnest of the greater victory to be enjoyed in Canaan.

"And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah." 33:41. The next two camp sites, Zalmonah and Punon, seem to have been established immediately after the victory over King Arad and they are in keeping with the victories and defeats of the wilderness. Zalmonah, meaning "shade of death, the grave," and Punon, "distraction" could define Israel's experience in Numbers 21. It was here, after their victory over Arad, that they began to murmur against God and against Moses. It was the result of the "soul of the people being much discouraged because of the way" (Numbers 21:4-5). It seems that their victories in the wilderness were enjoyed for only a short period of time.

Men become distracted by other hardships, and as Israel experienced here, fiery serpents were sent among them and many died. The shade of death surely did prevail. Spiritually, it does not mean loss of life to the Christian, but it does mean that there are severe consequences and much loss of spiritual fruit. Notice, however, that God is not defeated; and the way to life and spiritual fruit, is to look upon Christ, who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (11 Corinthians 5:21).

The next encampment reinforces this truth, as Israel's next stop was Oboth, "water sins, holes dug for water." It portrays the refreshment and invigorating life we find in Christ after the previous devastation of the flesh.

"And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ijerabarim, in the border of Moab." 33:44. Ijerabarim -- "the heaps, ruins of the regions beyond" -- is also a very discouraging and unrewarding place. As seen previously in the notes on chapter 21, it reflects the grim outlook of those who look only at their present situation and assume that the rest of the journey, the regions beyond, will be more of the same. Many people in Scripture came to this place, but it is not a place of victory.

David declared his feelings of futility in I Samuel 27:1: "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines." David escaped from Saul, but spiritually speaking, he came to the next stop here in Numbers, lim. This word "lim" means "heaps, ruins" and as David found out, his troubles in the land of the Philistines were greater than his difficulty with Saul. God delivered him, but he suffered some things which he would not have had to bear otherwise.

If we persist in our assessment, that all the regions beyond are only heaps, our experience will give way to the heaps, or ruins of lim also. It seems in the wilderness experience, it is so hard to look beyond our experience, by faith, and count those things which be not as though they were. We must "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18).

"And they departed from lim, and pitched in Dibongad." 33:45. Dibongad means "Pining, wasting of the troops." This is a further decline of the last two encampments, and being no nearer to the land of Canaan, they could certainly be concerned about a demoralized army. However, this is

the place to which all must come in order to learn the true condition of the flesh. We must realize beyond a shadow of a doubt that we cannot battle the principalities and powers of the "Canaan land" with fleshly weapons. It is only when we realize our own insufficiencies that we are able to take the strength of Christ for victory.

This brings us to "Almondiblathaim." It has a very unusual meaning and we might wonder about its application, as well as the literal reason for naming it such. It does have spiritual value, for it means "concealment, hiding of the fig cakes." It is in these places of utter despair, depicted by the foregoing camps, that we must hide or conceal the fig cakes, which speak of the fruit of Christ and His Word. David said, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119:11). We may have the experience of searching for the "concealed" cakes, before we can hide them in our hearts; but it is imperative that we make them our own, in order to lift ourselves above these previous camps.

It is also preparatory for the following mountains of Abarim, before Nebo (33:47). It was from Mount Nebo that Moses beheld the land of Canaan. Abarim means "regions beyond the passages," and tells us of the regions beyond the passages of Jordan. So it is that the fig cakes enable us to look by faith into the regions beyond our experience, which gives us an incentive to go up and possess that good land.

"And they pitched by Jordan, from Bethjesimoth even unto Abelshittim in the plains of Moab." 33:49. The final encampment before going into the land of Canaan has finally been reached, and there is much food for reflection. First, it is in the plains of Moab -- not a place which God would give for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 2:9). It belongs to the children of Lot, for Moab was the firstborn of Lot by his own daughter. Moab means "from father," and is the expression of how he came to be.

