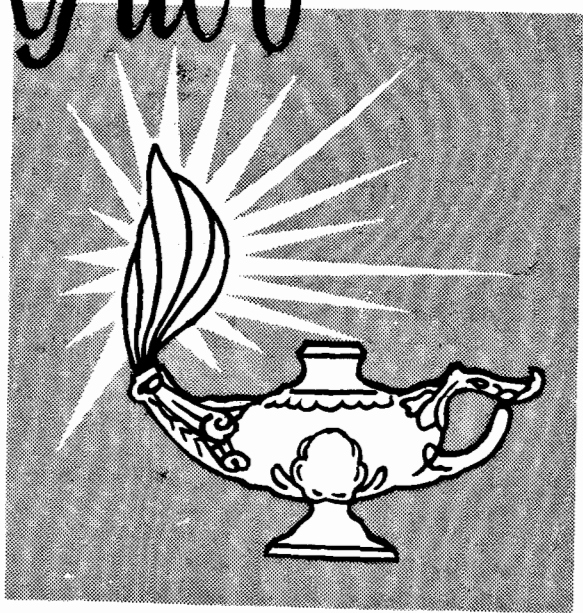


# Christadelphian Expositor



**NUMBERS**

**THE  
CHRISTADELPHIAN  
EXPOSITOR**



**A VERSE-BY-VERSE EXPOSITION  
OF THE SCRIPTURES**

by  
H. P. Mansfield

Logos Publications, Post Office, West Beach,  
South Australia, 5024.

# *Introduction*

## THE BOOK OF NUMBERS BEHOLD THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

---

### THE SETTING AND TITLE OF NUMBERS

In our introduction to Genesis and Exodus we referred to the five books of Moses on the basis of spiritual numerics: five being the number of grace. They are called *The Pentateuch* from *pente* "five", and each one sets forth a step in the developing program of grace as extended by Yahweh to fallen man.

Therefore, as a whole, they present a parable of salvation, which can be viewed from the standpoint of God or of man. Considered from the former, they reveal the following order of development:

<b>Genesis:</b>	sets forth Divine Authority and Power — in creating, punishing and selecting.
<b>Exodus:</b>	sets forth Divine Mercy — in choosing and delivering.
<b>Leviticus:</b>	sets forth Divine Holiness — in separating and sanctifying.
<b>Numbers:</b>	sets forth Divine Goodness and Severity — in providing and judging.
<b>Deuteronomy:</b>	sets forth Divine Faithfulness — in disciplining and delivering.

Considered from this viewpoint, the five books of the Law typically set forth five necessary steps to salvation. They begin with a recognition of Yahweh's authority and power; they move on to record His mercy, they emphasise the need of His holiness, they show the inevitability of His goodness and severity, to finally culminate in the revelation of His faithfulness in delivering His people.

The same five books considered from the human viewpoint exhibit the following five steps of Divine grace:

<b>Genesis:</b>	speaks of Ruin and Divine selection.
<b>Exodus:</b>	speaks of Separation.
<b>Leviticus:</b>	speaks of Fellowship with Yahweh.
<b>Numbers:</b>	speaks of Divine grace in His Providence.
<b>Deuteronomy:</b>	speaks of the attainment of Hope.

These are five steps that man must take to ensure salvation. He must recognise the fallen state of human nature, and the need of redemption from such. This will lead him to the separation of the waters

of baptism, and to fellowship with Yahweh. Submitting to Divine guidance and providence, he will ultimately attain unto that which has been set before him as a matter of hope.

Though these five books spell out the principles of Divine grace on the background of Israelitish history, they have important lessons to teach all who would come unto Yahweh in truth.

In the Parable of the Pentateuch, Genesis represents the *Book of Beginnings*, Exodus sets forth a *Pattern of Redemption*, Leviticus lays down the principles of *Fellowship Through Sanctification*, and in Numbers there is set forth the next step: *The Trial of Faith*.

All Yahweh's saints, or separated ones, are subjected to trial. Indeed, in that great day when Christ returns, and the redeemed are gathered rejoicing into his presence, it will be revealed that though there will be only one in that great Family of God who never sinned, there will be no one who has never been tried. For even of the Lord Jesus it is declared: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8).

*The Fourth Book of Moses Called Numbers*, therefore, is much more than a dry record of past Israelitish history. It is a book vibrant with interest, setting forth experiences and principles which have a very personal bearing upon our walk to the Kingdom of God. In a different setting, it records the very trials that afflict us now.

Take the basic cause of the failure of the people. It began with but a little thing. Chapter 11 commences: "Then the people *complained*. . ." Their complaining undermined the foundation of their faith and led to their failure. Israel had the power to conquer; the people had received the invitation of Yahweh to enter the land (Deut. 1:8); but instead of keeping their eyes firmly fixed on the future glory, they permitted present difficulties to obscure their vision. Grumbling led to complaining, and found the people contrasting the comforts they had left behind in Egypt with the bitterness they experienced in the wilderness. The voice of complaint once raised became contagious, and was soon heard on all sides. In consequence it was not long before the whole camp was grumbling (see Num. 11:4-5,10). Even Moses became discouraged by the continual moaning (vv. 11-14). The leaders themselves became divided with contention (Num. 11), until finally the defeatist, faithless attitude of the spies, and their complaints against the land, brought ruin to the whole project (Num. 13). Thus the tragedy of Israel's failure, is traceable to but a small thing: a little grumbling on the part of a few people!

What a lesson to learn in regard to Ecclesial life! It teaches that those who murmur without cause are soon given cause to murmur! That was the case with Israel, as the old generation was condemned to wander and die in the wilderness. So the historical records of *Numbers* are given deep, personal meaning by the Apostles. Drawing upon the whole of Israel's experiences in leaving Egypt, and specifically mentioning incidents recorded in *Numbers*, Paul observes: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our

admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:11-13).

The Greek word here translated as "ensamples" is *tupoi*, that is "types". Hence the incidents recorded in *Numbers* are to be treated first as historical, and second as typical. One generation perished in the wilderness; the other generation was brought safely to the confines of the Land of Promise. The two generations are typical of those who will be rejected of the Lord, and those who will be accepted of him. Therefore, in the nation of Israel, struggling through the wilderness towards the Promised Land, we have a type of "the Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38), enduring privations, trials and temptations such as it is our lot to experience in our wilderness journeyings. So Paul adds a word of warning: "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. 11:21-22). This, indeed, is the theme of the wonderful book before us.

## ITS SIGNIFICANT TITLE

Our sub-title: *Behold the Goodness and Severity of God* is locked up in the title of the book.

For *Numbers* is not its true title. This name comes to us from the *Septuagint* (the Greek translation of the O.T.) through the *Vulgate* (Jerome's Latin translation of the O.T.). The *Septuagint* translators gave the book the name *Arithmoi* (from whence comes Arithmetic), and in Latin this appears as *Numeri*, which, in English, becomes *Numbers*.

The title *Numbers* was given to the book because it contains two numberings of the children of Israel: one at Sinai, and the other before entering the land. During the wilderness wanderings, the old generation perished, and its place was taken by a new generation. A census was taken of both generations, and, remarkably, when the two numbers are compared there is little difference (cp. Num. 2:46 with 26:51). This teaches that if individuals, to whom the call comes fail their place will be taken by others. Hence Christ warned: "Let no man take *thy* crown" (Rev. 3:11).

In contrast to the Greek title, the Hebrew title of the book is *Be-Midbar* which, in the first verse is rendered *In the wilderness*. This takes us to the words of Stephen who speaking of Moses declared: "This is he, that was in the *Ecclesia in the wilderness*. . ." (Acts 7:38). The nation comprised the Ecclesia, called out by invitation, from Egypt and given the hope of an inheritance in the Promised Land.

Today the Gentile Ecclesia likewise finds itself in the wilderness, where the Roman Apostasy is found. John was figuratively taken "into

the wilderness" to view the judgment poured out upon the "great whore" that had perverted the truth (Rev. 17:3). Figuratively he was taken into the populated areas of the world such as Europe, where Roman Catholicism has flourished, and where, down through the ages, the Ecclesia also has found itself. Though moving among people who are highly educated and sophisticated, the true Ecclesia has found those areas a howling wilderness as far as the Truth is concerned, and as barren and as bitter as was the wilderness through which the Israelites wandered. And there it has to submit to the laws and instruction of Yahweh.

The key thought of *Numbers*, therefore, is the need for discipline. The called are separated from Egypt for service to Yahweh, and educated in a new way of life. They were taught to implement in action through their wilderness wanderings the holy principles of self-sacrifice, as exemplified in the teaching of *Leviticus*. The old generation failed, and Paul draws a lesson from *Numbers* which he sums up by stating: "But with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter into because of unbelief" (Heb. 3:17-19).

Unbelief is lack of faith. Hence the book of *Numbers* teaches that the redeemed are separated to serve in faith, and that they must be on their guard against unbelief.

As we follow those journeys we will find that the trials that faced the Israelites type those that face us today. The times and settings are different, but the principles remain the same. The book is separated into three sections: (1) Leaving Sinai — Ch. 1-10; (2) Wandering in the Desert — Ch. 11-20; (3) Journeying to the Land — Ch. 21-36.

---

## SUMMARY

Though Moses dominates in the Book of *Numbers*, above him there is the invisible Presence of Yahweh. He is more prominent than any man therein. The basic story of the book reveals how He works among His people. He is revealed as a Pillar of Fire by night, a Pillar of Cloud by day, a Provider of water and manna, a Shepherd leading His flock; a Captain commanding His army, a hovering Presence protecting the camp. Unfortunately, the people failed to comprehend this completely, and so failure marked their efforts, until the new generation arose. God is the same today as He was yesterday, and it remains for His people today, to seek the lessons in the Book of *Numbers*, and learn of the Presence of Yahweh, leaning on Him for help, hearkening to His voice in His Word, and seeking His guidance today, as He called upon His people to seek Him then.

**NUMBERS:**

**BEHOLD  
THE GOODNESS  
AND  
SEVERITY OF GOD**

**OR VICTORY THROUGH TRIAL**

# Foreword

## THE THEME OF THE BOOK

The key thought of the book, is the need of discipline on the part of the called as they wander through the wilderness of life, moving in faith towards the promised hope. A key verse is Numbers 33:1: "These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron."

The New Testament repeatedly alludes to, or cites, the book of Numbers. The incident of the brazen serpent is several times used by the Lord to exemplify his ministry on earth at that time (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32); the teaching and influence of Balaam is referred to by Jude (11), Peter (2 Pet. 2:15-16), and John (Rev. 2:14), showing that the test he brought to Israel is typical of the trials to which the Ecclesia in every age can be subjected. The rebellion of Korah finds reference in Jude (11). The unbelief of Israel forms a basis for Paul's exhortation to the Hebrews (Heb. 3,4), and so on in numerous places.

Hence our sub-title for Numbers:

### BEHOLD THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

The book commences by describing the preparations made in order to leave Sinai. The nation is numbered, and purified by excluding from the camp those who are ceremonially "unclean", though provision is also made for restitution in case of offence. The people are also shown that Yahweh is a jealous God and will not brook disobedience. In illustrative of this, the people are introduced to the Law of Jealousy, and to the Nazarite vow.

The second section takes us into the wilderness, and records outstanding events that happened there. We are shown the small things that led to the failure of the nation, until finally the spies return with their discouraging report, and a doomed generation wander through the wilderness without hope. Finally, the new generation is shown rejoicing as it moves towards the Land of Promise, overcoming its enemies by outstanding and remarkable victories, and finally encamping in an organised manner in the plains of Moab, facing the Land of Promise, ready to enter therein under Joshua.

Hence the book has three "movements":



## NUMBERS

BEHOLD THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

Part One: In the camp before Mount Horeb — Ch. 1-10

Part Two: Wanderings in the Wilderness — Ch. 11-19.

Part Three: Preparations for entering the land — Ch. 20-36

We can set out these three main divisions as follows:

## NUMBERS: IN THE WILDERNESS

- (1) Preparation in the Wilderness — Ch. 1-10
- (2) Provocation in the Wilderness — Ch. 11-19
- (3) Vindication in the Wilderness — Ch. 20-36

The above provides an outline for studying the book.

We are now ready to read it superficially, and then to study it in greater detail. As an aid to that we discuss the chronology of the book, and then provide a suggested Analysis.

## CHRONOLOGY

The book of *Numbers* does not supply a true sequential chronological order. For example, though it commences at “the first day of the second month of the second year” (Num. 1:1), the celebration of the Passover (Num. 9:4) actually took place on the 14th day of the first month; and the instructions for it were given prior to that (Num. 9:1). The appointment of Levites (Num. 3:6-8), the instructions regarding the lighting of the lamps and so forth (Num. 8:1-4) obviously all took place before the celebration of the Passover, and therefore before the period set down at the opening of the book. This suggests that *Numbers* comprises a careful selection of subjects designed to establish certain principles of spiritual importance, rather than providing a complete history of events throughout the wilderness wanderings.

We continue our chronology from *Exodus*

Period from Creation to the Exodus.....	2513	
Tabernacle erected (11½ months from 15 day of 1st year to 1st day 2nd year .....	1	
First day 2nd month Census taken (Num. 1:1)...		1 mth.
20th day 2nd year, Journey commenced (Num. 10:11-12) .....		(20 days)
From 20th day 2nd mth to death Miriam (1st mth 40th year — Num. 20:1 = 37 yrs. 11mths — Deut. 2:14).....		
To Moses' Address on Plains of Moab (1st day,		

11th mth — Deut. 1:3) a period of 38 years  
 9 mths from 1st day 2nd mth 2nd year (Num.  
 1:1) to 1st day 11th mth, 40th year (Deut. 1:3)  
 = 38 years 9 months.

38 9 mths.

Period from Creation to end Numbers..... 2552 10 mths

- The time covered by the book is 38 years nine months (Deut. 1:3): Dedication of the Tabernacle with the offering of the princes (7:1-2), and the descent of the cloud (9:15) on the first day of Abib in year 2.
- The second Passover (9:5) 14th day of Abib in year 2
- The census at Sinai (1:1) 1st day of second month in year 2
- The supplementary Passover (9:11) 14th day of Zif
- The commencement of the march (10:11) 20th day of Zif.
- The death of Miriam (day not given — 20:1) 1st month of 40th yr.
- The death of Aaron (Ch. 33:38; 20:28) 1st day of Ab (5th mth) of 40th year.
- Address of Moses — 1st day 11th month of 40th year (Deut. 1:3) a total period of 38 years 9 months (cp. Num. 1:1 with Deut. 1:3).

The last of the old generation perished at the brook Zered after thirty-eight years of aimless wandering. See Deut. 2:13-15.

(There were forty years from Exodus to death Moses: 2513 + 40 = 2553).

# Analysis

## VICTORY THROUGH PROBATION

*(Behold the goodness and severity of God)*

### PREPARATION IN THE WILDERNESS — Ch. 1:1-10:10

#### 1. Census of Warriors — Ch. 1:1-54

A census to be taken of those from 20 yrs upwards .....	vv.1-3
The Twelve Princes over the Tribes .....	vv.4-16
Only True Israelites Numbered.....	vv.17-43
General Summary .....	vv.44-46
Levites Exempted from War .....	vv.47-54

#### 2. Order of Worshippers — Ch. 2:1-34

The Eastern Encampment under Judah .....	vv.1-9
The Southern Encampment under Reuben.....	vv.10-16
The Tabernacle in the Centre .....	v.17
The Western Encampment under Ephraim .....	vv.18-24
The Northern Encampment under Dan .....	vv.25-31
General Summary .....	vv.32-34

#### 3. Service of Workers — Ch. 3:1-4:49

Aaron's Family Appointed to the Priesthood.....	vv.1-4
The Ministry of the Levites Defined.....	vv.5-10
The Levites Replace the Firstborn.....	vv.11-13
Levites Numbered from One Month Upwards.....	vv.14-16
The Three Families of Levites .....	vv.17-20
Number and Service of Gershonites.....	vv.21-26
Number and Service of Kohathites .....	vv.27-31

Eleazar to Supervise Service of Levites.....	v.32
Number and Service of Merarites.....	vv.33-37
Moses and Aaronites at East of Camp.....	v.38
Total Number of Levites.....	v.39
Firstborn Numbered.....	vv.40-43
Redemption of the Surplus of Firstborn.....	vv.44-51
Period of Kohathites' Service.....	Ch. 4:1-4
Kohathites' Service in transporting Tabernacle.....	vv.5-15
Eleazar's Service.....	v.16
Special Dispensation for Kohathites.....	vv.17-20
Period of Gershonites' Service.....	vv.21-23
Gershonites' service in transporting Tabernacle.....	vv.24-28
Period of Merarites' Service.....	vv.29-30
Merarites' Service in Transporting Tabernacle.....	vv.31-33
Number of Kohathites.....	vv.34-37
Number of Gershonites.....	vv.38-41
Number of Merarites.....	vv.42-45
Total Number of Levites.....	vv.46-49
<b>4. The Camp Cleansed From Defilement — Ch. 5:1-31</b>	
The Unclean Excluded (Purity Essential).....	vv.1-4
Laws of Recompense and Offerings (Honesty Essential).....	vv.5-10
The Trial of Jealousy (Exclusiveness in Worship Essential).....	vv.11-31
<b>5. Separated to Yahweh — Ch. 6:1-27</b>	
The Nazarite Vow.....	vv.1-21
The Formula of Priestly Benediction.....	vv.22-27
<b>6. Co-operating with Yahweh — Ch. 7:1-88</b>	
The Combined Freewill Offering of the Princes Accepted.....	vv.1-9
Instructions concerning the Altar Offerings of the Princes.....	vv.10-11
Nahshon of Judah Offers the 1st Day.....	vv.12-17
Nethaneel of Issachar Offers the 2nd Day.....	vv.18-23
Eliab of Zebulun Offers the 3rd Day.....	vv.24-29
Elizur of Reuben Offers the 4th Day.....	vv.30-35
Shelumiel of Simeon Offers the 5th Day.....	vv.36-41
Eliasaph of Gad Offers the 6th day.....	vv.42-47
Elishama of Ephraim Offers the 7th Day.....	vv.48-53
Gamaliel of Manasseh Offers the 8th Day.....	vv.54-59
Abidan of Benjamin Offers the 9th Day.....	vv.60-65
Ahiezer of Dan Offers the 10th Day.....	vv.66-71
Pagiel of Asher Offers the 11th Day.....	vv.72-77
Ahira of Naphtali Offers the 12th Day.....	vv.78-83
General Summary.....	vv.84-88
<b>7. Yahweh With His People — Ch. 7:89-10:10</b>	
The Voice in the Most Holy.....	v.89
The Light in the Holy.....	Ch. 8:1-4
The Levites Cleansed and Consecrated for Service in the Court.....	vv.5-22
The Duty and Age of Levites in Service Defined.....	vv.23-26
The Second Passover.....	Ch. 9:1-5
The Supplementary Passover.....	vv.6-14
The Ever-present Cloud (Yahweh's guiding Presence).....	vv.15-23
Divine Control By the Silver Trumpets.....	Ch. 10:1-10
<b>PROVOCATION IN THE WILDERNESS — Ch. 10:11-19:22</b>	
<b>1. Journeying At Yahweh's Command — Ch. 10:11-36</b>	
The Departure.....	vv.11-13
The Standard of Judah and His Company.....	vv.14-17
The Standard of Reuben and His Company.....	vv.18-21
The Standard of Ephraim and His Company.....	vv.22-24
The Standard of Dan and His Company.....	vv.25-28
Hobab Invited to Join Israel.....	vv.29-32

