

## Numbers 1-19

### A Census of Israel's Warriors

1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male, head by head. 3 From twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go to war, you and Aaron shall list them, company by company. 4 And there shall be with you a man from each tribe, each man being the head of the house of his fathers. 5 And these are the names of the men who shall assist you. From Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; 6 from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; 7 from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; 8 from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; 9 from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; 10 from the sons of Joseph, from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud, and from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; 11 from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideon; 12 from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; 13 from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran; 14 from Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; 15 from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan." 16 These were the ones chosen from the congregation, the chiefs of their ancestral tribes, the heads of the clans of Israel.

17 Moses and Aaron took these men who had been named, 18 and on the first day of the second month, they assembled the whole congregation together, who registered themselves by clans, by fathers' houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, head by head, 19 as the LORD commanded Moses. So he listed them in the wilderness of Sinai.

20 The people of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: 21 those listed of the tribe of Reuben were 46,500.

Questions

Literary elements

Prayer

Cross References

Repeated Motif: Wilderness.

The Land of Canaan is the goal location for the Israelites and in the first 10 chapters of Numbers we see the Israelites preparing to take over Canaan. But, it is important to notice that the Israelites are not there yet, where they currently are, and why. Whenever you see a physical location of the Israelites place a (!) over it and keep an eye on their progress! Also, it's important to note that the Israelites will be returning to this wilderness later in the book, so keep your eyes peeled whenever you see that they are in the "wilderness!"

Also remember, the people of Israel have a deep heritage with the Mount Sinai! This is where God made a covenant with them and gave them the 10 commandments

Why was a census needed?

This census's purpose is two-fold. (1) It demonstrates the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham - that his descendants would be as the sand on the seashore (\*) Gen. 22:17. And (2), it helps them know how many men were over 20 years old and who were able to fight. (ESV Study Bible, p. 265).

Names in the Bible often have deeper meanings. I love that the names of these men assisting Moses represent different characteristics of God. Here is their names and meanings:

Elizure "God is a Rock"  
Shelumiel "Peace is God"  
Nahshon "Serpentine"  
Nethanel "God has Given"  
Eliab "God is Father"  
Elishama "God has Heard"  
Gamaliel "Reward of God"  
Abidan "Father [God] is Judge"  
Ahiezer "Brother [God] is Help"  
Pagiel "Encountered by God"  
Eliasaph "God has added"

(The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 2, Numbers)

Repeated Phrase: the LORD commanded Moses"

22 Of the people of Simeon, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, those of them who were listed, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: 23 those listed of the tribe of Simeon were 59,300.

24 Of the people of Gad, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go to war: 25 those listed of the tribe of Gad were 45,650.

26 Of the people of Judah, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 27 those listed of the tribe<sup>①</sup> of Judah were 74,600.

28 Of the people of Issachar, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 29 those listed of the tribe of Issachar were 54,400.

30 Of the people of Zebulun, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 31 those listed of the tribe of Zebulun were 57,400.

32 Of the people of Joseph, namely, of the people of Ephraim, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 33 those listed of the tribe of Ephraim were 40,500.

34 Of the people of Manasseh, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 35 those listed of the tribe of Manasseh were 32,200.

36 Of the people of Benjamin, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to



Notice, Judah is the largest tribe! And fun fact, David and Jesus both came from the line of Judah!

war: 37 those listed of the tribe of Benjamin were 35,400.

38 Of the people of Dan, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:39 those listed of the tribe of Dan were 62,700.

40 Of the people of Asher, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war:41 those listed of the tribe of Asher were 41,500.

42 Of the people of Naphtali, their generations, by their clans, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war: 43 those listed of the tribe of Naphtali were 53,400.

44 These are those who were listed, whom Moses and Aaron listed with the help of the chiefs of Israel, <sup>!</sup>**twelve** men, each representing his fathers' house. 45 So all those listed of the people of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and upward, every man able to go to war in Israel— <sup>!</sup>46 all those listed were 603,550.

## Levites Exempted

<sup>?</sup>47 But the Levites were not listed along with them by their ancestral tribe. 48 For the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 49 "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not list, and you shall not take a census of them among the people of Israel. 50 But appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings, and over all that belongs to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it and shall camp around the tabernacle. 51 When the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down, and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up. And if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death. 52 The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, each man in his own camp and each man by his own standard. 53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so



Repeated Number: 12

Twelve usually has some reference to the 12 tribes of Israel. Keep your eyes peeled for it and see if you can find the connection when it appears!



This number is the number of the able men who were able to go to war! It doesn't include women, children, or men over 60! The total population estimation of the people of Israel is approximately 2 million people which is an INCREDIBLE fulfillment of the promise! The ESV Study Bible notes that this number & God's fulfilled promises should have given the Israelites great confidence that their invasion of Canaan would succeed, but we'll see how they actually respond in chapters to come!



Why were the Levites left out?

The Levites were excluded from this military saunter because even in war, they were still needed to fulfill the ceremonies and maintenance of the tabernacle! "Israel was the people of God, but without his presence with them in the tabernacle there would have been no point in their existence. The Levites' task was to ensure God's continuing presence with Israel." (ESV Study Bible, p. 267)

that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony.”<sup>①</sup>54 **Thus did the people of Israel; they did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses.**



Repeated Phrase

It's important to notice the Israelite's response to all that the Lord commanded Moses. Sometimes you might see that they did according to all that the Lord commanded, but we might see another phrase introduced soon. Be on the lookout for it too!

## Arrangement of the Camp

**2** The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **2** “The people of Israel shall camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers’ houses. They shall camp facing the tent of meeting on every side. **3** Those to camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah by their companies, the chief of the people of Judah being Nahshon the son of Amminadab, **4** his company as listed being 74,600. **5** Those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar, the chief of the people of Issachar being Nethanel the son of Zuar, **6** his company as listed being 54,400. **7** Then the tribe of Zebulun, the chief of the people of Zebulun being Eliab the son of Helon, **8** his company as listed being 57,400. **9** All those listed of the camp of Judah, by their companies, were 186,400. They shall set out first on the march.

**10** “On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben by their companies, the chief of the people of Reuben being Elizur the son of Shedeur, **11** his company as listed being 46,500. **12** And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Simeon, the chief of the people of Simeon being Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, **13** his company as listed being 59,300. **14** Then the tribe of Gad, the chief of the people of Gad being Eliasaph the son of Reuel, **15** his company as listed being 45,650. **16** All those listed of the camp of Reuben, by their companies, were 151,450. They shall set out second.



If you're a visual person, like me, all these instructions are difficult to visualize! But one important detail that could help is that the tent of meeting is always guarded by the Levites and is always at the center of the camp. This is symbolic of truth that God is at the heart of the nation of Israel.