Spiritually, it describes the line of unbelief and wickedness as the flesh continues to perpetuate itself. It is obvious why God would not give Israel any part of it. Secondly, the camp was from Beth-jesimoth, "house of the waster" to Abel-Shittim, "meadow of the acacias." The "house of the waster" is very fitting in Moab's land, for the flesh has never been any good, and never will be. However, the "meadow of the acacias" represents Christ. It was the acacia wood, or shittim, that grew in the desert and was used in building the ark of the covenant and other pieces of the tabernacle furniture. The acacia seemed to be the only wood that grew in the desert and is a figure of Christ, described by Isaiah as "a root out of the dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2).

In the midst of the spiritual desert of this world, Christ, who was "cut down", or cut off, out of the land of the living, was all God could use to accomplish His purposes. The word "acacia" meaning "thorns, to pierce, to scourge, flog," is also significant, for He surely was, and is, a thorn in the side of Christ-rejectors. We must discover Him, camp in the meadow, considering the benefits which are represented, before we can cross the Jordan. This river, meaning "descender," and flowing into the Dead Sea, represents our death with Christ. As Israel went into Canaan, however, it is the resurrection with Christ that is emphasized, as 12 stones were taken out of the midst of the river and placed as a memorial on the other side. Israel went over on dry ground, symbolically going through death without dying.

LESSONS IN NUMBERS

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: and ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it." 33:50-53. Crossing the Jordan revealed a mighty miracle, but it also took them into a hostile land. The parallel is the same in our lives as we realize, by experience, that He "hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 2:6). We live by resurrection power and life, but the land before us is a land of powerful enemies. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. As we see in verse 53, God has given the land to us by promise, and by this very resurrection power, we are well able to take it.

The land was to be divided by lot, according to verse 54, meaning that the tribes received the portion ordained by God. He was very equitable in the matter, giving more land to larger tribes and less to the smaller ones. Likewise today, He has specific and personal treasures for us, waiting to be claimed and enjoyed.

"But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell." 33:55. If Israel failed to drive out the inhabitants of this land, there would be consequences. If men today fail to lay hold of their spiritual inheritance, there will also be the same consequences. The spiritual application to this is that men are not able to see their land, or possessions clearly. There is a blindness in part, in understanding, and in seeing the beauties of God's Word. When certain victories are not taken, a believer cannot comprehend and enjoy the fullness of God's provision.

They shall be as "thorns in your sides." This is a result of the loss of eyesight. It is the development of pressure which can affect a person in the depths of his innermost being. It is a penetrating thorn which not only keeps him from enjoying the wealth which he could have, but actually inflicts pain and discomfort in his spirit.

Finally, they "shall vex you in the land." The word "vex" means to "cramp, or bind," and shows Israel as a prisoner in their own land. All of these came to pass and Israel was no longer lord of the land, but rather was in bondage to the gods of these nations. Today, if men refuse to drive out the enemy, they too, will be victimized by many hindrances and brought into bondage -- even religious bondage of the enemy.

"Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them." 33:56. God must judge sin, regardless of who commits it. He cast these wicked nations out before Israel because of their iniquity. At the same time, He warned this chosen people of the judgment which would fall on them if they persisted in their unbelief. All of this came to pass, and eventually, Israel too, was cast out of the good land into a land wherein they were strangers.

Borders of the New Land

Chapter Thirty-four

"And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:) Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the out most coast of the salt sea eastward." 34:1-3.

The land of Canaan is subdivided in the book of Joshua, detailing the inheritance of every tribe. In our chapter, we are given the four outer borders which were to become the land of Israel as a nation. It is freighted with spiritual meaning for us, for we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. We would emphasize that we are to lay hold of this inheritance now. The literal meanings of these borders apply to our own lives as we reach out by faith and claim them.

These borders might seem at first to be out of place for a spiritual inheritance, for all of these places tell us of sin and the attributes and possessions of the flesh. All is very much in order, however, for Scripture plainly teaches that redemption is twofold. It is always out of and into, delivered from one thing to something better.

The word Zin means "thorn" and tells us of the curse which passed upon all men when Adam fell. From here we read of Edom which was of the possession of Esau, a man who despised the choice blessings of God, and who is used to depict that which is of the flesh, contrary to God. The Salt Sea follows. It is also known as the Dead Sea and tells of the end of both sin and the flesh.