The Overshadowing Presence of Yahweh .....	vv.33-36
<b>2. Murmuring and Discontent — Ch. 11:1-12:16</b>	
Complaints at Taberah.....	vv.1-3
Murmuring by the Mixed Multitude.....	vv.4-9
Moses Discouraged .....	vv.10-15
Seventy Elders Appointed to Assist Moses .....	vv.16-17
The People are Promised Flesh.....	vv.18-23
The Spirit given to the Elders.....	vv.24-30
Quails from Heaven .....	vv.31-32
The Graves of the Greedy.....	vv.33-35
Dissension Among the Leaders.....	Ch.12:1-3
Moses Vindicated.....	vv.4-9
Miriam's Leprosy.....	vv.10-16
<b>3. Lack of Faith and Rejection — Ch. 13:14-45</b>	
Spies Selected.....	vv.1-16
Moses Instructs Them.....	vv.17-20
The Expedition.....	vv.21-25
The Report.....	vv.26-33
Dismay and Faithlessness of the People.....	Ch. 14:1-5
The Exhortation of Caleb & Joshua Rejected .....	vv.6-10
Yahweh Provoked to Anger.....	vv.11-12
Intercession of Moses .....	vv.13-19
The Nation Forgiven but Criminals Condemned .....	vv.20-25
Sentenced to Hopeless Wandering: Spies Destroyed .....	vv.26-38
Further Rebellion; Further Punishment .....	vv.39-45
<b>4. Instructions for the Next Generation — Ch. 15:1-41</b>	
Individual Offerings to be Resumed (vv. 1-29)	
a. The Law of Offerings.....	vv.1-16
b. The Law of Firstfruits.....	vv.17-21
c. Ignorance to be Atoned .....	vv.22-29
The Presumptuous Sinner to be Destroyed .....	vv.30-31
The Sabbath-breaker to be Stoned (Example of Presumptuous sin) .....	vv.32-36
Distinguishing Fringes to be Worn (Reminder of the Law) .....	vv.37-41
<b>5. Revolt Against Yahweh's Appointments — Ch. 16-19</b>	
Rebellion of Korah and His Confederates & Its Suppression .....	16:1-50
Redormentation of Aaron's Appointment by the Budding Rod .....	Ch. 17:1-13
Privileges of the Priests Reaffirmed.....	Ch. 18:1-32
Provision of the Sacrifice of the Red Heifer against the taint of death.....	Ch. 19:1-22

#### VINDICATION IN THE WILDERNESS — Ch. 20:1-36:13

<b>1. The Fortieth Year: From Kadesh to Hor — Ch. 20:1-21:3</b>	
Death of Miriam.....	v.1
Moses Provoked at the Waters of Strife.....	vv.2-13
Edom's Insolence: Passage Refused.....	vv.14-21
At Hor: Death of Aaron.....	vv.22-29
<b>2. To Moab via Ezion-Geber — Ch. 21:1-22:1</b>	
Defeat at Arad: Vengeance Promised .....	Ch. 21:1-3
The Fiery Serpents and Brazen Serpent.....	vv.4-9
On to the Border of Moab.....	vv.10-13
The Song of Triumph at Arnon .....	vv.14-15
The Joyful Song of the Well.....	vv.16-20
Decisive Defeat of Sihon of the Amorites.....	vv.21-32
Defeat of Og, King of Bashan.....	vv.33-35
Encampment on the Plains of Moab.....	Ch. 22:1
<b>3. Balaam's Curse Turned Into A Blessing — Ch. 22:2-25:18</b>	
Moab and Midian Join in Alliance Against Israel.....	vv.2-4

The Help of Balaam the Soothsayer Sought .....	vv.5-7
Yahweh Refuses Balaam Permission to Accept .....	vv.8-14
Further Rewards Offered: Balaam accepts .....	vv.15-21
The Angel and the Ass .....	vv.22-35
A State Welcome Granted Balaam.....	vv.36-38
Offerings to Baal at Kirjath-Huzoth .....	vv.39-41
Balaam Views the Camp of Israel .....	Ch. 23:1-6
First Parable: Israel Immune from the Curse of Man.....	vv.7-10
Balak's Anger and Disappointment .....	vv.11-13
Second Parable at Zophim: Yahweh's Purpose With Israel Is Immutable.....	vv.14-24
Balak's Increasing Irritability.....	vv.25-28
Balaam at the Sanctuary of Peor.....	vv.29-30
Third Parable: Israel's Future Glory, Triumph and Strength...Ch. 24:1-9	
Balak's Anger .....	vv.10-14
Fourth Parable: Prophecy Of The Latter Days .....	vv.15-24
Balaam Makes Ready to Leave .....	v.25
Balaam's Insidious Counsel to Balak Israel Seduced .....	Ch. 25:1-6
Phinehas Vindicates Yahweh's Honour .....	vv.7-9
Phinehas Granted an Eternal Covenant of Peace .....	vv.10-15
Israel Ordered to War Against the Midianites .....	vv.16-18

**4. Preparations to Enter The Land — Ch. 26:1-36:13**

A Second Census .....	vv.1-51
Land Inheritances to be granted by lot.....	vv.52-56
Second census of Levites .....	vv.57-62
Summary: An Entirely New Generation .....	vv.63-65
Law of Inheritances Clarified .....	Ch. 27:1-11
Moses told of his impending Death .....	vv.12-14
Joshua Appointed as Moses' Successor.....	vv.15-23

**Re-instruction Concerning Offerings — Ch. 28,29**

a. Daily Offerings .....	vv.1-8
b. Sabbath Offerings.....	vv.9-10
c. Monthly Offerings.....	vv.11-15
d. Passover Offerings .....	vv.16-25
e. Harvest Offerings.....	vv.26-31
f. New Year Offerings.....	Ch. 29:1-6
g. Atonement Offerings .....	vv.7-11
h. Tabernacle Offerings .....	vv.12-40

**Laws of Vows — Ch. 30**

a. A Man's Vow must stand .....	vv.1-2
b. A Father can Annul a Daughter's Vow .....	vv.3-5
c. A Husband can Annul a Wife's Vow .....	vv.6-8
d. All other Vows shall Stand.....	vv.9-16

**Yahweh's Vengeance On Midian — Ch. 31**

a. The Army Selected .....	vv.1-6
b. The Battle: Victory won but Instructions Ignored .....	vv.7-12
c. Moses' Anger: Judicial Punishment .....	vv.13-18
d. Ceremonial Purification of the Army returned from slaying .....	vv.19-20
e. Ceremonial Purification of things Taken in Battle .....	vv.21-24
f. Distributing the Prey .....	vv.25-47
g. The Army's Offering to Yahweh.....	vv.48-54

**Conquered Territory Occupied by 2½ Tribes — Ch. 32**

a. Request of Reuben & Gad to Settle East of Jordan.....	vv.1-5
b. Expostulation of Moses .....	vv.6-15
c. Assurances of the Tribes .....	vv.16-19
d. Moses' Stipulation.....	vv.20-24
e. Conditions Accepted .....	vv.25-27
f. The Nation Notified .....	vv.28-33

g. Gad's Portion.....	vv.34-36
h. Reuben's Portion.....	vv.37-38
i. Manasseh's Portion.....	vv.39-42
Review Of the Journeyings — Ch. 33	
a. 1st Stage: From Egypt to Sinai.....	vv.1-15
b. 2nd Stage: From Sinai to Kadesh.....	vv.16-17
c. 3rd Stage: 38 yrs Wandering — Kadesh to Kadesh.....	vv.18-36
d. 4th Stage: From Kadesh to Moab.....	vv.37-49
Final Instruction and Exhortation on the Plain of Moab.....	vv.50-56
The Borders of the Land — Ch. 34	
a. South Border.....	vv.1-5
b. West Border.....	v.6
c. North Border.....	vv.7-9
d. East Border.....	vv.10-13
e. Transjordan Area.....	vv.14-15
f. Leaders to Divide the Land by Lot.....	vv.16-29
Appointment of Levitical Cities & Cities of Refuge — Ch. 35	
a. Cities for Levites.....	vv. 1-3
b. Description of the Type of City Required.....	vv.4-5
c. Six Cities of Refuge Appointed.....	vv.6-8
d. Purpose of the Cities of Refuge.....	vv.9-15
e. Murder Defined.....	vv.16-21
f. Manslaughter Defined.....	vv.22-25
g. Warning Against Refugees Leaving the City.....	vv.26-29
h. More Than One Witness Required for a murder conviction.....	v.30
i. No Atonement for a Murderer.....	vv.31-34
Legislation Regarding Inheritances & Marriage of Heiresses — Ch. 36	
a. Objections to the Existing Law.....	vv.1-4
b. Limitation of Partners to a Marriage.....	vv.5-9
c. Conditions Accepted.....	vv.10-13

With this Analysis before us, we can see that the Book of Numbers can be briefly epitomised in three sections:

1. The old generation (1-14)
2. The transition era (15-20)
3. The new generation (21-36)

In similar manner, the journeyings can be divided into three parts:

1. Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea (1-14)
2. The wilderness wandering (15-20)
3. Kadesh to Moab (21-36)

Again, in the Book of Numbers there are:

- Two generations (1-14; 21-36)
- Two numberings (1-4; 26-27)
- Two journeyings (10-14; 21-27)
- Two instructings (5-9; 28-36)

**NUMBERS:**

**BEHOLD THE GOODNESS  
AND THE SEVERITY  
OF GOD**

***Section One***

***PREPARATION  
IN THE  
WILDERNESS***

***Ch. 1:1-10:10***

# The Book of Numbers

*The book records the history of Israel's wilderness-life from Sinai onwards. At Sinai they were incorporated as the people of God under the legal covenant, and were given the task of crossing the wilderness to the Promised Land. Instead of a rapid march to the Land of the Covenant, sad and terrible failure delayed them in their progress due to their lack of faith. But though the generation that left Egypt perished in the wilderness, the nation did not. A new generation arose that was led on to the borders of the land, conquerors over all opposition, until they reached the Plains of Moab, ready to enter into their inheritance. And here the story ends, to be taken up in The Book of Joshua. Deuteronomy is simply a review, and not a history.*

*The lesson is simple and obvious. Those called out of the Gentiles, as was Israel from Egypt, can be categorised under the heading of failure or success; the old generation or the new. The Book of Numbers reveals that though individuals may fail, God's purpose will not. Those who trust in Yahweh, and seek to do His will, shall succeed in spite of temporary failure. In Christ they have a priest, a mediator, whose resurrection is the sign of competence, and in whom they can conquer, and go on from strength to strength awaiting the consummation at his coming.*



# Outline

*In the first section, we find the ordering of the camp. The people, having been incorporated as the nation of God under the Mosaic Covenant, must now be placed to the test. They are to face the perils of the way, and the first requisite for success is to be in subjection to their Leader, Captain and King: Yahweh. Hence the first task is to organise those qualified as an army under His direction, so as to conquer any opposition that may be received on the way to the Promised land.*

*First there is ordered that a census of warriors be taken (Ch. 1). This requires an examination of pedigrees, for only true Israelites are to be allowed to fight the nation's battles. Complete identification with Israel is thus a first principle.*

*Then follows the order of worshippers (Ch. 2); for Israelites are not only to be warriors, but also worshippers. A true fighter for Yahweh is also a true worshipper; one appointment goes hand in hand with the other. Thirdly, there is the service of workers (Ch. 3,4). It is not enough that a man may desire to work for God, he must do it methodically and correctly as Yahweh directs. Hence the workers are given their proper function.*

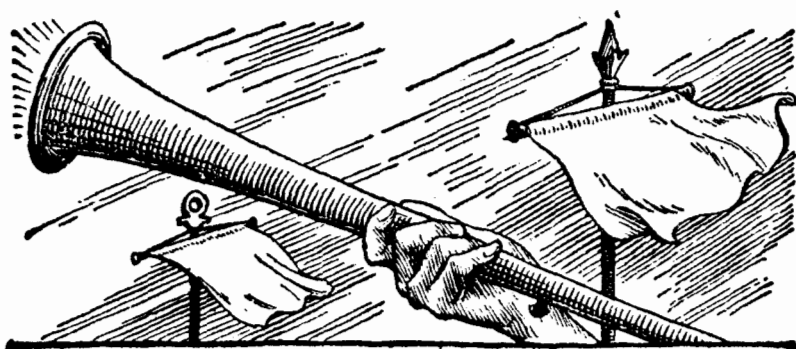
*But even when all is organised with the Tabernacle set up in the centre, the camp is not yet ready to move; the preparations are not yet complete. As the Ecclesia in the wilderness, Israel must be above reproach, and hence, there is first removed any polluting influences, so that the camp itself is pure (Ch. 5).*

*And now, having organised the army, the encampment, the workers, and purified the camp, opportunity is given any who so desire to reach unto a higher form of worship by the provision of the Nazarite vow (Ch. 6). Then as a national response to the goodness of Yahweh, the tribes, through their princes, present a freewill offering unto Yahweh which He graciously condescends to accept.*

*Thus individual initiative is encouraged when it does not violate any specific prohibition (Ch. 7).*

*And now all is ready. The Levites are organised for their service (Ch. 8) the Passover is celebrated; and the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day, witnesses that Yahweh is with His people (Ch. 9). Finally, there is heard the sounding of the silver trumpets, as the people gathered unto Him for worship and fellowship (Ch. 10), and to receive their instructions to leave for the Promised Land.*

---



## CHAPTER ONE

## CENSUS OF WARRIORS

*The opening scene of the Book of Numbers occurs 10½ months after the arrival of the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, and one month after the completion of the Tabernacle (Exod. 40:1-33). A census of the people is now taken, that the nation as a whole may be effectively organised for war against any enemy in the way. Mature men are selected for this purpose — true Israelites who answer to the qualifications laid down. Princes are placed over them; and the numerical strength of the nation established. It now constitutes the organised "Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38).*

**A Census Ordered Of Those 20 Years & Upwards — vv. 1-4**

*The nation is to be organised for war. Any battle, however, is to be treated as a fight of faith, and hence special qualifications are laid down for warriors.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses" —**

The conjunction at the commencement of the book links it with Leviticus. All the books of the Pentateuch commence in similar fashion, suggesting that they are five sections of one whole. Five is the number of grace, and the five books set forth in principle the steps of grace leading to life eternal. Though most Hebrew Bibles give the title of the book as *Be-Midbar*, "In the wilderness", some give it the title of *Vai-Dabber*, "And He spoke," this being the first word in the Hebrew. However, the title *In the wilderness* seems more appropriate for the book as a whole.

**"In the wilderness of Sinai" —** This is the generally accepted title of the book (see Introduction). The children of Israel reached Sinai in the 3rd month (Exod. 19:1), and abode there until the twentieth day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year (Num. 10:11). Therefore, the command to number the people for war came twenty days before leaving Sinai (Num. 1:1-2,18; 10:11-13). The nation was completely changed. It came out of Egypt a

rabble of slaves; it left Sinai a well organised army; a nation brought nigh to Yahweh by the Sinaitic covenant.

**"In the tabernacle of the congregation" —** This was the appointed meeting place between Yahweh and the people. In the Most Holy, He spake with Moses (Exod. 25:22; Num. 7:89). There, also, the instruction of the Book of Leviticus was given (Lev. 1:1, note).

**"On the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of Egypt, saying" —** As the children of Israel left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, the period of time here listed comprised a year and two weeks since the Exodus (Exod. 12:18), and approximately eleven months since arriving at Sinai (Exod. 19:1). A month earlier, the Tabernacle had been set up (Exod. 40:1).

**VERSE 2**

**"Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel" —** The census here ordered had been anticipated (Exod. 30:12), and the tax already paid (Exod. 38:25-26). There was evidently a re-count of the people made at this time to ensure that there had been no loss; but, apparently, no further tax was paid.

**"After their families, by the house of their fathers" —** The emphasis upon "families" and "fathers" is significant. It

indicates that family associations, and parental discipline and dignity were the basis of Israel's national order. "Family" suggests a unity in love; "father's house" suggests subjection to authority. Where those principles are found the rule of the father in discipline should be as easy as the love of obedience on the part of the family is delightful. "If I be a Father", saith Yahweh, "Where is Mine honour?" (Mal. 1:6). The honour paid a parent is the acknowledgement of his status in loving obedience. On the other hand, the Scriptures warn parents against the tyrannical abuse of their position, so as to avoid "provoking their children to anger" (Eph. 6:4). Family unity and love will prevent any such abuse on the part of parents, and will draw out from children the love, respect and obedience which it is the right of parents to expect. Unfortunately, in this evil age, the family unit as Scripturally defined is broken down by the permissiveness that is encouraged by the modern system of education which urges children to an independence that defies parental authority. Hence at an early age, children are leaving home, to escape from the control and discipline that family life demands. The result is a relaxation of conduct that leads to licence, crime and juvenile delinquency, as Paul predicted (2 Tim. 3:1-5). There is an inevitable clash between the principles of the world and those of the Word, and it is good that parents recognise this, and from an early age, by the exercise of firmness in discipline and warmth in love, train the child so that when subjected to the temptation of the world, he will remain with the family in love and in respect of his parents.

"With the number of their names" — To express a person by name suggests a more intimate knowledge of him than would otherwise be the case. Israel, as a nation, constituted the family of God, so that the family unit should have been a miniature of the nation in its unity, respect and love for Yahweh. A parallel expression as that before us is used of the Ecclesia in Acts 1:15, as it prepared for the fight of faith. The march to the Promised Land had to be an orderly movement, and hence the arrangements in regard to Israel as Yahweh's "Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). In like manner, Ecclesias today are exhorted to do all things "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40. See also 1 Cor. 11:34; Col.

2:5; Tit. 1:5).

"Every male by their polls" — "Polls" is another word for "skulls". It is good to count by heads, so long as they are used properly! Or by hands if there is work to be done!

### VERSE 3

"From twenty years old and upward" — Hence a measure of maturity was required, and not merely physical prowess.

"All that are able to go forth to war in Israel" — The word "war" in Hebrew is a noun, not a verb as in the A.V. All these men joined the army. Every citizen was a warrior; every family had a personal interest in the warfare of the nation, which Stephen describes as "the Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). Notice the requirements of the warriors. They had to be identified with an Israelitish family; they were counted by polls and so were expected to use their heads; they had to be mature for, as members of any army, they had to be constantly alert. With this in mind, consider the battle-cry of Nehemiah: "Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh. 4:14). Let us apply these principles in our Ecclesial activity, working and fighting against the world in support of our local Ecclesia, and we will play an important part in its development.

The Ecclesia today is likewise treated as an army. It is an army "ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13:48). The word "ordained" in the Greek is *tasso*, a military term signifying appointed into position. Individual members are appointed into position for eternal life, on the basis of "the Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. 2:19), and "his sheep follow his voice" when he "calleth them by name" (John 10:3; Rev. 3:5). They are "called to be soldiers" (2 Tim. 2:3-4), in a spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:3-5), and are warned against being "out of step" (1 Thess. 5:14 — the word "unruly" is from a Greek military term signifying *not to keep rank, to be insubordinate* — ct. v. 8, and compare with 2 Thess. 3:6. Obedience is required of soldiers who rank under Christ — 2 Thess. 3:14). The pattern for Ecclesial order and behaviour is set down in Numbers, forming the basis of Paul's instruction to Ecclesias in his epistles.

"Thou and Aaron shall number them

by their armies" — The R.V. renders this as hosts, identifying the word with that found in the divine title: Yahweh of hosts. The *armies*, plural, represent the various tribes organised for war, implying discipline, co-operation and submission to control. See Rom. 6:13; 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Thess. 3:6 where military terms are applied to the Ecclesias.

#### The Twelve Princes Over the Tribes — vv. 4-16

*As the restored Kingdom of God will have twelve princes over the tribes (Matt. 19:28), so it did in the past when the Kingdom was first organised.*

#### VERSE 4

"And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers" — The Hebrew word for "man" is *ish* denoting a great man in contrast to *adam*, that is used for the common run of men.

#### VERSE 5

"And these are the names of the men that shall stand with you" — These princes were honoured by standing with Moses and Aaron; as the Apostles will be honoured when they take their place with the Lord in the Age to come: "When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging . . ."

"Of the tribe of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur" — Reuben signifies *See a son!* Elizur is *El is a Rock*. Shedeur is *Our Shaddai is Fire* (cp Deut. 4:24). Reuben's name, in association with the names of the prince of his tribe, is a great contrast in significance to Jacob's description of his eldest son (cp. Gen. 49:4). Perhaps he, in faith, subsequently manifested qualities justifying this name. Be that as it may, the names of Reuben and his prince express the following statement: *See a Son revealing that El is a Rock, and the Shaddai are light*. These names are prophetic of what was accomplished in Christ who is both rock (Matt. 21:42-44) and light (John 8:12).

#### VERSE 6

"Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zuri-shaddai" — All the names of the princes are significant. These, in order, are *Hear; El is peace; My rock is the Shaddai*. The names, as forming statements, are found at the conclusion of this section.