**17** “Then the tent of meeting shall set out,<sup>①</sup> with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; as they camp, so shall they set out, each in position, standard by standard.

A great resource to help you visualize this is the Bible Project's video called “The Book of Numbers,” which you can search on youtube.

**18** “On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their companies, the chief of the people of Ephraim being Elishama the son of Ammihud, **19** his company as listed



Do all these instructions remind you of anything we've already read?

It reminds me of God's laws in Exodus. They were specific and detailed, and here we see God with more specific instructions!

being 40,500. 20 And next to him shall be the tribe of Manasseh, the chief of the people of Manasseh being Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, 21 his company as listed being 32,200.22 Then the tribe of Benjamin, the chief of the people of Benjamin being Abidan the son of Gideoni, 23 his company as listed being 35,400. 24 All those listed of the camp of Ephraim, by their companies, were 108,100. They shall set out third on the march.

25 "On the north side shall be the standard of the camp of Dan by their companies, the chief of the people of Dan being Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, 26 his company as listed being 62,700. 27 And those to camp next to him shall be the tribe of Asher, the chief of the people of Asher being Pagiel the son of Ocran, 28 his company as listed being 41,500. 29 Then the tribe of Naphtali, the chief of the people of Naphtali being Ahira the son of Enan, 30 his company as listed being 53,400. 31 All those listed of the camp of Dan were 157,600. They shall set out last, standard by standard."

32 These are the people of Israel as listed by their fathers' houses. All those listed in the camps by their companies were 603,550. 33 But the Levites were not listed among the people of Israel, as **the LORD commanded Moses**.

34 **Thus did the people of Israel. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses**, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, each one in his clan, according to his fathers' house.

### **The Sons of Aaron**

**3** These are the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests. 4 But Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD in the **wilderness** of Sinai, and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.

## Duties of the Levites

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him. 7 They shall keep guard over him and over the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle. 8 They shall guard all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, and keep guard over the people of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle. 9 And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel. 10 And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall guard their priesthood. But if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death."

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel.

①The Levites shall be mine, 13 for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the LORD."

14 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the **wilderness** of Sinai, saying, 15 "List the sons of Levi, by fathers' houses and by clans; every male from a month old and upward you shall list." 16 So Moses listed them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari. 18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their clans: Libni and Shimei. 19 And the sons of Kohath by their clans: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 And the sons of Merari by their clans: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites, by their fathers' houses.

21 To Gershon belonged the clan of the Libnites and the clan of the Shimeites; these were the clans of the Gershonites. 22 Their listing according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was 7,500. 23 The clans of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle on the west, 24 with Eliasaph, the son of Lael as chief of the fathers' house of the



What does this mean?

"In the last plague, every firstborn male Egyptian and every firstborn of their cattle died, but the Israelite boys and cattle were spared. So after this, all Israelite firstborn boys and cattle were dedicated to God. That meant that the cattle were sacrificed and the boys should have served God in the sanctuary (Ex. 11:4-13:15). But after the golden calf incident, the Levites took the place of the firstborn boys (Ex. 32:25-29)." (ESV Study Bible, p. 268)

Gershonites. 25 And the guard duty of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting involved the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting, 26 the hangings of the court, the screen for the door of the court that is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords—all the service connected with these.

<sup>①</sup> 27 To Kohath belonged the clan of the Amramites and the clan of the Izharites and the clan of the Hebronites and the clan of the Uzzielites; these are the clans of the Kohathites. 28 According to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, there were 8,600, keeping guard over the sanctuary. 29 The clans of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle, 30 with Elizaphan the son of Uzziel as chief of the fathers' house of the clans of the Kohathites. 31 And their guard duty involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the screen; all the service connected with these. 32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the chiefs of the Levites, and to have oversight of those who kept guard over the sanctuary.

33 To Merari belonged the clan of the Mahlites and the clan of the Mushites: these are the clans of Merari. 34 Their listing according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was 6,200. 35 And the chief of the fathers' house of the clans of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36 And the appointed guard duty of the sons of Merari involved the frames of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the bases, and all their accessories; all the service connected with these; 37 also the pillars around the court, with their bases and pegs and cords.

38 Those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, were Moses and Aaron and his sons, guarding the sanctuary itself, to protect the people of Israel. And any outsider who came near was to be put to death. 39 All those listed among the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron listed at the commandment of the LORD, by clans, all the males from a month old and upward, were 22,000.



These lists might be long and hard to read – BUT just like the laws we saw in Exodus, these numbers, positions, and responsibilities show us a glimpse of a Holy God who is sovereign and requires our worship through obedience!

## Redemption of the Firstborn

40 And the LORD said to Moses, "List all the firstborn males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking the number of their names. 41 And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the people of Israel." 42 So Moses listed all the firstborn among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. 43 And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273.

44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. 46 And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, 47 you shall take five shekels per head; you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs), 48 and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are over." 49 So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites. 50 From the firstborn of the people of Israel he took the money, 1,365 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. 51 And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as **the LORD commanded Moses**.



### Duties of the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites

4 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their clans and their fathers' houses, 3 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, all who can come on duty, to do the work in the tent of meeting. 4 This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting: the most **holy** things. 5 When the camp is to set out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it. 6 Then



Five shekels would have been about the amount of a year's pay for a shepherd!



This is the tariff described in Lev. 27:6. If the person is between a month to five years old, the valuations shall be five shekels of silver for a male and 3 shekels of silver for a female.



Much of chapter 4 describes the duties of each of these clans regarding the tabernacle and its furniture. If you need a refresher on the tabernacle and its layout, check out



Exodus 25-31 and/or watch the Bible Project's video called "Read Scripture: Exodus Ch. 19-40", which you can youtube.



Repeated theme: Holy

Keep an eye out for this word and what it is describing! Is "holy" describing a person or a thing? If a thing, why is the holy object holy? What makes it holy? Why is holiness important?



they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue, and shall put in its poles. 7 And over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall spread a cloth of blue and put on it the plates, the dishes for incense, the bowls, and the flagons for the drink offering; the regular showbread also shall be on it. 8 Then they shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet and cover the same with a covering of goatskin, and shall put in its poles. 9 And they shall take a cloth of blue and cover the lampstand for the light, with its lamps, its tongs, its trays, and all the vessels for oil with which it is supplied. 10 And they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of goatskin and put it on the carrying frame. 11 And over the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue and cover it with a covering of goatskin, and shall put in its poles. 12 And they shall take all the vessels of the service that are used in the sanctuary and put them in a cloth of blue and cover them with a covering of goatskin and put them on the carrying frame. 13 And they shall take away the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it. 14 And they shall put on it all the utensils of the altar, which are used for the service there, the fire pans, the forks, the shovels, and the basins, all the utensils of the altar; and they shall spread on it a covering of goatskin, and shall put in its poles. 15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the **holy** things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry.