Much of this southern border is a constant reminder that God has brought us out of death and translated us into the Kingdom of Light. The next verse follows this pattern as we consider the next land mark. Akkrabbim means "scorpion" and speaks of the end of sin, the sting of death. Zin is the same as the wilderness of Zin considered above, but from here we begin a swing to the positive blessings of redemption.

Never does God deliver us from something to leave us in a "neutral" zone. There would be no victory in such a place. Instead, we come to Kadesh-Barnea. It means "the son of wandering was set apart" (for a purpose), or "sanctuary of the wanderer." It speaks of the fact that God has brought the wandering sons of humanity home to Himself, and has given them an everlasting refuge in Christ.

Hazar-addar, "the enclosure of glory" reinforces the Scriptural truth taught by this southern extremity of Israel's land. We read in I Samuel 2:8: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust and

lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory." It is wonderful to be delivered from destructive forces of Satan, sin, and the flesh; but it is even more glorious to be delivered to these marvelous positive blessings which we view here.

From Hazar-addar, the border passes on to Azmon, meaning "the mighty." It is in keeping with God's provision of developing a mighty power in Christ. The next portion, the river of Egypt, might seem out of place, since Egypt speaks of the world. This river, however, is another beautiful expression of God's grace and care for His people. He has given us many of the refreshing comforts of this world wherein we are pilgrims and strangers. There are a great number of pleasures which we may receive from this refreshing river which delight us and call forth genuine praises to the One who has bestowed them upon us. "And the goings out of it shall be at the sea" (34:5). It is also important to realize that we only partake of such blessings as "they are flowing by." The river is not a stagnant pool where we gather everything to ourselves; rather it is to be enjoyed for the time being, see in that we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth.

"And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border." 34:6. The great sea -- the Mediterranean -- comprised the entire western border of Israel and their border on the north began at this sea and stretched toward Mt. Hor. Isaiah describes the wicked as being like the sea when it cannot rest, whose waters casteth up dirt and mire (57:20). So this western border, like the north one, is a very hostile border. It tells of the tremendous forces of wickedness which seem to beset the path of the spiritual warrior as he lays hold of the invaluable riches of this land.

"From Mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be your north border." 34:8. As pointed out in chapter 33:37, Mount Hor was on the edge of the land of Edom and was only a border, not a possession. Today also, even as we take our spiritual inheritance, we must realize that we still border on the hostile land of the flesh. The wilderness journey emphatically speaks of the battle between the two natures, and we might be prone to think that once we cross the Jordan, we have left the flesh behind forever.

That, however, is not true. In the heavenlies our primary battle is against Satanic forces, but be it ever remembered, the devil will use the flesh against us. He can never touch the new creation, but he can get to us through the flesh, if we allow him to do so.

It is for this reason that Paul writes to Ephesian saints: "Be ye angry and sin not, let not the sun go down on your wrath: neither give place to the devil." Phillips translates it: "Don't give the devil that sort of foothold" (Ephesians 4:26-27). This chapter of Ephesians gives a catalog of fleshly traits by which Satan would try to overcome and destroy the heavenly warrior. So, even though we have a spiritual inheritance, our "northern border" is very fittingly a cold hostile one which must be defended. The border continues to Hamath, meaning "walled." It is fitting that it should be here, for it tells us of a very welcome enclosure and haven of protection, needed during the skirmishes with the flesh. Zedad, "turned aside," is a further expression of the same truth as our Father gently turns us aside on this cold battlefield.

"And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan: this shall be your north border." 34:9. Ziphron tells of even greater victory than the respite found at Zedad. It means "the flow of song," and speaks of the song which God places in our hearts, because of His victory. Nazarenan comes into view as the final landmark of this northern border. It signifies "of their fountain," and tells of the fountain of refreshing enjoyed by the victorious warrior over Satan and the flesh. To the victor belongs the spoils of war, and so it is with every triumph over these formidable enemies found along the northern border. There will be great and eternal spiritual gain.

Do you pray, and then believing,
Grab your boots and parasol;
Scrub the barrel and get ready
For the rain you asked to fall?