#### VERSE 7

"Of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab" — The meanings: *Praise; the Oracle; Thy people are willing*. Nahshon was the brother-in-law of Aaron (Exod. 6:23), and an ancestor of David and the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:4). His name is derived from *nachash* denoting an enchanter or a diligent observer. Young gives the word to mean "a serpent" or "a diligent observer".

#### VERSE 8

"Of Issachar: Nethaneel the son of Zuar" — The three names mean: *Reverder; El (God) gives; small or little*.

#### VERSE 9

"Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon" — Signifying: *Dwelling; El is Father; Valorous or Strong*.

#### VERSE 10

"Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud" — These names signify: *Increaser; Double Fruit; My God hears; People of glory*. Elishama was the grandfather of Joshua (1 Chron. 7:26).

"Of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedhazur" — These three names signify: *Forgetting; El recompenses; Ransomed of the rock*.

#### VERSE 11

"Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni" — These three names denote: *Son of his right hand; Father of judgment; Warlike*.

#### VERSE 12

"Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammi-shaddai" — These three names: *Judgment; helping brother; People of the Shaddai*.

#### VERSE 13

"Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran" — These three names: *Blessing; God meets; Troubler*. Ocran is from a root signifying to disturb.

#### VERSE 14

"Of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel" — These names signify: *Company; El Gathers; Known of El (God)*.

#### VERSE 15

"Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan"

— These names: *Wrestling; Evil brother; Having eyes.*

The order of the tribes, and the significance of the names when set in sentences are significant. The order of the tribes spell out the following sentence: *See a son* (Reuben); *hear him* (Simeon); *praise him* (Judah); *He will reward* (Issachar); by providing *dwelling* (Zebulun); and *increasing* (Joseph) with *double fruit* (Ephraim) those who *forgetting* (Manasseh) the past, seek *the Son of God's right hand*, (Benjamin), with whom they will be *blessed* (Asher) with the *company* (Gad) of the redeemed after *wrestling* (Naphtali) with the flesh.

The order in which the tribes are found in Scripture varies almost every time they are listed. The order adopted here is as follows: the five sons of Leah (vv. 5-9); the three sons of Rachel (vv. 10-11); the one son of Bilhah (v. 12); the two sons of Zilpah (v. 13-14); and the one son of Bilhah (v. 15).

Now consider the statements formed by the full names of each of the princes:

**REUBEN:** See the Son revealing that El (God) is a rock, and the Shaddai (Almighty, but in the plural relating to the Elohim) is Light.

**SIMEON:** Hear him, for El provides peace, and the Shaddai will be a Rock.

**JUDAH:** Praise him, for the Oracle (the Word) will develop the people of liberality.

**ISSACHAR:** The reward will be given of God to the humble.

**ZEBULUN:** He will provide a dwelling, for God is a Father to the strong.

**JOSEPH:** The children of the Increaser will produce double fruit, for God hears the people of glory, causing them to forget, recompensing them through the ransomed Rock.

**BENJAMIN:** The Son of His right hand is a Father of judgment to the warlike.

**DAN:** The judgment through the helping brother will reveal the people of the Shaddai.

**ASHER:** The blessing will come as God meets (to subdue) the troubler.

**GAD:** The company God will gather will be known of Him.

**NAPHTALI:** He will successfully wrestle with the evil brother for he has eyes to discern.

## VERSE 16

“These were the renowned of the con-

gregation” — The word “renowned” is from *qara* and signifies *those called from*; and hence those separated from the congregation as were the Apostles (see John 15:16). The word “congregation” is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed* signifying “witness” or “testimony” as in v. 1. The princes assumed authoritative positions over the nation as the Apostles did over the Ecclesias. Israel, as a nation, is likened to the bride of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5), His witness among the nations (Jer. 13:11). Hence the use of the feminine form of witness.

“Princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel” — The word for “thousands” is *aleph*. This is the first letter of the Hebrew calendar, and as such does duty for the number *one*, and also, with a slightly different pointing as here, for *thousand* in the sense of a *family*: a multiple of one. The statement therefore signifies the “heads of families in Israel”.

## Only Israelites To Be Numbered — vv. 17-19

*The Israelitish character of the army is emphasised in that the census takes particular heed of the pedigree of each warrior. They are segregated according to their families and tribes for numbering. Only true Israelites are included in the army. Hence any of the mixed multitude would have to seek full adoption into the family of Israel to be included. This teaches the exclusiveness of the Truth.*

## VERSE 17

“And Moses and Aaron took these men” — By publicly setting these men forth in their positions, Moses and Aaron endorsed their appointment (Exod. 18:25), hence elevating their status from that of mere men, to persons of authority and importance — as Christ did that of the Apostles in the Ecclesias.

“Which are expressed by their names” — This statement shows the importance of the names of the princes, and why they are recorded. It indicates that the sentences that are built up out of the meaning of them are of proper significance, and not a matter of mere manipulation.

## VERSE 18

“And they assembled all the congregation together” — For “congregation” see note v. 16. The people were called together for the purpose of taking a census.

This was designed to endorse the complete identity of each individual with the nation. Yahweh, having established a commonwealth in Israel by His just, equitable laws, having ordained everything relative to His requirements for worship through the erection of the Tabernacle. His dwelling place and throne in Israel, having completed the giving of His laws and the appointment of His priests and levites, now commands the mustering of the people for certain reasons:

(1) That they might be properly organized for war in a fight of faith as they moved through the wilderness;

(2) That they might be equipped to enter the land and obtain the inheritance promised to Abraham then in possession of powerful enemies;

(3) That the nation might be properly ordered in relation to divine worship (see Ch. 2:32-33);

(4) That the tribes and families might be distinguished in relation to the nation as a whole (Ch. 2:34).

(5) That proper order might be observed in the coming invasion and settlement of the Promised Land (Josh. 13:31-33).

This principle is carried over into instructions given to the New Testament Ecclesias which likewise had to conduct their affairs "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40), and as an army in the field (1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Thess. 3:6).

**"On the first day of the second month"** — Apparently the census was completed in a day. This would not be difficult, for a numbering had already been made when the poll-tax was paid (Exod. 38:25-26).

**"And they declared their pedigrees after their families by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upwards, by their polls"** — Each true male Israelite (except those who were of the tribe of Levi) was a soldier and was to serve in this capacity as Israel pressed towards and into Canaan. Gentiles who embraced the hope of Israel, and so identified themselves with the nation such as Caleb, were evidently incorporated into one or other of the tribes. In Christ, baptised believers are incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:12-13), and numbered among its twelve tribes (Rev. 7:1-12). It is sometimes assumed that old men were exempt from such military service, but nowhere is this stated. Apparently their service con-

tinued until their death. That certainly is the case with those "in Christ" today.

## VERSE 19

**"As Yahweh commanded Moses, so he numbered them"** — This is the normal expression of absolute obedience to divine command.

**"In the wilderness of Sinai"** — This distinguishes this census from the second one recorded in *Numbers* which took place in the Plains of Moab (Num. 26).

## The Numerical Strength Of The Tribes — vv. 20-43

*The census reveals that the Israelites are a large company of people to commence such a journey. Critics of the Bible claim that the land could not possibly support such a large group, and therefore they would amend and lessen the number. However, other parts of the Word support the idea that the Israelites comprised a large community (Deut. 29:5; Psa. 78:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:4), and the record clearly shows that they did not depend on the land, but were fed from heaven. The incidence of miracle is essential to the Bible narrative. No miracle, and the Bible is false — for the greatest miracle of all time is the resurrection and glorification of the Lord, and this is absolutely essential to the veracity of the Word.*

## VERSE 20

**"And the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son"** — Though Reuben was Jacob's firstborn, he disgraced his status and was demoted (see Gen. 49:4). Accordingly, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph (see 1 Chron. 5:1). See the note on v. 21.

**"By their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war"** — The word "generations" is *toledath*, descendants, from *yalad*, "to give birth." It is a different word to that used in Lev. 25:30 which relates to a revolution of time, or an age. Entrance into the army was determined by descent, maturity and ability. Apparently, old age did not disqualify. Physical disability seems to be the only exemption to army service in Israel.

## VERSE 21

**"Those that were numbered of them,**

even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred" — Reuben was not the largest tribe: Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali ranking upon it; a partial fulfilment of Gen. 49:3-4. Reuben 46,500.

**VERSES 22,23**

"Of the children of Simeon . . . were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred" — Contrast with v. 21. Simeon — 59,300.

**VERSES 24,25**

"Of the children of Gad . . . were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty" — In this census, Gad is placed out of position as to the enumeration of the tribes (cp. v. 14), but it is given in the order associated with the Tabernacle. Gad is the only tribe whose number is stated in a broken hundred. Gad — 45,650.

**VERSES 26,27**

"Of the children of Judah . . . were

threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred" — Judah 74,600.

**VERSES 28,29**

"Of the children of Issachar . . . were fifty and four thousand and four hundred" — Issachar — 54,400.

**VERSES 30,31**

"Of the children of Zebulun . . . were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred" — Zebulun — 57,400.

**VERSES 32,33**

"Of the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim" — The listing of Ephraim before Manasseh, and the larger number of warriors in his tribe, shows that it was already assuming the lead over Manasseh. See Gen. 48:5,14-19.

"Were forty thousand and five hundred" — Ephraim — 40,500. Though Ephraim was numerically smaller than Reuben, the aggregate of the sons of Joseph greatly outnumbered him.

## THE CENSUS

A first census was taken at Horeb, and a second on the Plains of Moab. It was found that there was very little wastage, even though the old generation had perished in the wilderness. For convenience of comparison, the parallel figures for the census in Horeb are set out against those from the census in Moab.

Tribe	Horeb Census (Num. 1,2)	Moab Census (Num. 26)
Reuben .....	46,500	43,730
Simeon.....	59,300	22,200
Gad.....	45,650	40,500
Judah.....	74,600	76,500
Issachar.....	54,400	64,300
Zebulun.....	57,400	60,500
Ephraim.....	40,500	32,500
Manasseh.....	32,200	52,700
Benjamin.....	35,400	45,600
Dan.....	62,700	64,400
Asher.....	41,500	53,400
Naphtali.....	53,400	45,400
Total	603,550	601,730

These figures comprise only the "men of war", adults twenty years of age and over. When the women, children and Levites are added to this number, allowance must be made for a community of two million people or more as comprising the nation of Israel.



**VERSES 34,35**

"Of the children of Manasseh . . . were thirty and two thousand and two hundred" — Manasseh — 32,200. See the note above in regard to Ephraim.

**VERSES 36,37**

"Of the children of Benjamin . . . were thirty and five thousand and four hundred" — Benjamin — 35,400.

**VERSE 38,39**

"Of the children of Dan . . . were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred" — Dan — 62,700.

**VERSES 40,41**

"Of the children of Asher . . . were forty and one thousand and five hundred" — Asher — 41,500.

**VERSE 42,43**

"Of the children of Naphtali . . . were fifty and three thousand and four hundred" — Naphtali — 53,400

**Summary Of The Census — vv. 44-46**

*The summary reveals that there had been no loss or gain over the previous census.*

**VERSE 44**

"These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, being twelve men; each one for the house of his fathers" — Note the sad commentary in Num. 26:64.

**VERSE 45**

"So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upwards" — See note Ch. 2:2.

"All that were able to go forth to war in Israel" — Apparently only personal disability disqualified from this responsibility.

**VERSE 46**

"Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty" — Though taken over a month since the last census, there was no variation in the number now listed. How different was the case once Israel was condemned to wander and die in the wilderness! The males number 603,550, and the females

probably were of the same number, totalling over 1,200,000 persons who died within the compass of 40 years. Death would have been very familiar to Israel under those conditions, a trail of graves throughout the wilderness would tell the story of the failure of the nation (see 1 Cor. 10:5), and each month would see a dramatic decline in the number of those living over a certain age. However, as there is no variation in the number given in the census taken a month earlier as recorded in Exod. 38:26, and that given now, evidently this census merely reaffirmed and segregated into the tribes, the people then numbered.

**The Levites Exempted From War — vv. 47-54**

*The Levites are excluded from this part of the census, and from the regulations which are laid down for the other tribes. They have their own particular warfare: that associated with the Tabernacle service.*

**VERSE 47**

"But the Levites after the tribes of their fathers were not numbered among them" — Their census was taken separately of all males from one month upwards. The Levites given to the service of the Tabernacle were appointed a special kind of warfare exclusive to their ministry (see Num. 8:22-26).

**VERSE 48**

"For Yahweh had spoken unto Moses, saying" — The R.V. gives this the present tense, *spake unto Moses*. Apparently, at this point of time the Levites were formally separated from the rest of Israel, though, in fact, this principle of separation had been exhibited by their action in avenging Yahweh's honour in the matter of the golden calf (Exod. 32:26). An endorsement of it is found in the Levitical legislature (Lev. 25:32).

**VERSE 49**

"Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel" — Note the sevenfold commands relating to the Levites: (1) — Not to be numbered with the rest of Israel; (2) — Placed in charge of the Tabernacle and its vessels; (3) — Ordered to carry them from place to place; (4) — To minister unto it (5) — To

encamp about it; (6) — To set it up and take it down; (7) — To guard it against violation (vv. 49-51).

#### VERSE 50

“But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that belong to it” — See notes Num. 3:7-8; 4:15-33; 8:5-26.

“They shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof” — It was the duty of the Levites to carry all sections of the Tabernacle and its furniture from place to place during the wilderness wanderings. They stood in relation to the rest of Israel where the Ecclesia stands today in relation to the world at large. As it was the duty of the Levites to carefully superintend the conveying of the Tabernacle and its contents from place to place, so it is the duty of the members of Ecclesias to carefully supervise the things of the Truth as it is set up from place to place.

“And they shall minister unto it” — They were not only to erect it at those places determined by Yahweh, but they were to be its ministers, assisting the priests in the worship of the people.

“And shall encamp round about the tabernacle” — The three great families of Levites were encamped around the northern, western and southern sides of the Tabernacle, whilst Moses and the priests were encamped on its eastern side, that being the front entrance.

#### VERSE 51

“And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up” — See Ch. 10:17-21.

“And the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” — Anybody violating the sanctuary was to be executed. The word “stranger” is from the Hebrew *zuvr* from a root signifying *to turn aside*. In Proverbs it is used to describe an apostate Israelite, one who has turned aside from his God. Here it is used for any unauthorised person who may presumptuously approach the Tabernacle.

#### VERSE 52

“And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp” — There was separation of tribe from tribe. Each was to dwell in its place around

the Tabernacle, under its own standard, contributing in its own place to the general welfare like autonomous ecclesias, thus making up parts of the whole. Probably the purpose of this census was to segregate the individual tribes, and perhaps to appoint the “mixed multitude” to their tribal positions, for the total number of the people showed no variation from that taken a month earlier.

“And every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts” — See Psa. 20:5.

#### VERSE 53

“But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony” — The word “testimony” is *’edoth*, and denotes *witness*. The Levites encamped close to the Tabernacle on the southern, western and northern sides, forming a barrier between it and the various tribal encampments.

“That there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel” — The Levites were engaged in a spiritual warfare to preserve the purity of the nation, and save any from “the wrath to come” (cp. v. 51). There is a need, also, to preserve the purity of the Truth today as far as Ecclesias are concerned both by warning (2 Cor. 5:11), and action (1 Tim. 1:20). Unfortunately, later in the history of the nation, the Levites failed to carry out their duty in that regard, and this became the ground of indictment levelled against them (Ezek. 44:6-8). The word “congregation” in this statement is *’edah*, similar to *’edoth*, the feminine form of “witness”, used now in the sense of an assembly or concourse.

“And the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony” — The Hebrew word is similar in regard to both “congregation” and “testimony” demonstrating that the “witnessing” of the former was to be in regard to the latter. The phrase *keep the charge* is a military term. See its use in Num. 3:7,8,38; 8:24-26 (cp. margin); 9:10,23; 18:3-5; 1 Chron. 23:32; 2 Chron. 13:11. This statement comprises a key phrase of Paul in his epistles to Timothy: “This *charge* I commit unto thee, son Timothy” (1 Tim. 1:18). The Greek word *parangelia* denotes a proclamation or command received of a superior and transmitted to those beneath him in status for their observation in conducting a campaign. Both as a noun or as a verb (*paragello*) it occurs in the

following places rendered as either "commandment", "command", or "charge": 1 Tim. 1:3,5,18; 4:11; 5:7; 6:13,27. Paul, as a superior officer was giving the "charge" or "command" to Timothy as to a soldier in the field of battle. Timothy, and those with him, stood in relation to the Truth where the Levites did in relation to the

Tabernacle worship.

### VERSE 54

"And the children of Israel did according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses so did they" — The work of re-organisation was carried out meticulously according to the divine instructions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ORDER OF WORSHIPPERS

*In the plan of march set forth in this chapter, the first steps towards nationhood are made. Its basis is to be inter-tribal relationships; its structure: that of a city with properly defined quarters for all, so that all can be easily located. Even the place of the Levites is indicated, though they are separated from the body of the nation for a prescribed service in connection with the sanctuary. As Israel constitutes the Ecclesia in the wilderness, its plan of march is to be orderly, its plan of worship such that the people's religious and politico-military activities are completely integrated.*

#### The Eastern Encampment Under Judah — vv. 1-9

*The chief position, "toward the rising of the sun" is given to Judah. Though the status of firstborn was originally vested in Reuben, because of his disgraceful conduct this is now changed in conformity with the declaration of Jacob (Gen. 49:3-4). The positioning of Judah, therefore, constantly asserted the intention of God to supercede the natural firstborn by the spiritual firstborn, the true "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5).*

#### VERSE 1

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying," — This formula introduces a new section of the Book of Numbers.

#### VERSE 2

"Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the

ensign of their father's house" — The word "standard" is rendered "banner" elsewhere (see Song 2:4; 6:4,10). The Hebrew *degel* is from a root signifying to flaunt, to raise a flag, and hence to be conspicuous. The standards marked the four-fold division of the camp as a whole (see vv. 9,16,24,31).

The word *ensign* is *othoth*. Each tribe had its own *ensign* (*oth*), but evidently the leading tribe's *ensign* was the standard for the group of three tribes associated together. The word *oth* is from a root that acknowledges the close relationship of the members of the tribe, their mutual assent to the tribal order. The national organisation thus established was the natural one, by families, or according to the "father's house", as stated in Num. 1:2. This was important both for war as for worship. For the term "family" implies subjection to authority, whilst the term "father's house" shows that this authority has its grounds in the

natural relation. Such was Yahweh's relation to His people, of which the Father provided the image. They were linked together in family groups comprising Yahweh's house (Heb. 3:2), brother fighting alongside brother, an army so united as to provide the greatest strength; and yet one under authority to the Father. The very word for family suggests this. It is *mishpachah* and signifies to be united by birth. Parkhurst gives the meaning as "to humble, to subject" and hence to be under the authority of the master of the family. So, in Latin, *familia*, "a family", is from *famulus*, "a servant".

The command that Israel was to be united according to "their Father's house" foreshadows the order of individual Ecclesias. They, too, are to be united on a family basis, owning a common Father, and joined together in a common cause. Unfortunately, in the world, the family principle is despised, and children are encouraged by modern philosophy to go their own way, and to do their own thing. The result is an impatience towards family restrictions and parental authority, so that juvenile delinquency is rife, as Paul warned it would be (2 Tim. 3:2-3), and families quickly break up. Let us take heed.

**"Far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch"** — There was a space drawn between the tribes and the Tabernacle, measuring perhaps some 2000 cubits (cp. Josh. 3:4). This taught the children of Israel, that though they enjoyed privileges of association with Yahweh greater than that of other nations, there was to be no easy familiarity with God; they must not presume upon such privilege. This separation between God and worshippers needs to be maintained today, when disrespect to authority, and easy familiarity is the order of the day. We can become too familiar to the Father, even in prayer. The growing tendency to address Him with the more familiar pronouns such as *you* and *your* rather than *Thee* and *Thou* tends to break down that exclusiveness and remoteness which is God's right, taught by the title of *The Holy One* of Israel.

The term "the Tabernacle of the congregation" does not mean that the Tabernacle belonged to the congregation. The expression is better rendered as *the Tent of Meeting*, the word "congregation" being *mowade*, or appointed time for meet-

ing.