16 "And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest shall have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering, and the anointing oil, with the oversight of the whole tabernacle and all that is in it, of the sanctuary and its vessels."

17 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 18 "Let not the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be destroyed from among the Levites, 19 but deal thus with them, that they may live and not die when they come near to the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint them each to his task and to his burden, 20 but they shall not go in to look on the **holy**



Holy God, open our eyes to your Word. Thank you for being a God who doesn't leave us in the dark, but rather you're a God who has made His dwelling place among man, first with the Israelites, and then through your Son Jesus Christ. Thank you for the gift of the Pentateuch and for allowing us to see your fierce love for your people in these details. Amen!

things even for a moment, lest they die.”

21 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 22 “Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers’ houses and by their clans. 23 From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, all who can come to do duty, to do service in the tent of meeting. 24 This is the service of the clans of the Gershonites, in serving and bearing burdens: 25 they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering of goatskin that is on top of it and the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting 26 and the hangings of the court and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the court that is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service. And they shall do all that needs to be done with regard to them. 27 All the service of the sons of the Gershonites shall be at the command of Aaron and his sons, in all that they are to carry and in all that they have to do. And you shall assign to their charge all that they are to carry. 28 This is the service of the clans of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their guard duty is to be under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

29 “As for the sons of Merari, you shall list them by their clans and their fathers’ houses. 30 From thirty years old up to fifty years old, you shall list them, everyone who can come on duty, to do the service of the tent of meeting. 31 And this is what they are charged to carry, as the whole of their service in the tent of meeting: the frames of the tabernacle, with its bars, pillars, and bases, 32 and the pillars around the court with their bases, pegs, and cords, with all their equipment and all their accessories. And you shall list by name the objects that they are required to carry. 33 This is the service of the clans of the sons of Merari, the whole of their service in the tent of meeting, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.”

34 And Moses and Aaron and the chiefs of the congregation listed the sons of the Kohathites, by their clans and their fathers’ houses, 35 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who could come on duty, for service in the tent of meeting; 36 and those listed by clans were 2,750. 37 This was the list of the



Quick recap for you! The Kohathites handled the most holy items of the tabernacle, the Gershonites carried the curtains, and the Merarties transported the planks, poles, bases, etc. All of these directions are clearly commanded with specific instructions.



What would happen if someone doesn't follow these directions clearly?

clans of the Kohathites, all who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron listed according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

38 Those listed of the sons of Gershon, by their clans and their fathers' houses, 39 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who could come on duty for service in the tent of meeting— 40 those listed by their clans and their fathers' houses were 2,630. 41 This was the list of the clans of the sons of Gershon, all who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron listed according to the commandment of the LORD.

42 Those listed of the clans of the sons of Merari, by their clans and their fathers' houses, 43 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who could come on duty, for service in the tent of meeting— 44 those listed by clans were 3,200. 45 This was the list of the clans of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron listed according to the commandment of the LORD by Moses.

46 All those who were listed of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the chiefs of Israel listed, by their clans and their fathers' houses, 47 from thirty years old up to fifty years old, everyone who could come to do the service of ministry and the service of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting, 48 those listed were 8,580. 49 According to the commandment of the LORD through Moses they were listed, each one with his task of serving or carrying. Thus they were listed by him, as **the LORD commanded Moses**.

## Unclean People

**5** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>1</sup>2 "Command the people of Israel that they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge and everyone who is <sup>2</sup>**unclean** through contact with the dead. 3 You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell." 4 And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; **as the LORD said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.**



"The next six and one-half chapters present various commands for ritual purity within the camp, all necessary for the final preparations for the movement of the people through the desert and their journey on to their new home in the land of Canaan." (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Numbers)



Repeated Theme: Clean vs. Unclean

"The OT concept of "uncleanness" is hard for the modern, Western reader to understand. To be unclean was to be "dirty," unfit in the realm of the purity of the rule of God." (The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Numbers)

## Confession and Restitution

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Speak to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person realizes his guilt, 7 he shall confess his sin that he has committed.

① And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong. 8 But if the man has no next of kin to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of **atonement** with which **atonement** is made for him. 9 And every contribution, all the **holy** donations of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. 10 <sup>①</sup>Each one shall keep his **holy** donations: whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his."

## A Test for Adultery

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Speak to the people of Israel, If any man's wife goes astray and breaks faith with him, 13 if a man lies with her sexually, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected though she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her, since she was not taken in the act, 14 and if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself, or if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself, 15 then the man shall bring his wife to the priest and bring the offering required of her, a tenth of an ephah of barley flour. He shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 "And the priest shall bring her near and set her before the LORD. 17 And the priest shall take **holy** water in an earthenware vessel and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. 18 And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD and <sup>①</sup>unbind the hair of the woman's head and place in her hands the grain offering of remembrance, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And in his hand the priest



Again, we see God requiring purity and restoration for the upcoming journey! The goal isn't to simply kick people out, rather it's to bring people in. And yet over and over again, the Israelites are given the standard of purity that is defined by GOD, not man.



Recurring Theme: Atonement



Leviticus 6:1-7

shall have the water of bitterness that brings the curse. 19 Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, 'If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to **uncleanness** while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse. 20 But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself, and some man other than your husband has lain with you, 21 then' (let the priest make the woman take the oath of the curse, and say to the woman) 'the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh fall away and your body swell. 22 May this water that brings the curse pass into your bowels and make your womb swell and your thigh fall away.' And the woman shall say, 'Amen, Amen.'

23 "Then the priest shall write these curses in a book and wash them off into the water of bitterness. 24 And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain. 25 And the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand and shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar. 26 And the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering, as its memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water. 27 And when he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and has broken faith with her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away, and the woman shall become a curse among her people. 28 But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, then she shall be free and shall conceive children.

29 "This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself, 30 or when the spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife. Then he shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall carry out for her all this law. 31 The man shall be free from iniquity, but the woman shall bear her iniquity."



What?! This sounds like crazy talk. What in the world could this actually mean?

Many of the laws and regulations in the Torah can sound extreme and a bit crazy. Anyone else pretty excited that we're under the new covenant of Christ? But the purpose of this section is to show that adultery causes grievous uncleanness and must be purified from the Israelites. These verses (11-31) explain a ritual that is actually "an acted-out prayer that God would show whether a man's suspicions about his wife's fidelity were justified." (ESV Study Bible, p. 273). The point of the passage is that infidelity to one's spouse makes the whole tribe unclean and is in direct disobedience to God's laws.