- * God would have no furnaces if there were no gold to separate from the dross.
- * God is not only a present help in time of trouble but a great help in keeping us out of trouble.
- * All great souls have attended the School of Hard Knocks.
- * Darkness cannot put out the lamp; it can only make it brighter.

* Do you believe in the sun when it is hidden behind a cloud? Then doubt not the goodness of God when He seems to hide His face.

LESSONS IN NUMBERS

Borders of the New Land

Chapter Thirty-four

"And ye shall point out your east border from Hazarenan to Shepham." 34:10. The eastern border begins at this point and goes down to Shepham, "their barrenness." The places along this eastern border, like those of the north, are very much in their proper place, spiritually. The eastern border -- toward the rising of the sun -- tells of the light of God's Word shining brightly upon our inheritance.

One of the first effects of that is Shepham. It is here that we laid open before Him. We note that his experience is not the result of a battle, as might occur to the north, but rather the result of the Scriptures shining into our heart and revealing all its depths to the heavenly Judge; even as David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23). Riblah follows, and it, too, is a result of the light of the Scriptures. It means "the strife ended," and tells us that the light not only reveals that which is corrupt, but also energizes our new life to produce fruit.

Ain (verse 11), with its double meaning of "an eye, or fountain," is also a direct product of the Word; for it is our eye that is opened to the revelation presented here and also a fountain of refreshing produced because of our response to the light of the Scripture. Chinnereth, "the harp," is the outpouring of song because of the previous places.

"And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about." 34:12. We always remember Jordan as the place of victory, where the "old man" was laid to rest and we are raised up in newness of life in actual experience. It is imperative that we come to Jordan ("descender"), and realize that it flows into the salt, or dead sea. This place is also in keeping with the spiritual meanings of the eastern border, for it is through the glorious light produced here that we are able to understand that God has already disposed of our old nature and we can come here and enjoy the practical victory.

This shall be your land with all the coasts round about." Our inheritance has been measured in Christ and we, too, must possess all such coasts. Verse 13 reiterates that only nine and one-half tribes were numbered in this inheritance. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh received their treasures on the wilderness side of Jordan.

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun. And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance." 34:16-18. As we have noted several times, Israel received this land by promise, and it was meted out according to lot. Ten people are mentioned as being charged with that division, and they have their spiritual counterpart in our own experience.

Eleazar is the first mentioned and tells us of Christ, the risen and interceding High Priest. It is only because of His redemptive work that we have been "raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies" (Ephesians 2:6). Joshua is listed next and he is a beautiful portrait of "Christ in me, the hope of glory." He is the One who is "greater (in us) than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Finally, a group of ten princes, one from each tribe, depict the faithful ministers of Christ, who serve the people directly and declare their individual inheritance. All of these individuals are necessary in order that we may lay claim to the glorious land provided.

The remainder of this chapter is a roster of the ten men chosen from the nine and one-half tribes to divide the land. The meanings of their names suggest great spiritual truth to the spiritual warrior. Seven of them incorporate the name of "God," indicating the tremendous amount of responsibility which God has placed upon Himself to enable us to take our inheritance. Shemuel (verse 20) means "heard of God," and we soon realize in the heavenly land that God does hear the cries of His people. Elidad (verse 21), "my God is lover," acquaints us with the matchless, personal love and intimacy with God. Hanel (verse 13) reveals God's marvelous grace -- "favor of God." Kemuel (verse 24) appears rather strange at this place, meaning "avenge ye, God." It simply describes, however, those set for the defense of the Gospel and most assuredly they have been assigned by God Himself. Elizaphan indicates the great treasure which

God has provided in this land, for it means "My God is Protector." Paltiel, "delivered of God," describes a lesson learned again and again in Canaan; for we are continually dependent upon His deliverance. Finally, Pedahel means "redeemed of God," and is easily interpreted as showing the fact that God has not only redeemed us from the terrible bondage of "Egypt," but also has brought us to this great land of immeasurable wealth.