### VERSE 3

**"And on the east side toward the rising of the sun"** — The word "east" is from *qedmah*, and signifies the fore part, the front or head. The phrase can be rendered: "And on the fore side towards the east . . ." The east is always the front to the Hebrew, for in establishing a direction or position, he always faces east, "toward the rising of the sun", this being the token of a new day, and of a new epoch. Christ's coming, and the millennial Day of Yahweh, is described as "the rising of the sun" (see 2 Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:2). Hence the true Israelite was always taught to anticipate the coming of the Day of Yahweh, tokened by the rising of the Sun of righteousness, the Messiah. He looked hopefully towards the east, where, in the morning, the rising sun gave promise of a day of blessing from Yahweh. The position of the encampment of Judah was defined as the foremost part towards the rising of the sun. As such it foreshadowed the Lion of the tribe of Judah referred to in Rev. 5:5. The expression is used in Rev. 16:12 to describe Christ's coming. The title "kings of the east" is rendered by Bro. Thomas as "kings who are out of a sun's rising", the "sun" representing the Lord. By the very arrangement of the camp, Israel was encouraged to look to the dawn of the new day of Messiah's reign. It was appropriate, therefore, that Judah, from whom came the Messiah (Gen. 49:10), should show the way. Judah assumed this position, not because of a superiority of numbers in the tribe, but because of divine appointment due to Reuben being supplanted (Gen. 49:3).

**"And Nahshon the son of Amminadab shall be captain of a children of Judah"** — See Num. 1:7 for the significance of these names.

### VERSE 4

**"And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and fourteen thousand and six hundred"** — See Num. 1:26, and note that whereas Reuben was first in the numbering (Num. 1:20), Judah is given first place in the positioning.

### VERSE 5

**"And those that do pitch next unto him shall be the tribe of Issachar"** — In the

positioning of the tribes Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, all children of Leah were grouped together. Their joint names proclaim the message: Praise (the Son), he will reward with a dwelling (an inheritance).

“And Nethaneel the son of Zuar shall be captain of the children of Issachar” — See Num. 1:8.

#### VERSE 6

“And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred” — See Num. 1:28-29.

#### VERSE 7

“Then the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon shall be captain of the children of Zebulun” — See Num. 1:9.

#### VERSE 8

“And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred” — See Num. 1:31.

#### VERSE 9

“All that were numbered in the camp of

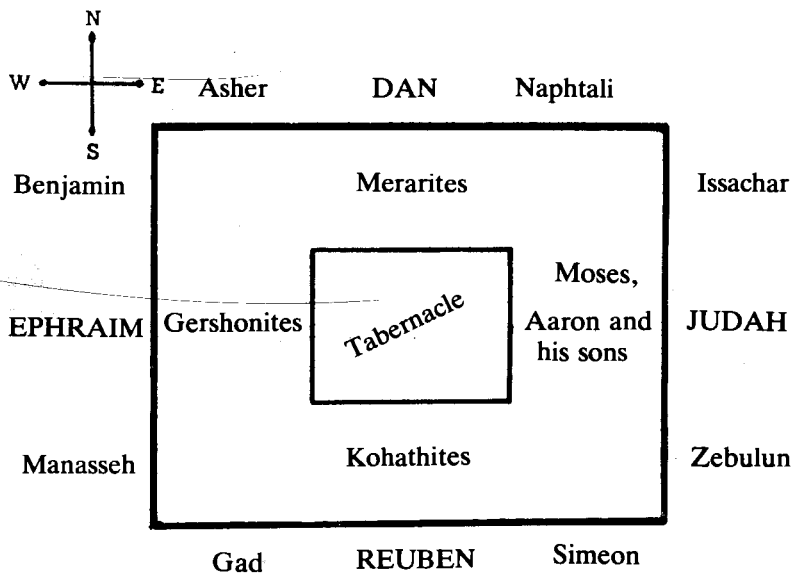
Judah were an hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth” — Judah's encampment, representing 186,400 males above the age of twenty years, not only encamped on the east, but led the tribes as the people moved from place to place. To this number, of course, must be added the women and minors under the age of twenty years.

**The Southern Encampment Under Reuben — vv. 10-16**

*The southern encampment comprises Reuben in conjunction with the associate tribes of Simeon and Gad.*

#### VERSE 10

“On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur” — See Ch. 1:5. The word “south” is *teman* in Hebrew, and denotes the right hand of a person facing east. The right hand is the position of strength and privilege. This was granted Reuben, even though he was deposed from the status of firstborn. In type, Reuben re-



Arrangement of encampment of the Tribes and the Tabernacle

presented Israel after the flesh, deposed from his original status to make way for the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). This type was set forth in the positioning of the marching tribes.

#### VERSE 11

"And his host, and those that were numbered thereof, were forty and six thousand and five hundred" — See Num. 1:21.

#### VERSE 12

"And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon" — Reuben and Simeon, sons of Leah, pitched by Gad (of Leah's handmaid, Zilpah), instead of Levi, not listed among the tribes, the other son of Leah.

"And the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai" — See note Numbers 1:6.

#### VERSE 13

"And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred" — See Numbers 1:23.

#### VERSE 14

"Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel" — In Numbers 1:14, Reuel is called Deuel. The letters Rosh ר and Daleth ד are similar in appearance, and could easily be mistaken for each other. The meanings of the two names are also similar. Whereas Deuel means *known of El*, Reuel signifies *friend of El*. Elsewhere his name is given as Deuel. See Num. 7:42,47; 10:20.

#### VERSE 15

"And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty" — See Numbers 1:25.

#### VERSE 16

"All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben were an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies" — The grand total of Reuben's encampment on the south of the Tabernacle was 151,450.

"And they shall set forth in the second rank" — In accordance with the words of

Jacob, Reuben was made subject to Judah, and this was illustrated in the marching order of the tribes.

#### The Tabernacle In The Centre — v. 17

*In the midst of the marching tribes and guarded by them was strategically placed the Tabernacle. This taught the lesson that the things of Yahweh should be found at the very heart of Israel.*

#### VERSE 17

"Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp" — The word "congregation" is *mow'ed* "appointment", "an appointed time", and hence rendered by the RV, "tent of meeting". This sacred tent was conveyed from place to place in the very midst of the marching tribes, but not in the order that may be suggested from this verse. As it reads in the A.V., it could be interpreted as teaching that the Tabernacle and all its furniture was conveyed from place to place in the very centre of the army after Gad and before Ephraim, but this, obviously, is not the case according to the order outlined in chapter 10. What, then, are we to make of the verse before us? It is merely a statement commanding that at the time the marching tribes moved off, so also must the Levites, bearing the Tabernacle. The proper order is given in Chapter 10. The words "set forward" is from the Hebrew *naca*, and signifies to "pull up tent pins" and hence to make ready to start, as well as to commence. Again, the word "midst" in the Hebrew does not necessary mean in the centre, and is frequently used to denote *amongst*. Thus: "Thou art a mighty prince *among* us" (Gen. 23:6), "the strange gods that are *among* you" (Gen. 35:2), and so in Num. 1:47,49; 2:33 etc. In these places the word does not mean *in the centre*, but *in the midst* of Israel. And the sense in which this is to be understood is explained in the rest of the verse before us.

"As they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards" — The order to be observed is that expressed later in Numbers 10.

#### The Western Camp Under Ephraim — Vv. 18-24

*On the western side, behind the Tabernacle, encamped Ephraim with its associated tribes: Manasseh and Benjamin.*

**VERSE 18**

“On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies” — See Num. 1:33. The west is expressed in Hebrew by the word *yam* “roar”, a word frequently rendered “sea” because of its roaring. This term is used to symbolise the Gentiles (Isa. 57:20), who are behind Israel in the purpose of Yahweh. The term is used to denote the west because of the Mediterranean Sea which is west of the land.

“And the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud” — See Num. 1:10. Elishama was the grandfather of Joshua — 1 Chron. 7:26.

**VERSE 19**

“And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty thousand, five hundred” — See Num. 1:33.

**VERSE 20**

“And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh” — Ephraim and Manasseh were the two sons of Joseph. When the right of the firstborn was taken from Reuben, its three-fold privileges: of leadership, a double portion of inheritance, and priesthood, were divided among the other sons of Jacob. Judah received the first, Joseph the second, and Levi the third (see notes on Gen. 49 and the statement of 1 Chron. 5:1). Appropriately, the tribes that sprung from the two sons of Rachel are associated together on the western side of the Tabernacle: Ephraim, Manasseh (from Joseph) and Benjamin.

“And the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur” — See Num. 1:10.

**VERSE 21**

“And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred” — See Num. 1:35.

**VERSE 22**

“Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni” — See Num. 1:11.

**VERSE 23**

“And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were thirty and four

thousand and four hundred” — Num. 1:37.

**VERSE 24**

“All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred throughout their armies” — The grand total of Ephraim’s encampment on the west of the Tabernacle was 108,100.

“And they shall go forward in the third rank” — The tribes of Ephraim made up the third division of Israel.

**The Northern Encampment Under Dan — vv. 25-31**

*On the northern side, to the left of the Tabernacle looking east, encamped Dan with its associate tribes: Asher and Naphtali.*

**VERSE 25**

“And the standard of the camp of Dan shall be on the north side by their armies” — See Num. 1:38,39. The word “north” signifies that which is *hidden, dark or unknown*. It comes from a root signifying *to hide*, and by implication *to hoard or reserve*. It is described as the place from whence comes fair weather associated with the terrible majesty of God (Job 37:22), the place empty of man’s presence (Job 26:7), the symbol of God’s throne (Isa. 14:13-14). The past judgment on Jerusalem at the hands of the Cherubim, and the future judgment on the Gentiles are both described as coming out of the north (Ezek. 1:4; Isa. 14:31; 41:25). Hence it is appropriate that Dan, whose name means *Judge*, should be situated north of the Tabernacle. In the order of the march he came behind the others, a reminder of the coming judgment of God, firstly on believers, then on Israel, finally on Gentiles (1 Pet. 4:17).

“And the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai” — See Num. 1:12.

**VERSE 26**

“And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were threescore and two thousand and seven hundred” — See Num. 1:38.

**VERSE 27**

“And those that encamp by him shall be Asher” — Three tribes were associated together that had descended from the

## SUMMARY OF ISRAEL'S WARRIORS

### *First Division*

Judah .....	74,600
Issachar .....	54,400
Zebulun .....	57,400

**TOTAL OF JUDAH'S ENCAMPMENT UNDER THE LION .....** 186,400

### *Second Division*

Reuben .....	46,500
Simeon .....	59,300
Gad .....	45,650

**TOTAL OF REUBEN'S ENCAMPMENT UNDER THE MAN .....** 151,450

### *Third Division*

Ephraim .....	40,500
Manasseh .....	32,200
Benjamin .....	35,400

**TOTAL OF EPHRAIM'S ENCAMPMENT UNDER THE OX .....** 108,100

### *Fourth Division*

Dan .....	62,700
Asher .....	41,500
Naphtali .....	53,400

**TOTAL OF DAN'S ENCAMPMENT UNDER THE EAGLE .....** 157,600  
**Total .....** 603,550





handmaidens of Jacob: Dan (Bilhah), Asher (Zilpah), Naphtali (Bilhah).

"And the captain of the children of Asher shall be Pagiel the son of Ocran" — See Num. 1:13.

#### VERSE 28

"And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were forty and one thousand and five hundred" — See Num. 1:40.

#### VERSE 29

"Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali shall be Ahira the son of Enan" — See Num. 1:15.

#### VERSE 30

"And his host, and those that were numbered of them, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred" — See Num. 1:43.

#### VERSE 31

"All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan were an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred" — The grand total of Dan's encampment on the north of the Tabernacle was 157,600.

"They shall go hindmost with their standards" — In marching they protected the reward of the tribes. See Num. 10:25-27.

#### Summary of Those Numbered — vv. 32-34

*A general summary is now given of those thus numbered. This probably included the "mixed multitude" but excluded the Levites who were numbered separately.*

#### VERSE 32

"These are those which were numbered of the children of Israel by the house of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their hosts were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty" — The grand total probably included the mixed multitude, the members of which would be allocated to various tribes. This is probably the significance of the repeated statement: "his host, and those that

*were numbered of them"*. As believers today are identified with the twelve tribes of Israel (Eph. 2:12-13; Rev. 7:4-9), so the "mixed multitude" would have been when they came out of Egypt. The numbers of warriors can be summarised as shown opposite.

#### VERSE 33

"But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel" — The Levites were numbered, but separately. See Num. 1:47-49; 3:39.

"As Yahweh commanded Moses" — The separation of the Levites was by divine appointment.

#### VERSE 34

"And the children of Israel did according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses" — They fulfilled their obligation in that regard. See Exod. 19:8. Unfortunately, under pressure of trials, they failed to follow Yahweh's instruction in other matters.

"So they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward" — The four main standards proclaimed the purpose of Yahweh in Israel. The Lion symbolised Rulership; the Man, the ability to manifest Godlikeness (Gen. 1:26); the Ox proclaimed the privilege of worship in service; and the Eagle, the means by which all the foregoing can be developed: the Spirit manifested in the Word. The four standards, therefore, proclaimed an exhortation: He who would rule (the Lion), must attain unto God likeness (the Man), and this demands the sacrifice of self in service (Ox), with the aid of the Spirit word (the Eagle). These standards shadowed forth the characteristics of the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), summed up in the Lord who combined all titles in himself: the Ruler, the Man of God, the Service, and the Word.

"Every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers" — The emphasis upon "the families" and "the house of their fathers" shows that the family unit and family discipline were the basis of Israel's nationhood. The former speaks of unity and love, the latter speaks of respect and obedience. The Ecclesia, today, should be similarly based. See Notes vv. 1-2.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SERVICE OF WORKERS

*Having considered the order to be assumed by the worshippers in their travels through the wilderness, attention in the next two chapters is given to the workers in the service of Yahweh. The tribe of Levi is separated for that purpose. Its members are in as distinct relation to the Book of Numbers as the priests are to the Book of Leviticus. They are appointed to guard the Tent of Meeting from any pollution from without, or to attend to it and its various parts during its travels, whilst the priests attend to the sanctuary when it is set up, and have their place therein as intercessors and worshippers. The Levites face outwards, guarding the Tent of the Tabernacle from pollution; the priests face inwards leading to God. This is the essential difference between what might be styled ministry and priesthood. Both the Levites who minister or prepare for worship, and the priests who conduct it, are types of the saints, who both minister and act as a spiritual priesthood (Heb. 13:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:5). The Levitical service is from God and for God, but towards men. It defines what the Scriptures call "ministry". The name "Levi" signifies "joined", and their work was to help men in their approach to God, so that they might be joined with Him in fellowship.*

#### **Aaron's Family Appointed To The Priesthood — vv. 1-4**

*A summary is provided of the appointment of the priests in preparation for a more detailed outline of the service of the Levites.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"These are the generations of Aaron and Moses"** — For the significance of the term *generations*, see introduction to the Book of Genesis. The term in this form occurs fourteen times in Scripture (twice seven) and has application to the covenant of Yahweh. It does not always relate to descendants. Consider, for example,

its use in the phrase: "The generations of the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 2:4), and similar uses of it. Accordingly, there is no specific mention of Moses' descendants in this chapter, though his influence on all that was appointed and done is apparent and prominent. He had no desire to found a dynasty (cp. Jud. 18:30), but every desire that the appointments of Yahweh, made through him, should be carried out, and that the line of priestly descent through Aaron should be established. This was only possible through the authority of Moses, so that what follows can be said to stem from him as much as it did from Aaron. Both were

essential to the appointments, and hence it is said that both men were joined in establishing the generations of priests and levites.

The natural descendants of Moses are mentioned only generally as the Amramites. The dignity of Moses was personal, not hereditary. He had, and desired to have, no successor in his office (Exod. 32:10; Num. 14:12), except the prophet promised like unto himself (cp. Exod. 4:13; Deut. 18:18). On the other hand, Aaron begat an hereditary priesthood, which ultimately was superceded.

In view of the greater status of Moses, why should Aaron be put first in the statement of this verse? Because both men typed Christ, but in different relationships. Aaron did so as a priest; Moses did so as a leader, lawgiver and ruler. In Christ, priesthood preceded his rulership, hence the placing of the names in this order.

"In the day that Yahweh spake with Moses in mount Sinai" — These instructions therefore predate those of Numbers 1:1.

#### VERSE 2

"And these are the names of the sons of Aaron" — See notes Exod. 6:23.

"Nadab the firstborn" — His name signifies *Of one's freewill*, or *Liberal*. Though he was the firstborn he died because of wickedness, and his position was taken by a younger brother. The number of firstborns recorded in Scripture who were deposed from their position as such in favour of a younger son is remarkable. It foreshadows the purpose of Yahweh to provide a younger son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to supercede His first son, Adam.

"And Abihu" — His name signifies *He (God) is Father*. The conjunction and joins him with Nadab, perhaps to indicate their association together. They were joined in wickedness, and died together under tragic circumstances.

"Eleazar" — His name signifies *God (El) hath helped*.

"And Ithamar" — His name denotes *Coast of the Palm*. He with Eleazar superceded Nadab and Abihu in their priestly positions. Accordingly, they are here joined together, and their joint names speak of uprightness and fruitfulness (Psa. 92:12-13). Those who lean on the help of God will develop fruit to the glory

of His name. The proper order is Eleazar before Ithamar; and when (as in the days of Eli) Ithamar's descendants assumed the first position over that of the descendants of Eleazar, there was failure in the priesthood.

#### VERSE 3

"These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office" — The word "consecrated" literally signifies (as indicated in the margin), *whose hand he filled*. In other words, the priests were consecrated to activity, and particularly in relation to the offerings made to Yahweh. See note Exod. 28:41.

#### VERSE 4

"And Nadab and Abihu died before Yahweh, when they offered strange fire before Yahweh, in the wilderness of Sinai" — In this statement, Israelites are reminded of the failure of the Aaronic priesthood. See notes, Lev. 10:1-2.

"And they had no children" — The word "children" is masculine in the Hebrew, and denotes *sons*. They had no sons to carry on their name, and so their very name was blotted out under heaven. See the warning of Rev. 2:23, and compare it with Isa. 53:10. The Jewish people imagined that they had blotted out the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but Isaiah truly prophesied: "He shall see his seed . . ." They asked, "Who shall declare his generation?" (v. 8), and the answer of Scripture is: "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation" (Psa. 22:30).

"And Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the sight of Aaron their father" — There were twenty-four courses within the priesthood in the days of David: sixteen in the line of Eleazar; and eight in the line of Ithamar. Eleazar, as the appointed firstborn, had twice the number of courses to that allocated the descendants of his brother. This endorsed the normal procedure adopted towards the legal firstborn: a double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:17). The use of the word "ministered" in regard to these priests should not be confused with that contained in v. 6. Here the rendition is better: "Eleazar and Ithamar acted as priests in the sight of Aaron their father." This was in contrast to the Levites who

occupied the position of servants. In his status as High Priest, overlooking the priests under him, Aaron foreshadowed that of the Lord Jesus Christ who supervised the labours of the Apostles and spirit-appointed elders of the Ecclesias of the first century (See 1 Cor. 3:5-9).

#### The Ministry Of The Levites Defined — vv. 5-10

*A general outline of the work of the Levites as servants to the Priests is now given.*

#### VERSE 5

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — This formula indicates a new subsection in the instructions given.

#### VERSE 6

“Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that

they may minister unto him” — The word “minister” in this place defines one occupying the status of a servant.