## The Nazirite Vow

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, 3 he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. 4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

5 "All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be **holy**. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long.

6 "All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. 7 Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself **unclean**, because his separation to God is on his head. 8 All the days of his separation he is **holy** to the LORD.

9 "And if any man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. 10 On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 11 and the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make **atonement** for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead body. And he shall consecrate his head that same day 12 and separate himself to the LORD for the days of his separation and bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering. But the previous period shall be void, because his separation was defiled.

13 "And this is the law for the Nazirite, when the time of his separation has been completed: he shall be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting, 14 and he shall bring his gift to the LORD, one male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish as



A Nazirite is the most dedicated servant to God as you can see from the list of things they can and cannot do! Some Nazirites that we will see later in Scripture are Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist!



Again, see the repeated theme of avoiding uncleanness?

a sin offering, and one ram without blemish as a peace offering, 15 and a basket of unleavened bread, loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and their grain offering and their drink offerings. 16 And the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering, 17 and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread. The priest shall offer also its grain offering and its drink offering. 18 And the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. 19 And the priest shall take the shoulder of the ram, when it is boiled, and one unleavened loaf out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaved the hair of his consecration, 20 and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. They are a **holy** portion for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed. And after that the Nazirite may drink wine.

21 "This is the law of the Nazirite. But if he vows an offering to the LORD above his Nazirite vow, as he can afford, in exact accordance with the vow that he takes, then he shall do in addition to the law of the Nazirite."

## Aaron's Blessing

① 22 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them,

24 The LORD bless you and keep you;  
25 the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
26 the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

27 "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them." ↻



This is a very famous blessing that we hear often stated at weddings, funerals, and church services, but here is where it is mentioned in Scripture. Isn't it amazing that this blessing is given in the context of the Israelites preparing to move toward Canaan?

It's nice to think that if God would verbally bestow such a powerful and wholistic blessing, we never truly need to doubt his provision. We have not only been given this blessing, but many other promises throughout all of Scripture which are all fulfilled in Jesus. And yet, our hearts are much like the Israelites, prone to wander and doubt our way through the wilderness of this very world we live in."



God, forgive us for our lack of belief in your blessing over our own lives. Give us faith to see that every promise in Scripture is both "YES & AMEN" through Jesus Christ. Father thank you for your Spirit who leads and directs us just like the smoke and fire directed the Israelites. You didn't abandon the Israelites, and you have not abandoned us. Help us to walk confidently and faithfully in those truths!

## Offerings at the Tabernacle's Consecration

7 On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle and had anointed and consecrated it with all its furnishings and had anointed and consecrated the altar<sup>\*</sup> with all its utensils, 2 the chiefs of Israel, heads of their fathers' houses, who were the chiefs of the tribes, who were over those who were listed, approached 3 and brought their offerings before the LORD, six wagons and **twelve** oxen, a wagon for every two of the chiefs, and for each one an ox. They brought them before the tabernacle. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, 5 "Accept these from them, that they may be used in the service of the tent of meeting, and give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service." 6 So Moses took the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7 Two wagons and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service. 8 And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. 9 But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the service of the **holy** things that had to be carried on the shoulder. 10 And the chiefs offered offerings for the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed; and the chiefs offered their offering before the altar. 11 And the LORD said to Moses, "They shall offer their offerings, one chief each day, for the dedication of the altar."

12 He who offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah. 13 And his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 14 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 15 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 16 one male goat for a sin offering; 17 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, the chief of Issachar, made an offering. 19 He offered for his offering one

Matthew 27:50-51 The ark of the testimony is in the Most Holy Place, separated by a veil. This is a beautiful imagery that is easy to miss. Remember when Jesus died, Scripture tells us that the veil was torn in two? In the tabernacles, even centuries after these instructions were given, there was a veil that separated the Most Holy Place and not everyone could enter into the Holy of Holies. The High Priest was the only one who could enter in on behalf of the people. JESUS, our great High Priest, ripped the veil in two from TOP TO BOTTOM with his last breath. Even in this imagery, these detailed instructions, we see glimpses of our rescue plan being put into place.



silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 20 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 21 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 22 one male goat for a sin offering; 23 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, the chief of the people of Zebulun: 25 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 26 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 27 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 28 one male goat for a sin offering; 29 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, the chief of the people of Reuben: 31 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 32 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 33 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 34 one male goat for a sin offering; 35 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, the chief of the people of Simeon: 37 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 38 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 39 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 40 one

male goat for a sin offering; 41 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, the chief of the people of Gad: 43 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 44 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 45 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 46 one male goat for a sin offering; 47 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, the chief of the people of Ephraim: 49 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 50 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 51 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 52 one male goat for a sin offering; 53 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, the chief of the people of Manasseh: 55 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 56 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 57 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 58 one male goat for a sin offering; 59 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, the chief of the people of Benjamin: 61 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 62 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 63 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 64 one male goat for a sin offering; 65 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, the chief of the people of Dan: 67 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 68 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 69 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 70 one male goat for a sin offering; 71 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, the chief of the people of Asher: 73 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 74 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 75 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 76 one male goat for a sin offering; 77 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the <sup>①</sup>**twelfth** day Ahira the son of Enan, the chief of the people of Naphtali: 79 his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 80 one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; 81 one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 82 one male goat for



We're about to see a whole lot of 12's! That's because on the 12th day, the chiefs of all the 12 tribes of Israel brought the same gifts to support the tribes worship!

"The exact repetition of the donations of each tribe underlines that all the tribes were equally committed to supporting the tabernacle." (ESV Study Bible, p. 275)

a sin offering; 83 and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This was the dedication offering for the altar on the day when it was anointed, from the chiefs of Israel: **twelve** silver plates, **twelve** silver basins, **twelve** golden dishes, 85 each silver plate weighing 130 shekels and each basin 70, all the silver of the vessels 2,400 shekels according to the shekel of the sanctuary, 86 the **twelve** golden dishes, full of incense, weighing 10 shekels apiece according to the shekel of the sanctuary, all the gold of the dishes being 120 shekels; 87 all the cattle for the burnt offering **twelve** bulls, **twelve** rams, **twelve** male lambs a year old, with their grain offering; and **twelve** male goats for a sin offering; 88 and all the cattle for the sacrifice of peace offerings twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, the male lambs a year old sixty. This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed.

<sup>!\*</sup> 89 And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from above **the mercy seat** that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.