The remaining three names seem to describe some attitudes which are to be on display in our hearts. Caleb, a mighty man of faith, and one of two from the first generation of Israel who went into the land, means "a dog, wholehearted." He speaks of one who takes the humble place of a dog (Matthew 15:26-28); and one who is dedicated to God, even as a dog is to his master. Bukki (verse 22) means "emptied out," and expresses the wholehearted attitude of being completely poured out to the Lord. Lastly, Ahilud has a threefold meaning, all of which are very much at home in the life of the overcomer. One meaning is "brother of majesty." Another is "brother of riddles; and the third is "brother of unity." All three join together, for such a one is of the majestic and royal line. His life, also, is a riddle, as he "judgeth (discerns) all things, yet he himself is discerned of no man" (I Corinthians 2:15). His life is often a complete riddle to those around him. He is also a brother of unity, as he understands God's purpose in having one body -- "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4). This prince of Israel realizes the tremendous power of overcoming when the body is unified against the power of the enemy.

These are they whom the Lord commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan." 34:29. "These" refer to Eleazar, Joshua, and these princes. All were necessary to divide the inheritance then, and their respective spiritual counterparts are necessary for us today, to obtain our chosen place in the heavenlies.

CHRIST, MY LIFE

Christ my life in me abides,
And my life in Him He hides;
Thus my hands and feet aye move,
At the impulse of His love.
Thus my lips are His alone
Filled with messages His own.
All my silver and my gold,
Not a mite do I withhold.
Hence my moments and my days
Are now filled with endless praise:
Heart and voice His mercies sing,
Always, only, for my King.
All my will to Him I give,
For It is "not I that live."
All my heart, it is His own,
Truly, all His royal throne.
All my love on Him I pour,
At His feet, its treasure store;
All myself and e'er to be,
His alone, eternally.
--Mary M. Bodie

LESSONS IN NUMBERS

The Cities of the Levities

Chapter Thirty-five

"And the Lord spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them." 35:1-2. Our present chapter contains yet more instructions for Israel to observe after they are in Canaan. We saw previously the four borders of Israel's inheritance (Chapter 34). Now we are to view the inheritance of the Levites. God had spoken to Aaron earlier: "Thou shalt have no inheritance in

their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel" (Chapter 18:20). By this we see that the Levites did not have a "lot of possession" as did the other tribes; rather, all the tribes gave certain cities of their inheritance to these ministers of the tabernacle. The Levites received the tithes presented by Israel, and those who ministered as priests, received certain portions of the blood sacrifices.

We read in verses four to seven of this chapter that they also received 48 cities and their adjoining suburbs. "And the suburbs of the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites shall reach from the wall of the cities and outward a thousand cubits round about." 35:4. This means that the Levites' possession included the city itself, plus 1000 cubits of ground in each direction, to be used for their "cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts."

"And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth." 35:8. We see how equitable God is in matters of giving. Those receiving larger inheritances had the responsibility of giving greater gifts. However, in Paul's day, as well as our own, that it is oftentimes the poor people who give the greatest gifts. The Macedonians, giving out of their poverty, far exceeded the rich Corinthian assembly, to whom Paul wrote. (II Corinthians 8:2-3) The Macedonians, as also the widow of Jesus' time, are used as examples of the grace of giving. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of Canaan; then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares." 35:9-11. These cities of refuge and instructions concerning are the heart of this chapter. These were cities given as a protection for a killer. These places of refuge were not for a deliberate murderer. The real beauty of these cities is in the fact that they represent the safety which is in Christ. There are at least five ways in this chapter wherein Christ is portrayed.

First, the cities were ordained by God. They were not the result of brilliant minds of men. So also, Christ was ordained by God as the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Redemption was planned before man ever fell and had need of a Redeemer.

Second, They were specifically prepared for the guilty: "That the slayer may flee thither which killeth any person unawares." For those coming to Christ, guilt is not the question, for all men have sinned and have come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) It was because of the guilt of man that such refuge was needed. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-8). If man had been the least bit righteous, there would have been no need for Christ to die. On the other hand, if there were some good in man, some martyr-minded man might justify such a death, considering it a worthwhile cause. How different the thought, interests, and provisions of God!