#### VERSE 7

“And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation” — The word “charge” in Hebrew is a military term, suggesting one acting as a watch, a sentry, or a guard. As such, the Levites are represented as being engaged in a spiritual warfare (see Num. 8:23-24). Their functions were most important. They included that of guarding the Tabernacle from pollution. Accordingly, they are depicted as being encamped around it (Num. 3:38). Unfortunately, in that regard they failed, in that they permitted into the sanctuary those who should have been excluded therefrom. And for this they were, and will yet be,

## SPIRITUAL LESSONS OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

Through the experiences of Israel, the book types the trials of believers in a world in which, unfortunately, their failings become obvious. But Yahweh's grace does not fail. Though defeat and rejection is the lot of the first generation of Israelites, the second generation continues on to success. The enemy is defeated; the curse of Balaam is turned into a blessing; and the people move on in strength to the promised inheritance. In this, the resources of the priesthood foreshadow those of Christ whose resurrection is the token of his competence as High Priest of the Melchizedek order. Likewise, the Levites and their service were given great prominence, foreshadowing the Ecclesia's responsibility to carry and exhibit Christ to the world, as the Levites did the various sections of the Tabernacle. The people are described as Yahweh's host, united in a common warfare. But events reveal that whilst the enemy without is powerful, that within is even more so; for the evil does not break *in*, but breaks *out*. Note the five-fold division of the book, expressing the principle of grace in spite of failures:

1. Ordering the Camp.....1:1-10:10
2. Dissension in the Wilderness — the Testimony of History as to the People.....10:11-16:35
3. The Resources of the Priesthood made authoritative by the token of the Resurrection.....16:36-24:25
4. The Testing in its Consequence.....25:1-27:23
5. The Divine Overshadowing and Guidance.....28:1-36:13

indicted (Ezek. 44:6-8). Levites were always on guard, ministering day and night in the Temple (Psa. 92:2; 134:1-2), teaching the lesson that constant vigilance is necessary in order to keep the Truth pure. They acted as servants, labouring in the mediatorial work for the priests, and working on behalf of the people (see 2 Cor. 4:5).

It is significant that a similar expression is used by Paul in instructing Timothy in the fight of faith in which he was engaged. He committed a charge to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18) which included the need to keep the Ecclesia pure from pollution. In addition to the "charge" to "war a good warfare" that he issued to Timothy, he provided him with an example of the action sometimes necessary in order to keep Ecclesias free from the polluting effects of false doctrine or conduct, by explaining to him how that he had found it necessary to excommunicate Hymenaeus and Alexander because of the blasphemies they were committing (1 Tim. 1:18-20).

**"To do the service of the tabernacle"** — They were to act the part of servants in the worship of the people. The word for "tabernacle" is *mishkan*, the dwelling place, or sanctuary itself.

### VERSE 8

**"And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation"** — Here the word "tabernacle" is *ohel* and relates to the tent itself. The instruments are the vessels or furniture of it, as particularised in vv. 25-26, 34, 36-37.

**"And the charge of the children of Israel"** — The whole nation of Israel, as a kingdom of priests (Exod. 19:6), was given a "charge" in relation to the service of the Tabernacle, but the Levites were selected as representatives of the nation in the place of the firstborn who originally occupied that position (see vv. 38,41; Num. 8:16).

**"To do the service of the tabernacle"** — See v. 38; Num. 8:11,15,24,26.

### VERSE 9

**"And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel"** — The reason for this is expressed in Num. 8:16. The words "wholly given" are *nethunim* in Hebrew, which is

derived from the root *nathan*, signifying something given or appointed. The Levites, as representatives of the nation as a whole, were given as gifts from Yahweh to the priests. In Josh. 9:27 *nathan* is rendered "made", and being applied to the Gibeonites, describes how they were given to the work of the Tabernacle, appointed to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation". The term *Nethinim* which is frequently referred to in Ezra and Nehemiah (1 Chron. 9:2; Ezra 2:43,58,70; Neh. 3:26, 31 etc.) relate to those Gentiles who were given or dedicated to the service of Yahweh. They are described as "those whom David appointed for the service of the Levites" (Ezra 8:20). As that was done then on behalf of the Levites, so, in the chapter before us, the Levites are appointed to be servants of the priests in the work of the Tabernacle.

### VERSE 10

**"And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office"** — The verb expresses the idea that the priests were to keep watch and make careful observation of the work they were set to do.

**"And the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death"** — The word "stranger" is the Hebrew *zawr* and is derived from a root signifying to turn aside. The word does not necessarily signify a foreigner, but can relate to an apostate Israelite, one who has turned aside from the strict requirements of the truth, or else to one not a descendant of Aaron. In Num. 1:51 the term relates to any not Levites, but here it relates even to Levites if not appointed to priestly duties. The ordinary Levites must not infringe upon the exclusive rights of Aaron and his sons in their special functions.

### The Levites Selected Instead of the Firstborn — vv. 11-13

Originally, firstborn Israelites as representing the nation, acted in a priestly capacity as in Exod. 24:5, but the apostasy of the nation when Moses was in the mount resulted in a change. The firstborn were replaced by the Levites. This was a reward for the manner in which they had vindicated the honour of Yahweh at the time (see Exod. 32:28-29). Their status or privilege in Israel is now outlined.

## VERSE 11

“**And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying**” — This preamble indicates a new sub-section.

## VERSE 12

“**And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborns that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel**” — These two verses (12,13) give the reason for the injunction and gift recorded in vv. 6-9. Yahweh, in sparing the firstborn of man and beast in Egypt, claimed them as His own. However, because of the apostasy of the nation, the firstborn, as representatives thereof, were deposed, and the tribe of Levi appointed in their stead. Having done so, Yahweh now transfers the Levites as a gift to His servant Aaron and his sons, as assistants in His service. Cp. Exod. 13:12; Deut. 33:9. The replacement of the firstborn by the Levites taught the principle that the flesh profits nothing in the absence of obedience to the law of Yahweh.

“**Therefore the Levites shall be Mine**” — Having been appointed to this position, lay Israelites were expected to view the Levites, as also the priests, in the light of this special relationship with God (see Deut. 12:19; 14:27), and, therefore, were expected to share their good things with them. See Deut. 12:12,18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 26:11-13.

## VERSE 13

“**Because all the firstborn are Mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto Me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast**” — The separation of the firstborn of Israel unto Yahweh illustrated the position of the nation in the world. Now that the Levites had superceded the firstborn, they, in turn, illustrated to the nation what was expected of a true Israelite. As the Levite had no inheritance

but Yahweh, it was a reminder that true Israelites have no continuing city here, though they may seek one to come (Heb. 11:13-16).

“**Mine they shall be: I am Yahweh**” — Rotherham renders this: “Mine they did become, and belong unto Me, Yahweh.” In a particular sense the Levites were separated unto Yahweh out of all the tribes of Israel.

### Levites To Be Numbered From One Month Upwards — vv. 14-16

*Whereas the other tribes were numbered from 20 years and upwards, the Levites were numbered from one month old and upwards.*

## VERSE 14

“**And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying**” — Contrast this statement with that of v. 1. The Levites were appointed to their position after Moses returned from the mount to witness the apostasy of the nation.

## VERSE 15

“**Number the children of Levi after the house of their fathers, by their families**” — See Note Ch. 1:2.

“**Every male from a month old and upwards shalt thou number them**” — The firstborn were redeemed from one month old. See Num. 3:43; 18:16. Hence it was appropriate that the Levites should be numbered likewise.

## VERSE 16

“**And Moses numbered them according to the word of Yahweh, as he was commanded**” — He was assisted by Aaron in this work. See v. 39.

### The Three Families of Levites — vv. 17-20

*The separation of families within the tribes is to be maintained.*

## VERSE 17

“**And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon**” — His name means *Expulsion, Exile*. See Gen. 46:11.

“**And Kohath**” — Signifying *Assembly*.

“**And Merari**” — *Bitter, unhappy*.

## VERSE 18

“**And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni and Shimei**” — See notes Exod. 6:17. Their



respective names signify: Gershon — *exile*; Libni — *white*; Shimei — *my report*. Combined they make the sentence: *The exile is proclaimed righteous through the report*. They had charge of the things that symbolised the way to practical righteousness: the coverings, veils, cords etc. See vv. 25-26.

#### VERSE 19

“And the sons of Kohath by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel” — See Exod. 6:18. Their names in order signify; Kohath — *Assembly*; Amram — *high people*; Izehar, *anointing*; Hebron, *alliance or union*; and Uzziel, *El is strength*. Again a sentence is formed: *The high people, through the spirit word are united together in the strength of El*. They carried the ark, table, candlestick, golden altar, illustrating the message of their names. These articles speak of God manifestation. As such it was appropriate that they follow the coverings etc. as carried by the Gershomites.

#### VERSE 20

“And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli, and Mushi” — Merari signifies *bitter, unhappy*; and his two sons: Mahli — *weak, sickly*, and Mushi — *sensitive*. These Levites had the heavy work of setting up the boards and erecting the Tabernacle. Figuratively this suggests the labour of proclaiming the Truth and ministering to the establishment of Ecclesias. Their names are appropriate to such work. The preaching of the Truth entails much bitterness, and involves attending to the spiritually weak, or sensitive. Consider the bitterness of Paul's labours (e.g. 2 Cor. 12:15), his tender yielding in love to those spiritually weak (2 Cor. 11:28-30). The very weakness of the flesh emphasises the need of divine strength in order to cope. Therefore there was a need of Zuriel — *My rock is God*, and Abihail — *Father of might* to counteract any weakness (see v. 35).

“These are the families of the Levites according to the house of their fathers” — Note how the family associations are preserved within the nation of Israel. Family, God and Law were the foundations of Israel's greatness.

**The Number and Service of the Gershonites — vv. 21-26**

*The Gershonites had charge of the*

*Tabernacle coverings and hangings of the court etc. (Num. 4:24-26). They had 7500 over one month (Ch. 3:22) with 2750 effectives (Ch. 4:40). They led the Levites conveying from place to place those articles of the Tabernacle that symbolised the basis of religious life: the coverings etc. foreshadowing the covering in Christ.*

#### VERSE 21

“Of Gershon was the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these are the families of the Gershonites” — Cp. v. 18; Exod. 6:17; Num. 26:58.

#### VERSE 22

“Those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, even those that were numbered of them were seven thousand and five hundred” — Of this number, effective workers were 2630 (Num. 4:40).

#### VERSE 23

“The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward” — They were stationed behind the Tabernacle separating it from the three tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

#### VERSE 24

“And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites shall be Eliasaph the son of Lael” — Eliasaph signifies *God (El) Gathers, or Adds*; Lael signifies *Belonging to God (El)*. Hence Eliasaph's name denotes: *God gathers, or increases, to Himself those belonging to Him*.

#### VERSE 25

“And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation” — See introductory note above.

“Shall be the tabernacle” — The word “tabernacle” occurs twice in this verse, and does duty for two different Hebrew words. The first is *Ohel*, here the word is *Mishkan*. The former word denotes the whole tent; this word relates to the dwelling place of Yahweh. The Gershonites had charge of the linen curtains of the *Mishkan* (Exod. 26:1); the sons of Merari had charge of its boards (Num. 3:36).

“And the tent” — Here the word is *Ohel* rendered “tabernacle” earlier in this same verse. The *Ohel*, or tent, included the eleven curtains of goats' hair made for the outer covering of the Tabernacle.

"The coverings thereof" — These were the rams' and badgers' skin coverings referred to in Exod. 26:14.

"And the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" — Here, again, the word is *Ohel*. For these hangings see Exod. 26:36.

#### VERSE 26

"And the hangings of the court" — See Exod. 27:9.

"And the curtain for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about" — See Exod. 27:16. Here the word "tabernacle" is *Mishkan*.

"And the cords of it for all the service thereof" — The Gershonites had charge of the cords of the Tabernacle; the Merarites had charge of the cords of the court. See v. 37. For reference to these "cords" see Exod. 35:18; 39:40.

#### The Number and Service of the Kohathites — vv. 27-32

*The Kohathites had the lightest labour (Ch. 4:4-15). They carried the Ark, table, lampstand, altar etc. They had 8,600 over a month old (Ch. 3:15,28), of which some 2750 were effective for service (Num. 4:36).*

#### VERSE 27

"And of Kohath" — Kohath was the second son of Levi.

"Was the family of the Amramites" — Moses and Aaron were among the descendants of Amram (Exod. 6:20), though the latter were separated for the priesthood. From the reference to "thy father's house" (Num. 18:1-2) it appears that there must have been other sons beside these two whose descendants took their place among the Levites. The reference to them in Num. 18:1 implies that they were distinguished above the other descendants of Levi.

"Was the family of the Amramites" — Moses and Aaron were among the descendants of Amram (Exod. 6:20), and the family of Aaron was separated for the priesthood. However, from the reference to "thy father's house" in Num. 18:1, it appears that Amram must have had other sons besides Moses and Aaron who took their place among the Levites. Numbers 18:1-2 speaks of three grades of assistants in the Tabernacle worship. It refers to

Aaron in the following terms: "Thou and thy sons and *thy father's house with thee* shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi the tribe of thy father bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee and minister unto them." Here three gradations are specified: Aaron and his sons, who were to bear the iniquity of the priesthood; the house of Aaron's father, or the Amramites, who were to share with him and his sons in bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary; and the remaining Levites, who were to minister, but in a relation less intimate. Thus the Levites were to be separated from the other tribes, and brought near to God; the Kohathites, who carried the most holy things (Num. 4:17-20), were brought nearest of the three Levitical families; the Amramites, the house of Aaron's father, were specially distinguished in their office among the sub-families of the Kohathites, while Aaron and his sons alone had the highest honour of the priestly office.

"And the family of the Izeharites" — See Exod. 6:18. The name signifies *oil as producing light, or for anointing*. Korah was a member of this family. See Num. 16:1.

"And the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites" — See note Exod. 6:18.

"These are the families of the Kohathites" — The name Kohath signifies *Allied, hence, a company united*. Amram, signifies *People of the Exalted One*. Yitzhar signifies *Oil*. Hebron signifies *Fellowship*. Uzziel signifies *The Power of God* (see v. 30). With names such as these, spelling out a wonderful message of a united people, drawn together by the oil of the Word, enjoying fellowship, and manifesting the power of God, it is appropriate that they should be in charge of the Ark, table, lampstand etc. See v. 31.

#### VERSE 28

"In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary" — The whole family, babies included, were appointed to this service, though the effectives, at that time, numbered only 2750 (Num. 4:36).



## VERSE 29

"The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward" — They were towards the camp of Reuben, Simeon and Gad. Later, the revolt of Korah brought together some of the family of Kohath, with some of the tribes of Reuben (Num. 16:1).

## VERSE 30

"And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites" — Again, notice the family basis of the political order of Israel in the terms "house," "father," and "families".

"Shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel" — These two names signify *El hath concealed* and *The Strength or Majesty of El* (God).

## VERSE 31

"And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary wherewith they minister, and the hanging, and all the service thereof" — All these parts of the Tabernacle emphasise the principle of God manifestation. And observe the exhortation expressed in the order observed. First came the family of Gershom bearing the coverings: teaching that the first essential is a covering for sin. Next came the Kohathites bearing the vessels and furniture relating to God manifestation, teaching the lesson that after being covered, there is a need to develop principles of righteousness; that when the flesh is covered away, God manifestation must take its place.

## Eleazar To Supervise The Levites' Activities — v. 32

*Eleazar, the High Priest elect is called upon to overlook the work of the Levites. The continuity of the narrative is broken at this point to introduce his status and work possibly because he was of the family of Kohath (being a descendant of Amram v. 27).*

## VERSE 32

"And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest" — See v. 2.

"Shall be chief over the chief of the Levites" — As High Priest elect, Eleazar foreshadowed Christ whose ministry superceded that of the Aaronic priesthood. Christ overlooked the work of the Apostles, the chief of the saints, as

Eleazar did that of the chief of the Levites.

"And have the oversight of them that keep the charge of the sanctuary" — See note Num. 3:36; 4:16. Once again we note that the word "charge" is a military term, denoting the fight of faith in which Israelites were engaged.

## The Number And Service of the Merarites — vv. 33-37

*The Merarites have the heaviest labour. They have charge of boards, bars, pillars, sockets etc. (Ch. 4). They have only 6,200 over one month in age, but some 3,200 effectives. This provides a natural provision for heavier work (cp. Num. 3:34; 4:44). Yahweh provides strength where it is needed.*

## VERSE 33

"Of Merari was the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Mushites; these are the families of Merari" — As noted earlier (v. 20), Merari signifies *bitter*, Mahli signifies *sick*; Mushi signifies *yielding*. The families of Merari, the last of Levi's three sons, had the heaviest labour. They had the work of conveying the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets from place to place, and of setting them up when they arrived at a new site. The erection of the Tabernacle typically foreshadowed the preaching of the Truth. And this provides an answer to the significance of the names of those allocated this duty. Much *bitterness* comes from ministering, or attending to those who are spiritually sick, and there is the need of patiently enduring, or yielding, in love to those spiritually sick (2 Cor. 11:23-30). In dealing with such matters, it is only through divine strength that success will be reached. Hence the significance of the name of the chief of this group of Levites. See v. 35.

## VERSE 34

"And those that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, were six thousand and two hundred" — See introductory note above.

## VERSE 35

"And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari was Zurriel the son of Abihail" — Zurriel signifies *Rock of God (El)*, and Abihail, *Father (possessor) of might*. See note on v. 33

above, and consider that it is only through divine strength (the *Rock of El*) that success comes, and Yahweh is shown to be the *Father of might*.

“These shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle northward” — They were thus adjacent to the encampment of Dan (Num. 2:25-28), the camp of judgment.

#### VERSE 36

“And under the custody and charge of the sons of Merari” — The margin renders this phrase as *the office of the charge*. The Hebrew word rendered “custody” being the same as that rendered “oversight” in v. 32.

“Shall be the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and all the vessels thereof, and all that serveth thereto” — See introductory note at the beginning of the sub-section.

#### VERSE 37

“And the pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords” — See note above, and Exod. 26,27 for references to the items mentioned in this verse.

#### Moses and Aaronites East of the Camp — v. 38

*The camp faced the east, and at this most important position was appropriately stationed Moses and the Aaronites, guarding it from unlawful trespass.*

#### VERSE 38

“But those that encamp before the tabernacle toward the east, even before the tabernacle of the congregation eastward, shall be Moses and Aaron and his sons, keeping the charge of the sanctuary, for the camp of the children of Israel” — See note Num. 1:53 for the significance of the military term here used.

“And the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death” — See note v. 10. Unfortunately, in subsequent ages, this principle was not always maintained to the disgrace of the nation. See Ezek. 44:6-9.

#### Total Number Of Levites — v. 39

*The Levites numerically were weaker than the other tribes.*

#### VERSE 39

“All that were numbered of the Levites,

which Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of Yahweh, throughout their families, all the males from a month old and upward, were twenty and two thousand” — This number is much lower than that of any of the other tribes; and yet the latter were only numbered from twenty years and upwards. Moreover a comparison of this total with the numbers of the three families (see vv. 22,28,34) reveals a discrepancy, for they total 22,300, or three hundred more than the number given in this verse. We have suggested the cause of this discrepancy in our note on v. 41. Another explanation is as follows: Numbers in Hebrew were expressed by letters, and not words at full length, and if two nearly similar letters were mistaken for each other, mistakes could occur. The discrepancy is probably due to such a mistake, and in relation to the Gershonites (v. 22) where for 7,500 we should read 7,200. The Hebrew *Resh* ר (200) might easily be mistaken by *Caph final* כ (500) especially if the down stroke of the letters was a little shorter as it often is in the Mss. Or the missing 300 could represent Levite firstborns who were not included in this numbering. See v. 41.

#### The Firstborn Numbered — vv. 40-41

*As arrangements are being made to replace the firstborns with the Levites, they are now numbered.*

#### VERSE 40

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Number all the firstborn of the males of the children of Israel from a month old and upwards, and take the number of their names” — This latter expression indicates a personal knowledge of the firstborns. It suggests that Yahweh has His true firstborn always in personal remembrance. The Lord told the Apostles: “The very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matt. 10:28-31). The Psalmist declared of the stars, which symbolise the saints, “He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names” (Psa. 147:4). This denotes an intimate knowledge of the ones or things so described.

#### VERSE 41

“And thou shalt take the Levites for Me (I am Yahweh) instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel” — As stat-

ed above (v. 39) the number of Levites given is less than the total of the three families by 300 persons. However, as the Levites were taken *instead* of the firstborn, it could be that the 300 represented firstborn Levites, and so were excluded in the total given in v. 39, as they would hold that position of privilege by natural right. It, therefore, would have been wrong to number them "instead of all the firstborn". One of the privileges of the firstborn was to act in a priestly capacity. This was now to be vested with the Levites.

"And the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel" — The cattle of the Levites were doubtless taken in the gross as an equivalent for the first-born animals of the other tribes, and treated in the manner specified. See Exod. 13:12-13; Num. 18:15; Deut. 15:19.

#### VERSE 42,43

"And Moses numbered, as Yahweh commanded him, all the firstborn among the children of Israel. And all the firstborn males by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen" — See notes above. The number 22,273 firstborns in a nation of 600,000 males would require nearly thirty persons in each "house". It would appear, therefore, that the firstborn were such in houses comprising family groups, such as the "house of David" (Jer. 3:14). They were expressed "by name" (Num. 3:40), indicating a careful supervision.