## The Seven Lamps

**8** Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand." 3 And Aaron did so: he set up its lamps in front of the lampstand, as **the LORD commanded Moses**. 4 And this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold. From its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern that the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

## Cleansing of the Levites

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Take the Levites from among the people of Israel and cleanse them. 7 Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification



These verses are so profound. Do not miss the imagery of our own redemption story. We too have a great high priest, but our great high priest entered once and for all into the holy places securing an eternal redemption for us!!!



Hebrews 9: 1-15

"9 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness.<sup>2</sup> For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. <sup>3</sup> Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, <sup>4</sup> having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. <sup>5</sup> Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. <sup>6</sup> These preparations having thus been made, the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, <sup>7</sup> but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the unintentional sins of the people. <sup>8</sup> By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy places is not yet opened as long as the first section is still standing <sup>9</sup> (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, <sup>10</sup> but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption..."

upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. 8 Then let them take a bull from the herd and its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another bull from the herd for a sin offering. 9 And you shall bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the whole congregation of the people of Israel. 10 When you bring the Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites, 11 and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the people of Israel, that they may do the service of the LORD. 12 Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and you shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the LORD to make **atonement** for the Levites. 13 And you shall set the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to the LORD.

14 "Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. 15 And after that the Levites shall go in to serve at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering. 16 For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel, I have taken them for myself. 17 For all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for myself, 18 and I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel. 19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make **atonement** for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel when the people of Israel come near the sanctuary."

**20 Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the people of Israel to the Levites. According to all that the LORD commanded Moses** concerning the Levites, the people of Israel did to them. 21 <sup>⌚</sup> And the Levites purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes, and Aaron offered them as a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made **atonement** for them to cleanse them. 22 And after that the Levites went in



God thank you for our great High Priest who has made a way for purification. God we are in awe of the reality that our righteousness, our purity, our best attempt at holiness is but as filthy rags, but in Christ Jesus we have atonement for our sins.

to do their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and his sons; **as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.**

## Retirement of the Levites

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "This applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall come to do duty in the service of the tent of meeting. 25 And from the age of fifty years they shall withdraw from the duty of the service and serve no more. 26 They minister to their brothers in the tent of meeting by keeping guard, but they shall do no service. Thus shall you do to the Levites in assigning their duties."

## The Passover Celebrated

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses in the **wilderness** of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 "Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its rules you shall keep it." 4 So Moses told the people of Israel that they should keep the Passover. 5 And they kept the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the **wilderness** of Sinai; according to all that **the LORD commanded Moses, so the people of Israel did.** 6 And there were certain men who were **unclean** through touching a dead body, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day, and they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. 7 And those men said to him, "We are **unclean** through touching a dead body. Why are we kept from bringing the LORD's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?" 8 And Moses said to them, "Wait, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

9 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If <sup>①</sup> any one of you or of your descendants is **unclean** through touching a dead body, or is on a long journey, he shall still keep the Passover to the LORD. 11 In the second



One of the things about Moses's response that sticks out to me is that he doesn't stick to the letter of the law (which would be easy to do in light of the specificity of the laws/rules). And yet because He knows the character and the heart of God, he feels the to freedom to wait to hear from the Lord on this issue.



God's reply to Moses is one that maintains both grace and specific guidelines. God's heart for his people is seen in that he desires for all to participate in worship, so much so that he makes these exceptions for those who are unclean and for sojourners. And yet, we also see that this exception doesn't mean the people can worship however they want. If an Israelite is able to participate in Passover and chooses not to, they should be cut off. God's laws are for the good of His people, and He expects obedience. Even more though, we see him chasing after their very hearts in this passage.

month on the fourteenth day at twilight they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12 They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statute for the Passover they shall keep it. 13 But if anyone who is clean and is not on a journey fails to keep the Passover, that person shall be cut off from his people because he did not bring the LORD's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin. 14 And if a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule, so shall he do. You shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native."

### The Cloud Covering the Tabernacle

15 On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony. And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning.

① 16 **So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night.** 17 And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the people of Israel camped. 18 At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the LORD they camped. As long as the **cloud** rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. 19 <sup>①</sup> Even when the **cloud** continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not set out. 20 Sometimes the **cloud** was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the LORD they remained in camp; then according to the command of the LORD they set out. 21 And sometimes the **cloud** remained from evening until morning. And when the **cloud** lifted in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the **cloud** lifted they set out. 22 Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the **cloud** continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out. 23 At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out. **They kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by Moses.**



Repeated Motif: Cloud/Fire is a symbol of God's presence and leading.



Vs. 15-23 are written in a hymn-like passage that minds the people that the cloud of God's presence is what brought the people out of Egypt, it's what spoke to them on Mt. Sinai, and it is a celebration of God's relationship with Israel!

It's important to note that whenever the cloud moved, the people followed and had to follow it until the Lord stopped. This required continual dependence on and obedience to the Lord. And we will see in upcoming chapters what happens when they do not obey (Numbers 14).

## The Silver Trumpets

**10** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp. <sup>3</sup> And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>4</sup> But if they blow only one, then the chiefs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. <sup>5</sup> When you blow an alarm, the camps that are on the east side shall set out. <sup>6</sup> And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall set out. An alarm is to be blown whenever they are to set out. <sup>7</sup> But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow a long blast, but you shall not sound an alarm. <sup>8</sup> And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets. The trumpets shall be to you for a perpetual statute throughout your generations. <sup>9</sup> And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. <sup>10</sup> <sup>1</sup> On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: **I am the LORD your God.**"

## Israel Leaves Sinai

<sup>11</sup> In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the <sup>1</sup> **cloud** lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony, <sup>12</sup> and the people of Israel set out by stages from the **wilderness** of Sinai. And the cloud settled down in the **wilderness** of Paran. <sup>13</sup> They set out for the first time at the command of the LORD by Moses. <sup>14</sup> The standard of the camp of the people of Judah set out first by their companies, and over their company was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. <sup>15</sup> And over the company of the tribe of the people of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. <sup>16</sup> And over the company of the tribe of the people of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.



Isn't it fascinating that these trumpets are used not only for the pragmatics of gathering the people, but they're also used as alarms in war and celebrations? What a beautiful picture- that God gives us tools that we are to use not only in the wars of our own lives, but those same tools can be use in our celebrations and the everyday gatherings in between. In light of that, what are some tools or commands we've been given that can be used in all of those seasons to remind us that YAWEH is the Lord our God.



Repeated Theme: I am THE LORD your God.



Anytime you see THE LORD spelled with all caps in the OT, this means YAWEH



The book of Numbers is structured into five different sections.

There are 3 wilderness sections:

Sinai – Chapters 1-10  
Paran – Chapters 13-19  
Moab – Chapters 22-36

And between those 3 wilderness sections are two journeying sections:

Journey from Sinai to Paran – Chapters 10-12  
Journey from Paran to Moab – Chapters 20-21

So this section of Scripture is the beginning of the first journey from Sinai to Paran! They are on the move!