Third, "Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge." 35:14. These cities were placed for easy access, well within the reach of the needy, whether in the wilderness or in Canaan. And so it is with Christ. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Christ is within reach of all who will call for Him. Man's primary problem is that God's way is too simple. Paul declares: "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (I Cor. 1:18). Again he says, "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1:23). God has made the way of salvation so simple and easy that if man does not avail himself of such refuge, he is without excuse and will bear his own iniquity.

Fourth, "These six cities shall be a refuge both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither." 35:15. God's provision was not only for Israel. It included all men. Jesus said: "Come unto me ALL ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Also, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). So it is "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21), and find refuge in Christ.

Fifth, "But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood." 35:26-27. This does not

mean that one can get out of the refuge of Christ and go to a lost eternity. It is simply a type which reinforces the fact that man's conduct does not determine his safety, but rather whether or not he is within the wall of refuge. We are reminded here of Romans 8:1 -- "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are IN Christ Jesus." John 3:18 confirms this: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed on the only begotten Son of God." As noted earlier, the question of guilt or innocence is not the issue. The determining factor of safety is whether or not one flees to the city of refuge. Today, if one believes on Christ, he is safe in his city of refuge. If he refuses to believe, he is condemned already, not because of sin, but because he refuses to take the protection offered to him.

"And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death." 35:16. Verses 16-21 describe one who was not eligible for the city of refuge. These exceptions indicate one who deliberately planned and executed such a deed as we notice in verses 20-21: "But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him."

This is the same attitude described in chapter 15:30: "But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously (with a high hand, deliberately) . . . that soul shall be cut off from his people BECAUSE HE HATH DESPISED THE WORD OF THE LORD." Such an one has complete disregard for what God has said. The consequences are the same today. For the one who refuses to accept the Word of God, there is no salvation. All men are children of wrath by nature (Ephesians 2:3), capable of committing the "error" of unrighteousness, but only those who persist in total rejection, despising the Word of the Lord are mature sons of disobedience, and are rejected from the "City of Refuge."

"But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him anything without laying of wait ... and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: then the congregation shall judge" 35:22-25. These verses describe the provision and terms of dwelling in the cities of refuge. Trial by jury to judge between the stories of the slayer and the revenger of blood, is indicated. When judgment is for the slayer, he is delivered into the city of refuge and must remain there until the death of the high priest. In effect, the city of refuge becomes a prison for him, but it did preserve his life. It is a great parallel of the truth presented by Noah and his family being preserved in the ark. Though there were many hardships aboard that ship, they were spared the devastation of the flood outside. It is also wonderful to note this same analogy in our lives today. We may feel somewhat closed in, imprisoned, cut off as it were, by the Christian experience, but we are also spared much of the destructive forces which are beating against the outside of our refuge.

There is another beautiful picture here. "He shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest which was anointed with the holy oil." 15:25. In type, the death of the anointed high priest atoned for the misdeed of the guilty. We emphasize that this was only figurative, because ONLY the blood of the sinless Christ could actually atone for sin. It was only Jesus who was "anointed" for that purpose; but notice here that "after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return unto the land of his possession." 35:28. Because of the death of our anointed High Priest, we have been set free, to lay hold of our heavenly inheritance. His blood has completely freed us from any taint of sin and guilt, and no one can take away our life.

"So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings." 35:29. The remainder of this chapter is a summation of these statutes. One. There is no release for the deliberate murderer. He is to be put to death. Two. A man cannot be condemned by the testimony of only one witness. Three. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge that he should come again to dwell in the land until the death of the high priest." 35:31. The word "satisfaction" literally means "to cover," and would be comparable to a bribe. One preserved in the city of refuge could only be delivered by the death of the high priest; even as the blood of Christ is the only redemption for us today.

Four. These statutes are, invoked -- "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are, for blood defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it." 35:33. We are once again informed that the only way to get rid of sin is to kill the sinner, as this is the only way for the land to be cleansed. In the spiritual sense, it was Christ who assumed our place and died to put away sin. "Knowing this that our old man is

crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:6).

"Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the Lord dwell among the children of Israel." 35:34. Over and over, God insists on a holy land, but even as we have seen in these verses, that cleansing and holiness is dependent on the fact that Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and it is only through Him that we enjoy that undefiled life and fellowship with God.

LESSONS IN NUMBERS

Keeping The Inheritance Separate

Chapter Thirty-six

"And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead . . . came near, and spoke before Moses . . . And they said, The Lord commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; and my lord was commanded by the Lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters." 36:1-2.

The incident of which the children of Gilead speak is recorded in chapter 27. Zelophehad had daughters only, and they came to Moses after the death of their father seeking their father's inheritance. Moses, in turn, brought the matter before the Lord, who said that Zelophehad's daughters were entitled to the inheritance.

The question in our present chapter is in regards to the marriage of these daughters. As we have seen, there were twelve tribes, but there were many families within each tribe. The tribe was allotted a certain area of inheritance and these, in turn, were given to the individual families. The men of Gilead were concerned that these five daughters of Zelophehad might marry into another tribe and take their inheritance with them.

This has special meaning to them because half of the tribe of Manasseh (of the family of Joseph) had already chosen their inheritance on the wilderness side of Jordan. No doubt, they felt that they could ill afford to lose more. Their primary concern was that a part of the inheritance of Joseph would be lost or transferred to one of the other sons of Israel -- 36:4.

As with a number of situations in Scripture, the concerns of these men reflect the concerns of God. Moses' command in verses 6-10 is the command of the Lord. The daughters of Zelophehad may "marry to whom they think best; only to the tribe of their father shall they marry." The choice belonged to them, and in reality, there were many families from which to choose. The same stipulation applied to all twelve tribes. In order to retain their inheritance, they MUST marry within their own tribe. God insisted that each inheritance remain separate.

There is much instruction for us, in this narrative. We are well aware that marriages among God's people should be from among believers. God declares that His people are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers (II Cor. 6:14). However, in our present chapter, God went beyond the distinction between believer and unbeliever. It is not only the Gentile or heathen they were forbidden to marry, but members of other tribes, or as we would say, other believers. The reason. "that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers." It is important for us to realize that God was the Master of our birth. He chose our family, our parents, our race, our culture, our country, and everything else about us. Whether we realize it or not, a certain inheritance and heritage has been passed down to us, and some of it can be lost by marriage.

In Israel's case, history has proven that not all the tribes yielded to the Lord, even after their good beginning. After the reign of Solomon, the Kingdom was divided. Ten tribes became known as Israel. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin was called Judah. Of all the kings which reigned over the ten tribes, none was good and they eventually went into captivity to Assyria. Their history as a nation is never resumed in Scripture.

Judah, on the other hand, had seven good kings, and though they, too, went into captivity to Babylon, their history is resumed after 70 years and we see a revival, both in the building of the temple and the wall and city of Jerusalem. If one of the tribe of Judah or Benjamin had married into one of the ten tribes, they would indeed have suffered a tremendous loss. We might wonder, "Could it not also work the other way? One of the ten tribes marry into Judah?" This did occur in II Kings 8. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat (one of the very good kings of Judah), began to reign and "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel as did the house of Ahab, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife" (II Kings 8:18). Today, a believer's spiritual inheritance and blessing may be lost because of marriages contrary to the will of God. It is vitally important that children marry, not only with the permission of their parents, but also have their blessing passed down to them.

"Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe, but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel SHALL KEEP HIMSELF to his own inheritance." 36:9. It is imperative that we, as well as Israel, realize that our inheritance is OF THE LORD. What God has given is to be defended and taken from His hand as being of pre-eminent importance to us.

The daughters of Zelophehad valued their inheritance which was given them of the Lord, and according to verses 11-12, "were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father."

"These are the commandments and judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho." 36:13. Thus the book of Numbers comes to an end with Israel having been instructed concerning any situation which might arise. All that was left for them was to go in and take the land which God had so graciously given to them.

So it is in our lives. God has given ample instruction and provision. Let us go up at once and possess this good land which flows with milk and honey, wherein we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

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