#### Redemption of the Surplus of the Firstborn — vv. 44-51

*Redemption money is required of the surplus firstborn among the tribes who are to be replaced by the Levites.*

#### VERSE 44

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — Introducing a new sub-section.

#### VERSE 45

"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be Mine: I am Yahweh" — Rotherham renders this last phrase as "the Levites shall belong unto Me, Me, Yahweh". As the

Levites replaced the natural firstborn, so the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) replace Israel after the flesh, the natural firstborn (Exod. 4:22). See note Gen. 49:3. In this enactment, therefore, there was a foreshadowing of the purpose of Yahweh in proclaiming His truth to the Gentiles; and of replacing the natural firstborn of the human race, Adam, by one worthy of that position, Christ.

#### VERSE 46

"And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites" — Those firstborn who exceeded in number the Levites were to be redeemed, or ransomed, as the word signifies. The fact that there were more firstborn than Levites suggests in type that there is opportunity for all to avail themselves of the ransom paid in Christ. See 1 Peter 1:18-19; Heb. 2:9.

#### VERSE 47

"Thou shalt even take five shekels a piece by the poll" — The shekel was a standard weight in Israel. The word is derived from a Hebrew word meaning *to suspend*, and suggests a form, or basis, of exchange. Five is the number of grace, so divine grace was extended to provide for the redemption of this surplus. From Num. 18:16 we learn that this sum henceforth was to constitute the redemption money. See Lev. 27:6.

"After the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them" — This is rendered by some (see *The Soncino* edition of *The Pentateuch*) as "the sacred shekel" suggesting a true and just weight. See Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:10. Anything else than a just weight is an abomination to Yahweh. See Prov. 16:11 and contrast with Prov. 20:10,23; Micah 6:11.

"The shekel is twenty gerahs" — The number twenty is a multiplication of four and five; the former is the number of the fulness of Israel, denoted by the four encampments of the tribes; five is the number of grace. Hence the number twenty in spiritual numerics denotes the fulness of Israel through grace. The Levites, in replacing the firstborn of Israel, represented Israel in its fulness, a status that became theirs through grace.

The reference to *gerahs* in this connection is significant. The word, in its Heb-

rew derivation, signifies to *bring up*, and hence to *ruminare*. It is therefore related to the action of clean animals in chewing the cud. Its connection with the ransom money is appropriate, for the very name suggests thought, care, justness etc. The "gerah" was berry, like a bean, the weight of twenty such determining the weight of the sacred shekel.

#### VERSE 48

"And thou shalt give the money, where-with the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons" — The family of Aaron, as priests, represented Yahweh in the midst of Israel.

#### VERSE 49

"And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that

were redeemed by the Levites" — See v. 46.

#### VERSE 50

"Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary" — This represents five shekels for each of the firstborn exceeding in number the total of the Levites.

#### VERSE 51

"And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of Yahweh, as Yahweh commanded Moses" — The money, given into the hands of Aaron and his sons, was doubtless used for the support of the Tabernacle worship.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE DUTIES OF THE LEVITES

*Previously the Levites were counted from a month old and upwards because they were to replace the firstborn of the other tribes. However, now they are to be numbered for service, and accordingly the count is to be from thirty years and upward. This denotes a measure of maturity, and whilst it is not obligatory on Christ's followers that they should await the age of thirty before ministering before him, it does show that maturity is required of all his followers. The duties of the various families of Levites are set forth in proper order, revealing that each has his work to do in the "Ecclesia in the wilderness" in a co-operative service. Hence, as each group arrived at a new site the Tabernacle was reared up in a regular and orderly fashion with the least trouble. Co-operation and order are the keynotes of effective Ecclesial service today as well.*

**Age And Time Of Service Of The Kohathites — vv. 1-4**

*These particulars are clearly set out.*

#### VERSE 1

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying" — The appoint-

ments that follow are thus authoritative. This is an important declaration, for in fact, they do not follow the natural order. Gershon, not Kohath, was the natural firstborn (Num. 3:17). Once again the natural is superseded in favour of the spiritual.

## VERSE 2

**“Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi”** — This second enumeration was for the purpose of their special duties, answering to the appointment of lay Israelites as members of the Israel army, or host (Num. 1:3). Whereas lay Israelites are numbered from twenty years and upwards, the Levites are to be numbered from thirty years upwards. A greater maturity of mind is required for priestly duties.

**“After their families, by the house of their fathers”** — Note the family associations as forming the basis of the nation itself. See note Ch. 1:2.

## VERSE 3

**“From thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old”** — In the Septuagint, this is given as twenty-five years of age, in conformity with Num. 8:24; 1 Chron. 23:24. However, the Rabbis claim that the Levites commenced to learn their duties at the age of 25, and at 30 began their public ministrations. Certain it is that both John Baptist and the Lord Jesus commenced their ministries at the age of thirty years (Luke 3:23).

At the age of fifty, Levites ceased from “work” and, apparently, limited their activities to that of overseeing the labour of others.

**“All that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation”** — The word “host” signifies “army”. The Levites formed an important section of Israel’s spiritual army (cp. Num. 1:3 notes). Their labour formed part of the fight of faith.

## VERSE 4

**“This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation”** — The service of the Levites comprised the carriage of the holy things throughout the wilderness, surely a type of the Ecclesia’s presentation of the Truth to be world without. “Tabernacle of the congregation” signifies *Tent of meeting*.

**“About the most holy things”** — The word *about* is in italics in the AV indicating that there is no comparable word in the Hebrew. It should be eliminated. The Kohathites had charge of the most precious things associated with the Holy and Most Holy Places. These included the

Ark, Table, Lampstand and so forth. In the figure of the marching tribes, foreshadowing the work of the Ecclesia in the wilderness of life, they set forth the things that typed the Lord Jesus Christ in his ministrations of glory. In a figure, they proclaimed Christ to the world, for the Tabernacle foreshadowed him (Heb. 8:1-2; 9:11).

### The Service Of The Kohathites In Conveying The Tabernacle — vv. 5-15

*The Kohathites are to convey the most precious furniture of the Tabernacle from place to place. Because of the sacredness of the things borne by them they are placed under the direct supervision of Eleazar the High Priest elect (Num. 3:32), and are subjected to far stricter regulations than the other Levites (Num. 4:15). As they are given the honoured privilege and duty of conveying the sacred furniture, they are granted access to the Holy Place and the Most Holy in order to make everything ready for travel (Num. 4:17-20). Nevertheless, the greatest reverence must be shown by them (as the greatest reverence should be shown by all in their approach to things divine), and therefore before their entrance into the Holy Places, the priests are required to cover the furniture with coverings provided.*

## VERSE 5

**“And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it”** — The service of the Kohathites included the conveyance of the furniture of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (see Num. 3:27-32); therefore the greatest care had to be observed in attending to these items. First Aaron and his sons entered the Holy Place, and took down the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy, and with it covered the Ark. For even the Kohathites, who were to bare it from place to place, were not permitted to gaze upon the sacred object. The veil with the cherubim thereon represents the the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:20).

## VERSE 6

**“And shall put thereon the covering of badgers’ skins”** — The Hebrew does not include the definite article, but merely has “a covering of badgers’ skins”. This was a special covering for this purpose,

and not the covering of the Tabernacle which is referred to independently in v. 25. For "badgers' skins", see comment at Exod. 25:5. It was a protective covering such as the flesh requires in its present state of mortality.

**"And shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue"** — The covering of blue expressed the lesson conveyed by the colour (see Num. 15:38-39). As the procession moved from place to place, the Israelites would know that underneath that covering of blue was the Ark, the most holy object in their worship: the meeting place between Yahweh and flesh (see Exod. 25:22); His throne in Israel. By that means they were reminded of their high and holy calling. The Ark only was to be of this colour, the Table had a covering of scarlet, the Altar one of purple. Hence, in procession, the Ark was covered wholly with a covering of blue, the Table of Shewbread with a covering of scarlet, and the Altar of burnt offering with a covering of purple. The other pieces of furniture were draped over with badgers' skins speaking of deliverance through water. The three colours, Blue, Scarlet and Purple set forth in order: (1) the ideal of God manifestation, mental, moral and physical; (2) the way it is to be attained: through sacrifice of self; (3) the result: God manifest in the flesh, the colour of royalty, involving rulership over self (Prov. 16:32) and over the nations (Rev. 5:9-10). That lesson was proclaimed by the various colours that covered the holy furniture whilst Israel was on the march.

**"And shall put in the staves thereof"** — Reference to the staves is found in Exod. 25:13. Actually, they were never removed from the Ark (Exod. 25:15), so that the statement probably signifies that they adjusted the staves for carrying. Note the expression in v. 11.

#### VERSE 7

**"And upon the table of shewbread they shall spread a cloth of blue"** — The word "shewbread" is *paniym*, and signifies *faces* or *presence*. See Exod. 25:23. For the significance of the cloth of blue, see Num. 15:38-39.

**"And put thereon the dishes, and the spoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal"** — See Exod. 25:29-30 and Lev. 24:6. Rotherham renders the sentence: "The dishes and the pans and the bowls and the libation cups." The first two were

for the meal offerings, the last two for the drink offerings. See marginal note, where "cover" is rendered *pour out withal*. See note Exod. 25:29; 29:40; 30:9.

**"And the continual bread shall be thereon"** — The twelve loaves of bread, piled in two heaps on the Table are here called the *Bread of Continuity* (Young) because they were never lacking (see 2 Chron. 2:4). The adjective is also applied to the burnt offering, incense etc. This *Bread of Continuity* (never lacking) foreshadows Christ, the antitypical *Bread of His presence*. See John 6:56-58; 12:24-25.

#### VERSE 8

**"And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof"** — The cloth of blue represented the principle of God manifestation, whilst scarlet represented sacrifice. The Table and the bread upon it (which was eaten by the priests) set forth the offer of fellowship to man, but as that fellowship is only possible through sacrifice, it was covered with the cloth of scarlet.

#### VERSE 9

**"And they shall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candlestick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his snuffdishes, and all the oil vessels thereof, wherewith they minister unto it"** — For these dishes etc., see notes on Exod. 25:31-39. The word "snuffdishes" is from the Hebrew *machtah* from a root signifying *to lay hold, to pick up* (fire). It is also rendered "censers" (Num. 16:6), and firepans (Exod. 27:3). They evidently were metal pans available for various purposes associated with the oil lamps. "Candlestick" should be *Lampstand*; candles were not used in the Tabernacle! A cloth of blue covers the Lampstand because it represents the word of light which reveals the will and commandments of Yahweh, (see Num. 15:38-39).

#### VERSE 10

**"And they shall put it and all the vessels thereof within a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put it upon a bar"** — The word "bar" is from a Hebrew word denoting a yoke, such as the spies used in order to carry the grapes back to the camp (Num. 13:33). Rotherham renders the word as *a frame*, whilst the Septuagint has *a rest*.

It was evidently a bearing frame, such as would be necessary to convey the Lampstand from place to place.

#### VERSE 11

“And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall put to the staves thereof” — The expression, *put to*, evidently signifies to adjust them for carrying.

#### VERSE 12

“And they shall take all the instruments of ministry, wherewith they minister in the sanctuary, and put them in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers’ skins, and shall put them on a bar” — This statement relates to all the vessels and utensils not expressly mentioned previously. See previous notes regarding the covering etc.

#### VERSE 13

“And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon” — The Hebrew word for “ashes” is *dashen*, and signifies *fat*. See note, Lev. 1:16. Rotherham renders the word as *fat ashes*. Evidently the altar was cleansed of all fatty remnants prior to it being covered with the purple cloth in preparation for removal. The colour *purple* is significant. It is a combination of scarlet and blue; and as the former represents the sacrifice of flesh, and the latter represents the commandments and teaching of Yahweh, purple becomes the colour of God manifest in the flesh. This is appropriate to the altar, for it represents flesh sacrificed and life dedicated to doing the will of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 14

“And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the flesh-hooks, and the shovels, and the basons, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badger’s skins, and put to the staves of it” — For a description of the vessels connected with the altar, see Exod. 27:1, 3, 6.

At the conclusion of v. 14, the Septuagint adds: “They shall take a purple cloth and cover the laver and its foot, and they shall put it in a blue cover of skin, and put it on bars.” The reference to the “blue cover of skin” is to the badgers’ skins of the A.V.

#### VERSE 15

“And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward” — The greatest reverence was to be shown toward these items of spiritual significance, and hence, whilst the Kohathites were given the privilege of conveying them from place to place, the priests had first to prepare them for that purpose.

“After that the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it” — The Kohathites had charge of seven items: the Ark, the golden Altar, the Table of shewbread, the Lampstand, the instruments of ministry, the brazen Altar, and the Laver. Seven is the number of the covenant, and these items have particular bearing upon the covenant of Yahweh. In conveying them from place to place, the Kohathites typically set forth the principles of the Truth, as the Ecclesia does today in proclaiming the Gospel message.

“After that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it” — Though the boards and so forth were placed upon wagons to be conveyed from place to place, all of the tabernacle furniture were carried by Levites. See Num. 7:1-9 where it is expressly stated that no wagons were given to the Kohathites. It was David’s failure to see that the Ark was so conveyed to Zion that resulted in the tragedy of Uzzah (cp. 2 Sam. 6:6; 1 Chron. 15:1-14).

“But they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die” — Even the Levites who were chosen and consecrated to bear the most holy things, were warned not to touch them lest they die. They had to bear them upon the staves provided for the purpose.

“These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation” — See the summary in Num. 3:31.

#### Eleazar’s Service — v. 16

*The High Priest elect supervised all the labour of the Kohathites, foreshadowing the work of Christ, who superceded the Aaronic priesthood. He supervised the work of the Apostles, and continues to overlook the welfare of Ecclesias. See Rev. 2:1.*

#### VERSE 16

“And to the office of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest” — His name signifies

*El (God) hath helped.* He was High Priest elect, and therefore foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ whose priesthood superseded that of the Aaronic order. He was ancestor of the Zadokites (1 Chr. 6:4-8), typical of the immortal priests of the Age to come (Ezek. 44:15-16).

**"Pertaineth the oil for the light"** — Eleazar was personally responsible for the items designated in this verse. In regard to the oil for the lamps see notes at Exod. 25:6; 27:20; Lev. 24:2.

**"And the sweet incense"** — See notes Exod. 25:6; 30:34; 31:11.

**"And the daily meat offering"** — The reference is to the *minchah*, or grain offering. The regular or "daily grain offering" was divided into two portions, one offered in the morning and the other in the evening (Lev. 6:19-23), so that theoretically it would be necessary to carry one half for the full day's march.

**"And the anointing oil"** — See notes Exod. 30:23; 31:11.

**"And the oversight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein is, in the sanctuary, and in the vessels thereof"** — Eleazar had to carefully supervise all that was done to see that the holy furniture and vessels were properly covered and made ready for travel. The lives of the Kohathites depended upon the care of his supervision. See v. 19.

### Special Dispensation For The Kohathites — vv. 17-20

*Under normal circumstances it would have been death for the Kohathites to have entered the Holy Place or the Most Holy but now special permission is granted them to do so under certain conditions. This foreshadows the approach of saints to the Most Holy. See Hebrews 10:19-22.*

#### VERSE 17

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying"** — This declaration authenticates the concession that follows.

#### VERSE 18

**"Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites"** — Normally, Levites were not permitted to enter either the Holy or the Most Holy, and if they presumed to do so, it was at risk of life. However, a

concession is now granted them to do so for the special purpose of taking up the furniture therein, and conveying it from place to place. Nevertheless, strict instructions are laid down for such occasions, and the holy furniture had to be properly covered before entrance was permitted. If this were not carried out properly, the lives of the Kohathites would be at risk (see 1 Chron. 15:12-15).

#### VERSE 19

**"But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the most holy things"** — It is profitable to take note of the circumspection, the care, the reverence to be manifested in approaching the sacred things. The same care needs to be exercised when we approach the Father in prayer; it is tragic to do so in the spirit of easy familiarity, as is often the custom in the prevailing religious world. Yahweh has declared; "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me" (Lev. 10:3).

**"Aaron and his sons shall go in"** — Any approach to the sacred vessels must be through the priest. In like manner, any approach by us to divine things, must be through our priest, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 10:21-22).

**"And appoint them every one to his service and to his burden"** — Careful instructions were issued as to the work to be performed by each one. In like manner, there needs to be proper order in the administrations of Ecclesias (see 1 Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5).

#### VERSE 20

**"But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die"** — The Kohathites must avert their eyes from the holy things, they were not to look at them even for the briefest of moments. The verb "are covered" signifies in the Hebrew, to gulp down, to swallow, and literally denotes the instant it takes to swallow. Rotherham renders the verse: "They shall not enter to see for a moment that which is holy lest they die". One might be tempted to enter in merely out of curiosity during the process of packing; but to do so was to risk one's life. The greatest reverence in approaching holy things had to be maintained at all costs. Consider the fate of the men of Beth Shemesh who presumed to look into the Ark of Yahweh (1 Sam. 6:19).



### The Age And Service Of The Gershonites — vv. 21-23

*Gershon was the literal firstborn of the sons of Levi, but his family is made subservient to that of Kohath, for the reasons already advanced.*

#### VERSE 21

“**And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying**” — In this case, the instructions were relayed to Aaron. Cp. v. 41.

#### VERSE 22

“**Take also the sum of the sons of Gershon, throughout the houses of their fathers, by their families**” — See note v. 2.

#### VERSE 23

“**From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them**” — See v. 3.

“**All that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation**” — As is indicated by the rendition in the margin, this is a military term, and literally signifies *to war the warfare*. A similar phrase occurs in v. 3: “**To enter into the host to do the work**”. The service of Yahweh is a sacred warfare, part of which is to defend the Tabernacle from pollution in any way, keeping at bay those unauthorised to enter therein, and maintaining the purity of worship. See the same expression used by Paul in the spiritual warfare in which saints today are engaged (1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:3).

### The Service Of The Gershonites In Conveying The Tabernacle — vv. 24-28

*The Gershonites are given the charge of the Tabernacle coverings including the hangings of the court etc.*

#### VERSE 24

“**This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, to serve, and for burdens**” — “**To serve**” implies the labour of a menial, a servant such as Paul described himself in Romans 1:1, whilst the term “**burden**” indicates the bearing of a load, and in this context, conveying it from one place to another.

#### VERSE 25

“**And they shall bear the curtains of the tabernacle of the congregation**” — See Num. 3:25-26. They arranged for the

conveyance of all the hangings with the exception of the veil at the entrance of the Most Holy, which was placed around the Ark. See v. 5. The first reference to the tabernacle is the word *Mishkan*, and denotes the dwelling place of Yahweh in Israel; the second word is *Ohel* in Hebrew, and denotes the tent. The latter phrase is rendered *Tent of Meeting* in the RV.

“**His covering**” — See Exod. 36:14-18.

“**And the covering of the badgers' skins that is above upon it**” — See Exod. 36:8.

“**And the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation**” — See Exod. 36:37-38.

#### VERSE 26

“**And the hangings of the court, and the hangings for the door of the court, which is by the tabernacle and the altar round about**” — See Exod. 27:9-15.

“**And their cords**” — The cords of those things previously enumerated, for the Merarites carried the cords of the hangings of the court. See v. 32.

“**And all the instruments of their service, and all that is made for them: so shall they serve**” — Their work entailed the care of the accessories associated with the main objects they had to care for.

#### VERSE 27

“**At the appointment of Aaron and his sons shall be all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their burdens, and in all their service: and ye shall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens**” — The word “**appointment**” should read *mouth* as in the margin. Whilst the duties of the Gershonites were carefully laid down, specific instructions were to be issued by Aaron suitable to the moment of conveyance, and it was expected of the Levites that they adhere strictly thereto.

#### VERSE 28

“**This is the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation; and their charge shall be under the hand of Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest**” — Those Levites, who were in charge of the less holy Temple furniture, were under the direction of Ithamar, the other surviving son of Aaron, and the father of the Aaronites (1 Chron. 12:27; 27:17). Thus the Zadokite Levites had precedence over the Aaronic

Levites. Eli was a descendant of Ithamar, and his descendant Abiathar was sup-  
planted in favour of Zadok by Solomon  
(1 Kings 1).