17 And when the tabernacle was taken down, the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who carried the tabernacle, set out. 18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out by their companies, and over their company was Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 20 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21 Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the **holy** things, and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival. 22 And the standard of the camp of the people of Ephraim set out by their companies, and over their company was Elishama the son of Ammihud. 23 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25 Then the standard of the camp of the people of Dan, acting as the rear guard of all the camps, set out by their companies, and over their company was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Asher was Pagiël the son of Ocran. 27 And over the company of the tribe of the people of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. 28 This was the order of march of the people of Israel by their companies, when they set out.

29 And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel." 30 But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." 31 And he said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the **wilderness**, and you will serve as eyes for us. 32 And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same will we do to you."

33 <sup>ⓘ</sup> So they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey. And the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them.



If you're reading it for the first time, you might be thinking, "It's happening!!!! The Israelites are starting their journey to the Promise Land." But just like many of us, the Israelites tend to start out strong and then quickly forget the faithfulness of God.

34 And the **cloud** of the LORD was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp.

35 And whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you." 36 And when it rested, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel."

## The People Complain

<sup>①</sup>**11 And the people complained** in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. 3 So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

4 Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said,<sup>①</sup> "Oh that we had meat to eat! 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. 6 But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

7 Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. 8 The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. 9 When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.

10 Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. 11 Moses said to the LORD,<sup>①</sup> "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? 12 Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to



Recurring Phrase: And the people complained

Isn't it amazing how God has been so faithful and He has promised so much, and at the very beginning of the journey the Israelites are already complaining! He just blessed them in chapter 6, and His very presence was with them, and yet they complained.



Every time the Israelites complain, highlight that passage and make note of (1) what they're complaining about and (2) God's response.



Not only is God angered by their complaining, but Moses is fed up too!

give their fathers? 13 Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."

## Elders Appointed to Aid Moses

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17 And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. 18 And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who<sup>①</sup> will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt.'" Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19 You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, 20 but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, "Why did we come out of Egypt?"'" 21 But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!' 22 Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?" 23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not."

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the **cloud** and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not



At first glance, the Israelites' complaint seemed to only deal with the monotony of the food, but here lies the heart issue. They long for Egypt, for past idols and a different god.



Isaiah 50:2

"Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst."



Are verses 20 and 23 examples of the Lord using snark or sarcasm? Because if so, those Israelites just got BURNED.

continue doing it.

26 Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28<sup>?</sup> And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." 29 But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" 30 And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.



I wonder why this storyline was left in here?



Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions."

## Quail and a Plague

31 Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. 32 And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 33 While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed,<sup>!</sup> **the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague.** 34 Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving. 35 From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.



We might have thought that the Israelites had gotten away with their complaining and wayward hearts, but there is always consequences for sin.

It looks like this journey to the Promise Land is going to be less smooth than we had hoped!

## Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses

<sup>!</sup> **12** Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman. <sup>!</sup> 2 And they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it. 3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. 4 And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out,



Again, we see a complaining spirit, but this time it's even within the leaders!



What initially appeared to be a complain against Moses's wife, turns out to actually be a jealousy issue over Moses's supreme authority.



I love this reminder that what is said, thought, or acted upon in secret is never a secret from God. He is all knowing, all-seeing, ever-present and for that, we give him praise!

you three, to the tent of meeting.” And the three of them came out. 5 And the LORD came down in a pillar of **cloud** and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. 6 And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD.<sup>①</sup> Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” 9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.



The Lord is making a clear distinction here, “To oppose Moses, whom God had put in this position, was also to oppose God himself.” (ESV Study Bible, p. 284)

10 When the **cloud** removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous. 11 And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. 12 Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb.”<sup>②</sup> 13 And Moses cried to the LORD, “O God, please heal her—please.” 14 But the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again.” 15 So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. 16<sup>①</sup> After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the **wilderness** of Paran.



How many times does Moses have to plead with God to remove punishment for either a person or the Israelites as a whole?



They’ve finished their first journey and are now in the second wilderness, which starts the third section of Numbers!

## Spies Sent into Canaan

**13** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>①</sup>2 “Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.” 3 So Moses sent them from the **wilderness** of Paran, **according to the command of the LORD**, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel. 4 And these were their names: From the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin,



Notice

Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph (that is, from the tribe of Manasseh), Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. 16 These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.

17 Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, "Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, 18 and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, 19 and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, 20 and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.



This time period lets us know it's around late July (by our calendars).

21 So they went up and spied out the land from the **wilderness** of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. 22 They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. 24 That place was called the Valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster that the people of Israel cut down from there.



This is where God promised the land to Abraham in Genesis 17:8!

### Report of the Spies

25 At the end of **forty** days they returned from spying out the land. 26 And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and



Recurring Number: 40



Can you hear their doubt dripping from these sentences?

very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” 31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” 32 So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. 33 And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

## The People Rebel

14 Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this **wilderness**! 3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” 4 And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. 9 Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” 10 Then all the



“This statement reflects lack of faith in the Lord, for the spies are evaluating the situation only from a human perspective. As a result they have no courage. By contrast, trust in the Lord would produce genuine courage, as it does when the people of Israel are given a second opportunity to enter and conquer the Promised Land after [spoiler alert] 40 years of wandering in the wilderness.” (ESV Study Bible, p. 286)



OUCH! A complaining and unbelieving heart is exposed again. How many times will the Israelites long to go back to Egypt rather than walking in faith with a God whose very presence lives among them?



God, too often we view ourselves as Moses, Aaron, Joshua, or Caleb, but Father, many times we are the Israelites complaining about the journey you’ve laid before us. Father, forgive us of our wandering hearts. Forgive us for trying to see ourselves as heroes in the story instead of YOU.

congregation said to stone them with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

11 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."



Does this passage remind you of a similar passage we read in Exodus 32:10?

### Moses Intercedes for the People

13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, 14 and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your **cloud** stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of **cloud** by day and in a pillar of **fire** by night. 15 Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, 16 'It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the **wilderness.**' 17 And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, 18 **The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.**' 19 Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."



Again, Moses intercedes on the behalf of the people, just like he did in Exodus 32! The ESV Study Bible says that Moses frequently acts as the "covenant mediator."



Recurring description of God in the OT!



Exodus 34:6-9 & Psalm 78:38, 106:45

### God Promises Judgment

20 Then the LORD said, "I have pardoned, according to your word. 21 **But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD,** 22 none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the **wilderness,** and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, 23 shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me



Praise God that His purpose to fill the earth with his glory cannot be stopped by human failure!! He will 100% absolutely fulfill every promise.



shall see it. 24 But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. 25 Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the **wilderness** by the way to the Red Sea.”