#### Age And Period Of The Merarites Service — vv. 29-30

*The ministry of the descendants of the  
third son of Levi is outlined.*

#### VERSE 29

“As for the sons of Merari, thou shalt  
number them after their families, by the  
house of their fathers” — See v. 2.

#### VERSE 30

“From thirty years old and upward  
even unto fifty years old shalt thou num-  
ber them, everyone that entereth into the  
service to do the work of the tabernacle of  
the congregation” — See note v. 23.

#### The Merarite Service In Conveying The Tabernacle — vv. 31-33

*The Merarites had the heaviest labour.  
They had charge of the boards, bars,  
pillars, sockets etc. They had only 6,200  
over a month old, but they had 3,200  
effectives, and thus a natural provision for  
heavier work. Thus Yahweh provides  
strength where it is needed.*

#### VERSE 31

“And this is the charge of their burden,  
according to all their service in the taber-  
nacle of the congregation” — See Num.  
3:36-37, and note on Num. 4:24.

“The boards of the tabernacle, and the  
bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and  
the sockets thereof” — See Exod. 26:15-  
37. As noted above, this would comprise  
the heaviest task in the work of con-  
veyance.

#### VERSE 32

“And the pillars of the court round  
about, and their sockets, and their pins,  
and their cords, with all their instru-  
ments, and with all their service” — See  
Exod. 27:9-19. The Merarites were res-  
ponsible for all the frameworks and ac-  
cessories.

“And by name ye shall reckon the  
instruments of the charge of their bur-  
den” — The *Septuagint* renders this:  
“Number them by name and all the arti-  
cles borne by them”. Evidently the pieces  
of the frameworks were numbered, like

pieces in a prefabricated building so that  
there would be no confusion in the re-  
erection. These pieces were assigned to  
their bearers singly, and “by name”.  
They comprised the heavier portions of  
the Tabernacle, and the command seems  
intended to prevent individual Merarites  
choosing their own burden, and so throw-  
ing more than the proper share on others.  
It reminds us of Paul’s exhortation to the  
Galatians of the need to “bear one an-  
other’s burdens” bearing in mind that  
each one “must bear his own burden”  
(Gal. 6:2-5).

#### VERSE 33

“This is the service of the families of the  
sons of Merari, according to all their  
service, in the tabernacle of the congre-  
gation, under the hand of Ithamar the son  
of Aaron the priest” — Ithamar had  
charge of both the Gershonites and the  
Merarites (cp. v. 28). However greater  
care was to be given to the things borne  
by the Kohathites under Eleazar than  
those attended to by the other two divi-  
sions of the Levites. The former related  
to the principles of God manifestation in  
the lives of saints which is far more  
difficult of attainment than the erection  
of the edifice of worship (supervised by  
the Merarites), or even the coverings  
associated thereto (supervised by the  
Gershonites). A person is covered in  
Christ through baptism, which is far more  
easily attained than the development of  
Christ principles in the lives of those so  
covered, symbolised by the Altar, Laver,  
Lampstand, Table, Incense Altar and the  
Ark. Hence the supervision of Eleazar  
was exclusive to the Kohathites, whilst  
that of Ithamar took in the rest of the  
families of Levi. Eleazar’s work was  
greater. He had to see to the proper  
covering of those objects carried by the  
Kohathites, in a way not necessary in the  
case of the burdens carried by the Ger-  
shonites and Merarites.

#### The Number Of The Kohathites — vv. 34-37

*Though numerically weaker than the  
other two branches of Levites in the total  
number over one month of age, the Koha-  
thites had a greater number of effectives  
than the other two, and hence were cap-  
able of the heavier work apportioned them  
during the wilderness wanderings.*

**VERSE 34**

“And Moses and Aaron and the chief of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites after their families, and after the house of their fathers” — The title of “chief” of the congregation (*edah*, an assembly of *witness* or *testimony*) evidently was given to the princes as selected and appointed. See Num. 1:5,16.

**VERSE 35**

“From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the service, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation” — The Hebrew word for “work” denotes the labour of a servant which is the position adopted by the Apostles in their Ecclesial activities (see John 13:13-16; Rom. 1:1). The word for “congregation” denotes a set time, and is rendered by the R.V. as *Tent of Meeting*. For the time period set down see Num. 4:3.

**VERSE 36**

“And those that were numbered of them by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty” — Of the Merarites there were 2750 effectives out of a total of 8600 over a month (Num. 3:15, 28). This represents a surplus of 5850 beneath and above the limits of thirty or fifty years of age.

**VERSE 37**

“These were they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites all that might do service in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moses and Aaron did number according to the commandment of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” — Moses was given the command (v. 21), but Aaron assisted him in the direction of it.

**The Number of Gershonites — vv. 38-41**

*The number of the effectives among the Gershonites is now recorded.*

**VERSE 38, 39**

See notes above.

**VERSE 40**

“Even those that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the house of their fathers, were two thousand and six hundred and thirty” — The Gershonites had 2630 effectives out of a total of 7500 over a month (Num. 3:22), a surplus of 4870 beneath and above the limits of thirty or fifty years of age.

**VERSE 41**

See notes above.

**The Number of Merarites — vv. 42-45**

*The number of the effectives among the Merarites is now recorded.*

**VERSE 42,43**

See notes above.

**VERSE 44**

“Even those that were numbered of them after their families, were three thousand and two hundred” — The Merarites had 3,200 effectives out of a total of 6200, a surplus of 3,000 beneath and above the limits of thirty to fifty years of age. They had the highest number of effectives, but also the hardest labour. This teaches the lesson that Yahweh provides strength when and where it is needed.

**VERSE 45**

See notes above.

**The Total Number of Levites — vv. 46-49**

*A general summary is now provided. It is obvious that the numbering must have been by tens, and not by individuals. Perhaps the labour was undertaken by groups of ten men. Jewish tradition set down the minimum number of those who could meet together to celebrate the Passover in accordance with the instructions given (see Exod. 12:4) as ten persons. This well may have been the basis of the numbering in apportioning the work of the Levites.*

**VERSES 46-49**

See notes above.

## CENSUS OF LEVITES

*Chapter 3* provides a general census and location of the various families numbered from one month old and upwards to replace the firstborns of all other tribes.

*Chapter 4* lists the totals of those between the ages of 30 and 50 able to serve in the various tasks allotted the Levites.

Family	Males 1 mth. & Upwards	Males between 30 & 50	Location & Chief Tribe
Gershonites	7,500	2630	West — Ephraim
Kohathites	8,600	2750	South — Reuben
Merarites	6,200	3200	North — Dan
Moses & Aaron			East — Judah



Carrying the sacred vessels during the Exodus was the duty of the Levites

## CHAPTER FIVE

## SEPARATED FROM DEFILEMENT

*Chapter Five comprises the fourth sub-division in the first section of the Book of Numbers, according to our Analysis. It describes how all forms of defilement are excluded from the camp of Israel in preparation for the march through the wilderness towards the Promised Land. The laws set down in this chapter are designed to bring sanctity to Yahweh's people. The nation typifies the Ecclesia in which, in its perfection, nothing will be permitted to remain that defiles (see Rev. 21:27). Therefore, in preparation for journeying towards the promised inheritance, laws are implemented designed to bring sanctity to Yahweh's people. The camp is first cleansed of obvious defilement (vv. 1-4), the Law of Trespass is reiterated (vv. 5-10); and instruction regarding secret sin is given (vv. 11-31).*

**The Camp Cleansed — vv. 1-4**

*In preparation for the journey, the camp is cleansed. Lepers, and the ceremonially defiled, are excluded from the main body. By this means the need of purity is emphasised.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — This formula introduces a new sub-section, and authenticates the instructions given.

**VERSE 2**

**“Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper”** — See notes in Lev. 13:3,46; Num. 12:14. The disease of leprosy in Israel was rare and dreadful, and invariably a sign of Yahweh's displeasure in the sufferer. It was the disease of Egypt, from which He had promised the people of Israel immunity, if they obeyed His commands (Exod. 15:26). Leprosy was a living death; it was typical of open and notorious wickedness. Every case of leprosy recorded in Scripture, is connected with sin in some way. The leper, therefore,

had to be disfellowshipped until cured of his malady. The same instructions are found in Paul's teaching to the ecclesias. Consider his direction to disfellowship the brother guilty of immorality in Corinth (1 Cor. 5:1-5), and, later, his command to restore him because of his reformation (2 Cor. 2:6-8). By this means, declared Paul, the brethren “confirmed their love towards” the erring brother, for all they did, both in regard to disfellowshipping him, and in restoring him again, was done in love.

**“And every one that hath an issue”** — Whereas leprosy was rare and openly evident, an “issue” was common, but little noticed. It was normally hidden away (cp. Lev. 15:2). Issues can be likened to those sinful habits that spring out of ordinary life, but which are hidden away by the one indulging in them, or which may be little regarded by others when known. In Israel, the command was issued, that any suffering from an issue separate himself until cured of the complaint. This teaches that there should be an attempt to correct those habits incidental to the flesh which we may be

inclined to ignore, or explain away, as being "only natural".

**"And whosoever is defiled by the dead"**  
 — To touch a dead body was to contract defilement. See Lev. 21:1; Num. 9:6,10; 19:11,13; 31:19. The word "dead" is from the Hebrew, *nephesh*, soul, so that the law relates to the very opposite of an immortal soul! When one touched the dead body of a person, he was accounted unclean for seven days (Num. 19:11; 31:19). Even to touch the carcase of a beast, was to be accounted unclean until even (Lev. 11:27,39-40). The flesh is tainted through death, for humanity is subject to death through sin (Rom. 5:12). This taught that death is physically corrupting. Its presence is a reminder of sin, for, in the beginning, man was made subject to death because of sin (Rom. 5:12). Accordingly, a Nazirite, having touched a dead body was accounted as having "sinned", because he had broken his vow, perhaps inadvertently (Num. 6:11). What would cause him to touch a dead body? Obviously sympathy or affection for a deceased relative. As good as these feelings might be, the Law taught him to look beyond death to the glory to be revealed in the age to come. When, through "natural" affections he fell short of this, it was accounted as defiling and unclean. By that means, the Law taught that there were natural affections that can interfere with the complete dedication that is demanded of a true servant of Yahweh. Therefore, under such circumstances, the Law treated the person who had touched a dead body as having sympathized unduly with one who had fallen away. A true Israelite is associated with life, not with death. Therefore, when the disciple asked the Lord that he be granted permission first "to bury his father", the Lord replied: "Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:21-22). He was referring to those who were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). Physical death came as a result of this in the beginning, and therefore is associated with it by the Law. There are important spiritual lessons to be learned from every one of its ordinances.

### VERSE 3

**"Both male and female shall ye put out"** — Both sexes are equally responsible and are to be treated alike (cp. Gal. 3:26-28).

**"Without the camp shall ye put them"**  
 — The sin offering was likewise taken "without the camp", but into a "clean place" (Lev. 4:12), and there burnt. Christ was taken "without the camp" that he might provide an offering for sin — Heb. 13:12-13.

**"That they defile not their camps"** — The ceremonially unclean polluted the place of abode by their presence, and, accordingly, were removed as an outward manifestation of what every Israelite should be internally (Rom. 12:1). In addition to the vital spiritual import of this action, it was also hygienically sound practise. It isolated those who could pollute others. Today it is common medical practise to isolate those with infectious diseases lest others contact the disease. The verse before us anticipates that which modern science has discovered is necessary medically. It is the first place in Scripture where reference is made to such segregation and isolation.

**"In the midst whereof I dwell"** — See Lev. 26:11-12. The shekinah glory in the Tabernacle was the symbol of Yahweh's presence in the midst of Israel; and it was incongruous that the camp of the Holy One should be polluted.

### VERSE 4

**"And the children of Israel did so, and put them out without the camp: as Yahweh spake unto Moses, so did the children of Israel"** — The exclusion of all things that defiled, left the camp in a fit state to represent the Ecclesia in its purity; as it will be in the future (Rev. 20:9; 21:27).

### The Law Of Recompenses And Of Offerings — vv. 5-10

*Israel is instructed in the Law of Restitution; the principle that honesty is the best policy is laid down. Based upon the law of Lev. 6:1-7, an additional regulation provides for restitution in the case where the man is dead and has no heir.*

### VERSE 5

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — Having purified the camp, Israelites are warned of the consequences of trespasses.

### VERSE 6

**"Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit"** — The terms

## WITHOUT THE CAMP

Under the Law many things were taken "without the camp", but all, in some way, were related to sin. In order to teach that sin can only be properly atoned for, or forgiven, by principles outside of the Law (Exod. 34:7), this ceremony was introduced. Among the items so treated are:

- The bullock of the sin offering — Lev. 4:12,21; 18:17; 9:11; 16:27. See Heb. 13:12-13.
- The ashes of the burnt offering — Lev. 6:11.
- The dwelling place of the leper — Lev. 14:3.
- The place where the scapegoat is taken — Lev. 16:26.
- The place where the condemned are slain — Lev. 24:14; Num. 15:35.
- The place to where the defiled are removed — Num. 5:2-4.
- The place where the red heifer is slain — Num. 19:3.
- The place where the ashes of the red heifer are stored — Num. 19:9.
- The place where warriors defiled with death are cleansed — Num. 31: 19.
- The place for the ceremonially unclean — Deut. 23:10-14.
- The place where proselytes dwell for a period — Josh. 6:23.

"man" and "woman" are *ish* and *ishah* respectively in Hebrew, but the term "men" is from the Hebrew, *Adam*. These terms used in conjunction seem to apply to those who are called to a higher office in the sight of God, and yet act according to the flesh, following its dictates. The statement relates to acts of sin such as are common to men of the flesh.

**"To do a trespass against Yahweh"** — For instruction concerning trespasses, see Lev. 6:1-7. A trespass involves an invasion of the rights of another, or wrongs done to his possessions or property. In this case it involves a repudiation of that which is due to Yahweh (see Lev. 5:15-16).

**"And that person be guilty"** — Even if the act is done inadvertently, he shall be treated as guilty. See Lev. 5:17.

### VERSE 7

**"Then they shall confess their sin which they have done"** — See Lev. 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Josh. 7:19.

**"And he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth part thereof, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed"** — The word "recompense" signifies *to return*. Compensation of the principal must be paid in full, and a 20 per cent increase added thereto. In addition, an offering is to be made. In Leviticus 6, it is called *asham* or guilt-offering; here it is described as "the ram of atonement" (v. 8). Portion of the offering was burned, and portion eaten by the priests (Lev. 7:6). How much better is this law of restitution, than Gentile laws which leaves the sufferer impoverished, and merely imprisons the criminal. Who gains from the imprisonment? It is a cost to the State and does not help the sufferer. This law, however, that compels the guilty party to recompense those whom he has robbed, and to add an increase when so doing, is morally edifying. It would act as a deterrent to those who might contemplate a dishonest act. Recently, a man found guilty of embezzling a large sum of

money offered to make restitution in full if allowed his freedom, but the presiding magistrate claimed that the law did not permit him to grant such concession. The man was imprisoned, his family impoverished, the company that suffered loss received no compensation, and the cost of maintaining him and his family was laid upon the State. In contrast to this iniquitous system, the Law of Yahweh was both just and good.

### VERSE 8

**“But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto”** — This ordinance is additional to that of Leviticus, and takes heed of a case when the man who has suffered wrong has died. In that case, the restitution and compensation would be made to his nearest kin (*goel*). But what if there were no *goel*?

**“Let the trespass be recompensed unto Yahweh, even to the priest”** — As Yahweh is the Redeemer of Israel, He takes the place of all such in the nation. When there was no next of kin, the restitution and compensation were paid to the priest.

**“Beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for Israel”** — In Leviticus 6:6-7, the ram of atonement is called a guilt offering. The ram is the protector of the flock. The Hebrew word used to describe such is from a root expressing strength. This offering procured a *covering* for the offender: *i. e.* the forgiveness of his trespass. Christ, as the antitypical Ram, derived strength to provide a suitable offering for forgiveness of trespasses (see Psa. 80:17; Rom. 8:1-3).

### VERSE 9

**“And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring unto the priest, shall be his”** — The word “offering” is *teruwmah* and denotes a heave offering. See note Lev. 7:14. Heave offerings were presented at the altar, but were not offered on it. They were given to the priest as Yahweh’s representative in Israel (Num. 5:8; Deut. 19:17). Some believe that the heave offering was lifted up and down by the priest as a ritual action, representing the lifting up of the offering to Yahweh on high, but there is no definite confirmation of this. The *teruwmah* was a “reserved portion”, or that which was “lifted off” (from the root *ruwm* “to lift”) from the

rest. Hence firstfruits were treated as such, being separated from the bulk and lifted up, or given to Yahweh. Christ is described as “the firstfruits” (1 Cor. 15:23), for he was separated from all others and given exclusively to Yahweh. The Redeemed are described as “the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb” (Rev. 14:4), for they, too, are separated unto Yahweh and given to Him, that is to the Priest (the Lord Jesus Christ) who is His representative. Accordingly, they are described as being lifted up to Yahweh: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

There is a distinction shown between the “heave offering” (*teruwmah*) and the “wave offering” (*tenuwphah*). The former was the perquisite of the individual officiating priest, whilst the latter was for the use and service of the whole priesthood (cp. Exod. 29:27; Lev. 7:31; 8:31; 23:20). The *tenuwphah* was waved before the altar, as expressing activity in the service of Yahweh, in contradistinction to the *tenuwphah* which was lifted up to Him. All the Levites were given to the priesthood as a *teruwphah* (cp. Lev. 7:14; Num. 8:11), so that they ministered to all the priests. To withhold the firstfruits from Yahweh as His *teruwmah* was treated as a trespass; and for saints to withhold their service to Christ is a trespass, for it is the “heave offering” that such can lift up to him.

### VERSE 10

**“And every man’s hallowed things shall be his”** — The “hallowed things”, are the gifts that Israelites might offer unto Yahweh. They constituted the dedicatory offerings (*e.g.* firstfruits etc.). Such were treated as the perquisites of the priests.

### The Trial of Jealousy — vv. 11-31

*As the sin of adultery is particularly defiling and destructive of the relations existing between Yahweh and Israel typed as Husband and bride (Isa. 54:5; Lev. 20:26), and as they are disruptive of the very foundations of the social order, the whole subject is dealt with in this chapter at a length proportionate to its importance. However, Scripture does not reveal one instance where this law was invoked by a jealous husband, so that it is evident that it is designed to illustrate spiritual*



*adultery and Yahweh's viewpoint towards it. Considered in that light, this strange law becomes prophetic of Israel's relationship with Yahweh her spiritual Husband, and His treatment of her as exhibited by the words and actions of Hosea, the prophet of enduring love. Through Moses, Israel was warned that it must have no other God; "for Yahweh, Whose name is Jealous (Qanna) is a jealous God" (Exod. 34:14). Ezekiel published the parable that represents Israel as the founding child who becomes Yahweh's bride (Ezek. 16:6-14). The Law relating to the Trial of Jealousy reveals the responsibilities resting upon the nation because of its privileged position as Yahweh's bride, and the consequences of spiritual adultery.*

## VERSE 11

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — See note vv. 1,5.

## VERSE 12

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him" — To "go aside" is to do so morally as in vv. 19,20,29; Prov. 4:15; 7:25. The law took heed not only of the natural relationships of marriage, but the spiritual implications also. The nation, having entered into covenant relationship with God was likened to His bride (see Lev. 20:26; Ezek. 16:6-14; Isa. 54:5), and therefore to turn aside from Him is treated as adultery (see Jer. 2:2-5; 3:1-2). Hence the importance of the Law now set forth before the nation. In similar manner, the Ecclesia is likened to the Bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-3), and friendship with the world is treated as spiritual adultery (James 4:4). The emphasis of the Law is given to the husband, for there was no provision for a wife to press a case inasmuch as the law looked beyond natural relationships to those existing between Yahweh and His people. Yahweh would remain faithful, so that no provision need to be made in order to press a case against Him.

## VERSE 13

"And a man lie with her carnally" — The Hebrew *shekabath zera'* is literally *lying with semen*, i.e. copulating. See Lev. 18:20; 19:20.

"And it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be

**defiled"** — Clear proof of adultery earned the death penalty (Lev. 20:10), so that the verse before us relates to a case of suspected adultery. In such a case the following test was permitted, though no evidence of it being pressed by a husband is recorded in Scripture except that of Yahweh against the nation of Israel.