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. 28 Say to them, ‘As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: 29 your dead bodies shall fall in this **wilderness**, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, 30 not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. 32 But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this **wilderness**. 33 And your children shall be shepherds in the **wilderness** <sup>①</sup> **forty** <sup>①</sup> years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the **wilderness**. 34 According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, **forty** days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity **forty** years, and you shall know my displeasure.’ 35 I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this **wilderness** they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die.”

36 And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land— 37 the men who brought up a bad report of the land—<sup>①</sup> died by plague before the LORD. 38 Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.



Fascinating connection here. The same Hebrew words used to describe the plague that haunted the Egyptians, are the same ones to describe this plague (Exodus 9:14). Also it’s used when describing the fate of the faithless in creating the golden calf (Exodus 32:35). Let it be noted, the consequence for keeping the Israelites from faithfulness or leading the Israelites out of faithfulness is severe.

## Israel Defeated in Battle

39 When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned." 41 But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed? 42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. 43 For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you." 44 But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.



Nothing good can happen when we choose to take matters into our own hands rather than obeying God's words and pursuing His presence.

## Laws About Sacrifices

**15** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving you, 3 and you offer to the LORD from the herd or from the flock a food offering or a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or at your appointed feasts, to make a pleasing aroma to the LORD, 4 then he who brings his offering shall offer to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil; 5 and you shall offer with the burnt offering, or for the sacrifice, a quarter of a hin of wine for the drink offering for each lamb. 6 Or for a ram, you shall offer for a grain offering two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil. 7 And for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 8 And when you offer a bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or for peace offerings to the LORD, 9 then one shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three tenths of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with half a hin of oil. 10 And you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, as a food offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.



Love this reminder again that this land is not going to be taken by the Israelite's own might or determination, but by God's gracious hand alone.

11 "Thus it shall be done for each bull or ram, or for each lamb

or young goat. 12 As many as you offer, so shall you do with each one, as many as there are. 13<sup>?</sup> Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 14 And if a stranger is sojourning with you, or anyone is living permanently among you, and he wishes to offer a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD, he shall do as you do. 15 For the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the LORD. 16 One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you."



Why are these new laws being given? What's the significance of this new rule for when they enter the Promise Land?

It's important to remember that "the entry into Canaan has just been delayed 40 years, and an attempt to enter has failed" – in light of these two things and that we know that God doesn't need food, we can come to the conclusion that He is again after Israel's heart! "The imagery of sacrifice is drawn from that of a meal: the worshiper must act as the generous host and give to God all that he would give an important guest. It was not that God needed food, but these gifts showed the worshiper's devotion." (ESV Study Bible, p. 289)

17 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land to which I bring you 19 and when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present a contribution to the LORD. 20 Of the first of your dough you shall present a loaf as a contribution; like a contribution from the threshing floor, so shall you present it. 21 Some of the first of your dough you shall give to the LORD as a contribution throughout your generations.

## Laws About Unintentional Sins

22 "But if you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments that the LORD has spoken to Moses, 23 all that the LORD has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the LORD gave commandment, and onward throughout your generations, 24 then if it was done unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one bull from the herd for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the rule, and one male goat for a sin offering. 25<sup>\*,\*,\*</sup> And the priest shall make **atonement** for all the congregation of the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven, because it was a mistake, and they have brought their offering, a food offering to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their mistake. 26 And all the congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole population was involved in the mistake.



Father, again we come before you thanking you for the Great High Priest we have in Jesus who made an atonement for our sins ONCE AND FOR ALL. Thank you for covering both our chosen sins and the sins we unintentionally engage in. Lord, give us eyes to see our sin as great, but your grace and atonement as greater!



1 Peter 3:18  
"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit"



Romans 6:8-11  
"Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus."

27 "If one person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering. 28 And the priest shall make **atonement** before the LORD for the person who makes a mistake, when he sins unintentionally, to make **atonement** for him, and he shall be forgiven. 29 You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel and for the stranger who sojourns among them. 30 But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or a sojourner, reviles the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off; his iniquity shall be on him."

### A Sabbathbreaker Executed

32 While the people of Israel were in the **wilderness**, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. 34 They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him. 35 And the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as **the LORD commanded Moses**.

### Tassels on Garments

37 The LORD said to Moses, 38 "Speak to the people of Israel, and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner. 39 And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and **remember** all the commandments of the LORD, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after. 40 So you shall **remember** and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God. 41 **I am the LORD your God**, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: **I am the LORD your God**."

### Korah's Rebellion



Recurring Motif: Remember

Throughout the Israelites' journey, we will see God start to command them to remember all the commandments of the Lord, just as we've seen him command them to REMEMBER that YAWEH brought them out of Egypt. Remembering our rescue story is such a critical discipline of the believer as it keeps us ever-mindful of God's sovereign hand and his unfailing love.



Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing by Robert Robinson

"Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood;  
How His kindness yet pursues me  
Mortal tongue can never tell,  
Clothed in flesh, till death shall loose me  
I cannot proclaim it well.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above."

**16** Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. 2 And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. 3<sup>①</sup> They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are **holy**, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” 4 When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, 5 and he said to Korah and all his company, “In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is **holy**, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him. 6 Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; 7 put fire in them and put incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the **holy** one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!” 8 And Moses said to Korah, “Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, 10 and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? 11 Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?”



Recurring Motif: Complaining/  
Grumbling



This accusation of Moses and Aaron “exalting” themselves shows that these men have misunderstood WHO God is and WHO Moses and Aaron are. Priesthood isn’t a position to be claimed by man, rather God appointed Moses and Aaron. And as we’ve read earlier in chapter 12, attacks on God’s appointed people are taken seriously.

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and they said, “We will not come up. 13<sup>①</sup> Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the **wilderness**, that you must also make yourself a prince over us? 14 Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up.” 15 And Moses was very angry and said to the LORD, “Do<sup>①</sup> not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed one of them.”



Notice, this complaint is a little different from the others. “The Reubenites object to dying in the wilderness instead of Canaan or Egypt. This rebellion against God’s will and purpose akin to that provoked by the spies, who died in a plague.” (ESV Study Bible, p. 291)



“I have not taken one donkey from them” – This is Moses professing that he is innocent of their complaints. Moses was NOT misusing the office of priesthood for personal gain! (ESV Study Bible, p. 291)

16 And Moses said to Korah, “Be present, you and all your company, before the LORD, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow.

17 And let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer." 18 So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." 22 And they fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."



Recurring Motif: Moses interceding on behalf of the people (AGAIN).

25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins." 27 So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. 28 And Moses said, "Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. 29 If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD."

31 And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. 32 And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. 34 And all Israel who were around them fled

at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up!" 35 And **fire** came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

36 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 37 "Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers out of the blaze. Then scatter the fire far and wide, for they have become **holy**. 38 As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar, for they offered them before the LORD, and they became holy. Thus they shall be a sign to the people of Israel." 39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned had offered, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar, 40 <sup>!</sup> **to be a reminder to the people** of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become like Korah and his company—as the LORD said to him through Moses.

<sup>!</sup> 41 But on the next day all the congregation of <sup>!</sup> **the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron**, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." 42 And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the **cloud** covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." <sup>!</sup> And they fell on their faces. 46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make **atonement** for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun." 47 So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made **atonement** for the people. <sup>!</sup> 48 And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

<sup>!</sup> REALLY?! The VERY next day??? Come on Israel.

<sup>!</sup> What a glorious picture! An atonement standing between life and death, stopping a plague and making a way for God's people to be saved!

## Aaron's Staff Buds

**17** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, **twelve** staffs. Write each man's name on his staff, <sup>3</sup> and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house. <sup>4</sup> Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. <sup>5</sup> And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from me the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you." <sup>6</sup> Moses spoke to the people of Israel. And all their chiefs gave him staffs, one for each chief, according to their fathers' houses, **twelve** staffs. And the staff of Aaron was among their staffs. <sup>7</sup> And Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

<sup>8</sup> On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.

<sup>9</sup> Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the people of Israel. And they looked, and each man took his staff. <sup>10</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumbings against me, lest they die." <sup>11</sup> Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

<sup>12</sup> And the people of Israel said to Moses, "Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. <sup>13</sup> Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?"

## Duties of Priests and Levites

**18** So the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear iniquity connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear iniquity connected with your priesthood. <sup>2</sup> And with you bring your brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they



What's amazing is that after all that God had done, all the lives lost and consequences given, Moses and Aaron still were trying to convince the other tribes that only Aaron's tribe, the Levites, were the ones who God chose and appointed to take care of the tabernacle and approach God. The reality that God's commandment wasn't enough rings true even in my own heart. How many times do I not take God at His word? How many times do I grumble and complain at things he's clearly stated?



Is there a commandment that God has given that you consistently grumble, complain, and question? If so, take a few moments here to pray and confess that sin. Praise God for our great High Priest who has already made an atonement for your sin. Then walk on in LIFE, turning your back on your grumbling, and run hard after obedience!



may join you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. 3 They shall keep guard over you and over the whole tent, but shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar lest they, and you, die. 4 They shall join you and keep guard over the tent of meeting for all the service of the tent, and no outsider shall come near you. 5 And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on the people of Israel. 6 And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting. 7 And you and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.”

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, “Behold, I have given you charge<sup>Ⓢ</sup> of the contributions made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel. I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual due. 9 This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering of theirs and every sin offering of theirs and every guilt offering of theirs, which they render to me, shall be most **holy** to you and to your sons. 10 In a most **holy** place shall you eat it. Every male may eat it; it is **holy** to you. 11 This also is yours: the contribution of their gift, all the wave offerings of the people of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. 12 All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you. 13 The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. 14 Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. 15 Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of **unclean** animals you shall redeem. 16 And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. 17 But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not

One would think that more commandments and appointments from God would not be necessary after having just read Exodus and Leviticus. But in light of the last few chapters, God is clearly stating (again) the need for properly appointed mediators!

redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 18 But their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right thigh are yours. 19 All the **holy** contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a **covenant** of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you." 20 And the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.



Recurring Theme: Holiness



Did you notice the emphasis in this section on holiness?



Recurring Theme: Covenant

21 "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting, 22 so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. 23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24 For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel."

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "Moreover, you shall speak and say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe that I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. 27 And your contribution shall be counted to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. 28 So you shall also present a contribution to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel. And from it you shall give the LORD's contribution to Aaron the priest. 29 Out of all the gifts to you, you shall present every contribution due to the LORD; from each its best part is to be dedicated.' 30 Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be counted to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the winepress. 31 And you may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward

in return for your service in the tent of meeting. 32 And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have contributed the best of it. But you shall not profane the **holy** things of the people of Israel, lest you die.”



Just a friendly reminder: the consequence of sin is death.

## Laws for Purification

**19** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 “This is the statute of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the people of Israel to bring you a red heifer without defect, in which there is no blemish, and on which a yoke has never come. 3 And you shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered before him. 4 And Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. 5 And the heifer shall be burned in his sight. Its skin, its flesh, and its blood, with its dung, shall be burned. 6 And the priest shall take cedarwood and hyssop and scarlet yarn, and throw them into the fire burning the heifer. 7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. But the priest shall be **unclean** until evening. 8 The one who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water and shall be **unclean** until evening. 9 And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place. And they shall be kept for the water for impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it is a sin offering. 10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be **unclean** until evening. And this shall be a perpetual statute for the people of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them.

11 “Whoever touches the dead body of any person shall be **unclean** seven days. 12 He shall cleanse himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean. But if he does not cleanse himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not become clean. 13 Whoever touches a dead person, the body of anyone who has died, and does not cleanse himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and that person shall be cut off from Israel; because the water for impurity was not thrown

on him, he shall be unclean. His **uncleanness** is still on him.



Why is touching a dead body such a big deal to the Israelites?

14 "This is the law when someone dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be **unclean** seven days. 15 And every open vessel that has no cover fastened on it is **unclean**. 16 Whoever in the open field touches someone who was killed with a sword or who died naturally, or touches a human bone or a grave, shall be **unclean** seven days. 17 For the **unclean** they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin offering, and fresh water shall be added in a vessel. 18 Then a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there and on whoever touched the bone, or the slain or the dead or the grave. 19 And the clean person shall sprinkle it on the **unclean** on the third day and on the seventh day. Thus on the seventh day he shall cleanse him, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water, and at evening he shall be clean.

"Life and death are two poles of existence inside and outside the Bible. Holiness, God, and life are associated [together] in Scripture, whereas uncleanness, sin, and death also belong together. Human corpses caused the gravest kind of pollution under Mosaic system, affecting all who approached them. Thus those who have contact with the dead must keep away from the sanctuary and undergo cleansing." (ESV Study Bible p. 295)

20 "If the man who is **unclean** does not cleanse himself, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, since he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. Because the water for impurity has not been thrown on him, he is **unclean**. 21 And it shall be a statute forever for them. The one who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and the one who touches the water for impurity shall be **unclean** until evening. 22 And whatever the **unclean** person touches shall be **unclean**, and anyone who touches it shall be **unclean** until evening."