"**And there be no witness against her**" — This law posed the problem of suspected adultery. Such a suspicion could have been induced by coldness on the part of a man's wife, or some other reason.

"**And there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner**" — The words in italics, *with the manner*, do not help the meaning of the statement. The verb "taken" is from a Hebrew root signifying *to be caught*. The phrase, therefore, is better rendered "caught in the act". This was the crude accusation made by the scribes and Pharisees when they dragged the adulterous woman into the presence of the Lord, and interrupted his teaching of the people by demanding that he state how he would treat the case in view of Moses' law (John 8:1-11). It is interesting to notice that the Lord invoked the very Law before us in his handling of this case, reminding the leaders of the Jews that the nation under their care was itself guilty of spiritual adultery against Yahweh, and so placing the responsibility for this squarely upon those who were governing it.

## VERSE 14

"**And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled**" — Whether or not there is obvious proof of adultery, the husband may develop a spirit of jealousy. Why would a man do so if his wife were innocent? Without actually committing physical adultery, she might become cold, or indifferent, or rebellious towards him. Her attitude may well cause him to suspect some alienation of her affection, and so cause the "spirit of jealousy" to develop. In fact, she has permitted something to enter into her life that causes this, so that her ardour towards him is lessened, and this, in turn, has resulted in him manifesting the "spirit of jealousy". The Hebrew word for "spirit" is *ruach*, the basic meaning of which is to breathe heavily. When the word is used of the

wind, as it is on some occasions, it denotes a strong, powerful wind. Similarly the *ruach* (spirit) of God is said to rush suddenly and powerfully on a man (Judges 14:6; Ezek. 3:14; Acts 2:3). It is used here in the sense of an over-mastering rush of feeling. Jealousy is a powerful emotion, often stimulated by zeal, and people can find themselves so ruled by it as to find their normal placid personalities completely changed into the most violent and extreme passion and actions. It can cause affection to be replaced by anger towards the one previously loved for it is hardly likely that a man would experience jealousy in regard to someone of whom he is not fond.

All this, which applies to normal relationships, has its application in those that exist between Yahweh and His people. One of His names is that of *Qanna* or Jealous (Exod. 34:14). It reminds worshippers that He demands their undivided loyalty, and that anything less than that will stimulate the spirit of Jealousy as far as He is concerned (See Ezek. 8:5). A believer's love waxes cold (see Matt. 24:21; Rev. 2:4) when alienation of affection is caused through worldly influences, and this becomes the cause of jealousy on the part of Yahweh. He clearly detects a lack of the true spirit of love which should motivate those who have embraced the covenant of faith in Christ. They become indifferent towards Him. What is the cause of this alienation of affection? Is it not the influence of the world? Does not James teach that friendship with the world is the cause of enmity with God? And does he not indict such who are guilty of this as being "adulteresses" whatever sex they might be literally? Hence, in the terms of this parabolic law, the spirit of jealousy can come upon God, Who is described as Israel's Husband (Isa. 54:5). In that light, this law had a significance for every Israelite, irrespective as to their normal domestic relationships.

#### VERSE 15

"Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her" — An offering had to be brought for a wife accused of suspected adultery, even though subsequent investigation should prove her to be innocent. Why? Though the wife might be cleared of the accusation of adultery, her conduct towards her husband had contributed to the

spirit of jealousy manifested by him, and to that extent, she was deemed guilty. The ideal of wifely conduct is that of self-sacrificing warmth and love, and she must not allow circumstances nor familiarity to lessen her feelings towards him. If her conduct falls short of this, she must recognise that it is the cause of her humiliation, and change it accordingly. The fact that she lacked in wifely duties was brought home to her by the offering her husband was compelled to make on her behalf.

It is vital to see through to the spiritual lessons expressed. When the love of believers towards the Truth, or towards God, lessens, it is because some other influence has entered their lives, or because they have not been attentive to the Word. Many of those accused of adultery in the Scriptures were physically very moral people dwelling in complete unity with their wives, but guilty of a friendship with the world that constituted them spiritual adulteresses (James 4:4). And that, we believe, is the key to this law. When a woman lacked in wifely duties, she became subject to this law of jealousy; when a believer lacks in his duties towards the Truth and towards God, he, too, incites the spirit of jealousy in God.

"The tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon" — Barley meal without incense or oil, represents the humblest product of the earth, typical of the earthly conduct of the woman, whether guilty of physical adultery or not. The offering was presented without the sanctifying influence of oil (the joy of divine communion — Heb. 1:9), or the purifying influence of prayer (frankincense — Rev. 5:9). Barley was the cheapest, and humblest of grain. Even in time of famine it rated only half the price of wheat (2 Kings 7:1,16,18); the poorer classes in distress used barley (Ezek. 4:18); the well-to-do used it for fodder (1 Kings 4:28). The offering of barley, therefore, was the offering of humility, expressing the attitude of submissiveness that the Truth requires of wives in the Lord (see Eph. 5:22-23). Their attitude in that regard is an example of that which should be manifested by both "male and female in Christ" towards the requirements of the Truth.

"For it is an offering of jealousy" — In Hebrew, the words *jealous* and *zealous* are closely related, so much so, that one

word sometimes does duty for both expressions. This is as it should be, because zeal for a cause creates a feeling of jealousy when half-hearted service is rendered towards it. Yahweh desires enthusiastic, whole-hearted interest in His purpose; He has little use for those who are "neither hot nor cold". He urges such to "be zealous and repent" (Rev. 3:14-19).

**"An offering of memorial"** — As an offering of *memorial* it recalled the goodness and severity of God, the obligations of a wife to her husband, and of Israel to its Husband, even Yahweh. Whereas, elsewhere in this chapter, the word *qin'ah* is in the singular, here it is in the plural, *qin'ath*: jealousies. There is a double jealousy, in that the action of the wife affects both her husband and her God. Throughout this ordinance, the status of Yahweh, and the responsibility of Israel to render faithful, undivided loyalty to Him, is always brought into view.

**"Bringing iniquity to remembrance"** — The offering, presented by the husband on behalf of his wife, brought into focus the conduct his wife should manifest; and, typically, the warm loyalty that Israel should reveal towards Yahweh.

#### VERSE 16

**"And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before Yahweh"** — Young renders the personal pronoun *her* as *it*, identifying the action with the offering and not with the woman. This conforms with the instructions of v. 18.

#### VERSE 17

**"And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel"** — The "holy water" doubtless was taken from the laver, which represents the Word. It is the influence of the Word that will reveal any lack of service, any coolness of attitude, on the part of Yahweh's bride. The laver was appropriate for that purpose, for it was made from the polished metal mirrors supplied by devout and chaste women at the Tabernacle (Exod. 38:8). Paul, in his treatment of the laver in its antitypical significance (as representing the Word), shows that it is particularly designed for purification of the Bride (Eph. 5:26). The water was placed in an earthen vessel representing weak human nature. See 2 Cor. 4:7.

**"And of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and**

**put it into the water"** — The Tabernacle was the abode of Yahweh in Israel, and therefore representative of His interest in the proceedings. The "dust" of the Tabernacle represents the nature of those associated with Him in worship; their mortality (Gen. 3:19). As dust was "the serpent's meat" (Gen. 3:14; Isa. 65:25) it is emblematic of the sinful nature of man.

#### VERSE 18

**"And the priest shall set the woman before Yahweh"** — Saints should always be in the presence of God, or before Yahweh, for they, like Noah are called upon to "walk with God" (Gen. 6:9). However, because human nature tends to forget, the wife suspected of adultery was brought close to the Tabernacle in order that she might realise the solemnity of the proceedings. This teaches the best procedure to adopt in the case of any who tend to fall away, or to become cold in their service to Yahweh. They should be humbled by being reminded of what is required of them (answering to the offering of barley), and should be brought into close proximity to Yahweh by the influence of the Word, and by prayer. This may awaken them to their responsibilities, and so become "an offering of memorial". The whole procedure was designed to restore the husband and wife to their proper relationships, and not merely to condemn.

**"And uncover the woman's head"** — The RV renders "let the hair of the woman's head go loose". This was similar to the action taken in the case of the leper (Lev. 13:45), whose untended hair was a sign of uncleanness. Paul declared that it is "unseemly" for a woman to have her head uncovered before Yahweh in the Ecclesia (1 Cor. 11:1-16). The same applied to the woman under the Law whose head was uncovered. She was humbled before the priest and her husband. Was this fair in the case of only suspected adultery? Yes, because as we have noted above, the demeanour of the woman, her actions, had contributed to the accusation being levelled against her. Though she may not have been guilty of physical adultery, her coldness towards her husband had resulted in her contributing to the jealousy he felt. Yahweh desires us to be warm and enthusiastic in our service; otherwise He may well suspect us of giving unto Him less than is His due, in order to serve others, and so arousing His anger. And that would be to our shame.

We, figuratively, may have our heads covered as symbolic of our submission to Christ our espoused husband (1 Cor. 11:6-11), but if our actions do not accord with the warmth of affection we should manifest, if, in fact, we do not "love the Lord's appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8), our heads may be figuratively uncovered at the judgment seat of Christ, and "the shame of our nakedness appear" obvious to all (Rev. 16:15).

**"And put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering"**

— This offering is described in v. 15. It is the offering of humility devoid of any element of joy, as such it represented the abased condition of the woman. She stood there, with the offering of humility in her hands, and with her head uncovered in shame. Described as a *memorial*, her offering bore witness to the fact that she had neglected to manifest that submission of love and warmth of feeling she was required to reveal towards her husband, as typifying the attitude of loving submission that the nation should manifest towards Yahweh as His bride. But what if she did not receive reciprocal affection from her husband? If, in spite of that, she still performed her proper duty towards him, she would have performed her part, and would receive commendation of Yahweh. The attitude of Abigail towards Nabal is indicative of the type of conduct that commends itself to God and man. She remained faithful to her husband, fulfilling her wifely duties, even though she did not receive reciprocal treatment, or affection, from him. She did it "as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).

**"And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse"** — The word "bitter" is *marah* as in Exod. 15:25. The water would not be literally bitter, but would be made so by the nature of the curse. This water appears to be that mentioned in v. 17. The Word of God is a "savour of life unto life, or death unto death" (see 2 Cor. 2:16), according as we react to its requirements. It can save or destroy. It can be both sweet and bitter (Rev. 10:9; Ezek. 3:14).

#### VERSE 19

**"And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse"**

— The formula adopted by the priest on such occasions presumed the innocence of the woman unless she was proved guilty. The margin renders the latter section of the verse, "being in the power of thy husband". The relationship between husband and wife in the Word is defined by this statement. It is a relationship that is established in view of the status of the Ecclesia towards Yahweh. No husband, loving his wife, would presume on his status as such. See Eph. 5:25.

#### VERSE 20

**"But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband"** — The negative aspect of the matter is placed second.

#### VERSE 21

**"Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman"** — In the RSV, these words are placed in parenthesis. They specifically bring home to the woman, if she be guilty, the enormity of her actions. The word "cursing" is from the Hebrew *alah*, "execration". The curse would rest upon the woman if she were proved guilty, and would reveal itself in her external appearance.

**"Yahweh make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when Yahweh doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell"** — As among the Hebrews the thigh and other parts of the body were used to express those parts that nature hides (cp. Gen. 46:26), the reference to the thigh here could well be treated the same, and relate to the falling down of the womb with the consequent extension of the abdomen. Notice that the margin renders the word "rot" as *fall*. With the swelling of the abdomen, the woman would give all the external signs of child-bearing but with none of its fruit. Now consider the figurative application. Israel became guilty of spiritual adultery (Jer. 3:1-3) arousing the jealousy of Yahweh (Ezek. 8:3; 16:38,42; 23:25). With the Temple services conducted daily there were all the appearances of bearing seed; but none to the glory of the Father. Ecclesias, and Ecclesial members, can likewise give every external appearance of bearing fruit, but fail to do so. Of Sardis it was recorded: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, but you are dead"

(Rev. 3:1). Attendance at the meetings, constant reading of the Bible, must be accompanied by a practical application of principles honouring to Yahweh. In the absence of such, an Ecclesia, or an individual, appears to Him in the same light as the woman mentioned in this verse. Indeed, the people of Israel in the days of Ezekiel were like that, "for with their mouth they shewed much love, but their heart went after their covetousness" (Ezek. 33:31). Their actions aroused the jealous anger of Yahweh. Through Ezekiel He declared: "I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy" (Ezek. 16:38).

#### VERSE 22

"And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen" — This response is similar to Israel's acceptance of the terms of the Mosaic covenant with its blessings and cursings. See Deut. 27:15-26.

#### VERSE 23

"And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water" — Rotherham renders this: "he shall wipe them out into the bitter water." The curses were written with a soluble ink that could be wiped off with a water-filled sponge which could be returned to the bitter water.

#### VERSE 24

"And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse" — As the very words of the curses had been washed into the water, the woman virtually drank them. This is what one does when one studies the Word academically, with no attempt to put into practise the principles set forth therein. The water of life then becomes bitter water to such.

"And the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter" — This is all said in anticipation, because the woman did not drink until after the offering had been presented. See v. 26. Rotherham places the word "bitter" before "water" as an adjective.

#### VERSE 25

"Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and

shall wave the offering before Yahweh, and offer it upon the altar" — The waving of an offering denoted activity before Yahweh. In this instance it became a vow on the part of the woman that she will act in humility before her God as indicated by the nature of the offering. Afterwards it was offered upon the altar. The normal law concerning the *minchah*, or meal offering, was to burn a handful as a "memorial", and to place the balance at the side of the altar to be subsequently given to the priests (see Lev. 2).

#### VERSE 26

"And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof" — Offerings burnt upon the altar comprised the vow of the worshipper to give herself up completely in service to Yahweh, in the performance of His will. The "memorial" was a token of the whole. The rest of the offering was given to the priest, indicating that the worshipper recognised her need of the mediatorial functions of the priest to offer herself acceptably before Yahweh.

"And afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water" — With the "memorial" in mind, the water, representing the Word, was then drunk.

#### VERSE 27

"And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter" — The "water" revealed the true state of the woman. Israel under the Law may have looked fair from external appearances, but when compared with what her "Husband" desired of her, she fell far short of the ideal, and only excited the divine jealousy. This was shown when her conduct was compared with the requirements of the Word, answering to the water. So it will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ in regard to those whose actions denote them to be adulteresses (ct. James 4:4 with Rev. 14:4). The test will be related to the Word, as the Lord warned: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). That word will prove bitter to such in that day.

"And her belly shall swell, and her

**thigh shall rot**" — The external appearances of childbearing, but, in this cause, not to the glory of the husband, for no fruit will result.

**"And the woman shall be a curse among her people"** — This was the fate of Israel among the nations because of her national faithlessness towards Yahweh her Husband (Isa. 54:4). See Deut. 28:37; Jer. 24:9; 29:18,22; 42:18; 44:12; Zech. 8:13. This also shall be the case with Ecclesial members who are rejected at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

#### VERSE 28

**"And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed"** — Acquitted of the accusation laid against her, she assumed her normal position as wife, producing fruit to the glory of her husband.

#### VERSE 29

**"This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled"** — The law that applied when a woman was proved guilty of adultery, as Israel was nationally.

#### VERSE 30

**"Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before Yahweh, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law"** — This statement applied to a case in which the husband had no con-

crete evidence of adultery, but discerned in the attitude of his wife, a coldness towards him which caused him to suspect some alienation of her feelings towards him, developing in him the spirit of jealousy.

#### VERSE 31

**"Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity"** — No punishment was provided for the man, even though he, being of a jealous disposition, had caused his wife to go through this ordeal needlessly. Unfounded jealousy is cruel, but lawful jealousy is a protection of the home and a divine characteristic (Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Josh. 24:19; Ezek. 39:25; Nah. 1:2; Zech. 1:14; 8:2. See Song 8:6). Jealousy often springs from ardent love. In the national, typical application of the law, Yahweh's wife (Isa. 54:5) was the cause of much Godly jealousy, and this law was a reminder to all Israelites, both male and female, of the consequences of their coldness towards Him, or their faithlessness in going aside to strange worship. The Law is a prophetic parable of Israel's state as the bride of Yahweh.

**"And this woman shall bear her iniquity"** — She suffered the consequences of her actions or attitudes as expressed by this law. It taught wives in Israel, and, figuratively, the nation as a whole, the need to manifest true wifely characteristics and warmth of affection, towards their husbands.



A woman's probity is put to the test through the Trial of Jealousy

## CHAPTER SIX

## SEPARATED UNTO YAHWEH

*Having revealed through the laws of Chapter five that Purity is essential by demanding the separation of the unclean, that Honesty is essential by setting forth the laws of recompense and offerings, and, finally, that Exclusiveness in worship is essential by outlining the trial of jealousy, the instruction of the Book of Numbers now provides affirmative laws illustrating positive forms of worship by laying down the terms of the Nazarite Vow. Opportunity is provided for ordinary Israelites to give themselves unto God for a time as priests. All Israel belonged to Yahweh (Deut. 7:6; 14:2), but opportunity is now provided for individual consecration to Him, on the part of such as might feel moved in that direction under special circumstances. Men or women were at liberty to vow a vow of separation that is, they might resolve to dedicate themselves exclusively to God for a specified time. The terms and conditions of the period of separation are clearly set down in this chapter, and comprise powerful spiritual lessons for those who desire to give themselves unto Yahweh in any age. As the Nazarite vow made priests of laymen, so does acceptance of Christ through baptism (1 Pet. 2:9).*

**The Nazarite Vow — vv. 1-8**

*The term "Nazarite" signifies separation. The separation is to be threefold: 1. From the vine; 2. From cutting the hair; 3. From contact with the dead. Each of these requirements have powerful spiritual lessons reaching down to these times.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — This statement authenticates the laws which follow.

**VERSE 2**

**"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When man or woman shall separate themselves to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to separate themselves unto**

**Yahweh"** — The title Nazarite signifies to separate. Accordingly, Rotherham renders this verse: "When any man or woman would make the special vow of one separate, by separating himself unto Yahweh." The word "separate" is from the Hebrew *pala*, to sever, consecrate, but distinguished as exceptional. Hence Rotherham renders it, *the special vow*. See Lev. 27:2; Deut. 28:59. The statement of the verse before us teaches that both men or women could take the vow, though in the case of the latter, it was subject to the restrictions imposed by Num. 30:3-9. So, also, in Christ male and female become as one (Gal. 3:28). The vow could be for a limited time, or for life. However, only a few are on record as lasting a lifetime. Samson (Jud. 11:5,7;

16:17), Samuel (1 Sam. 11:11), John Baptist (Luke 1:15) were among the number. Samson is called a Nazarite, but not Samuel or John, though it is obvious that the Law of the Nazarite applied to them. It seems obvious, from Acts 21:23-27, that Paul also took a Nazarite vow for a certain period. The principle of separation is illustrated in the cases of other men who did not take on the full restrictions of the vow. Thus the term is used of Joseph as typical of Christ in Gen. 49:26. Notice that the great principle of the vow was that of separateness. Accordingly, the margin renders the phrase, *to separate themselves, as to make themselves Nazarites*. The Hebrew word *nazar* rendered as "separate" signifies "to hold aloof", "to abstain", "to set apart", and is the root of the title Nazarite. The verb occurs in Lev. 15:31; 22:2. It also occurs in Hos. 9:10 in relation to pagan worship: "They went to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto that shame." That statement implies that Israelites became Nazarites unto Baal.

### VERSE 3

"He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink" — Though a woman could take a vow, this verse is in the masculine gender because a woman's vow was subject to the approval of her husband or father. During the period of the vow, wine or strong drink was forbidden. Intoxicating liquor was also prohibited the priests when on active service (Lev. 10:9-11; Jud. 13:4,7,14; Amos 2:12; Luke 1:15). Such drink befores the mind and impairs spirituality (Lev. 10:9-11). Its counterpart is purely emotional religion which stimulates but does not educate. The form of religion induced by sentimental mass appeal, and the skilful use of music and hymn singing divorced from an appeal to the Word correctly interpreted. Paul exhorts: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). Popular evangelistic religion which relies upon flesh-stimulating oratory, and which tends to stir up an audience emotionally, is the antitype of this. On the other hand, to be "filled with the Spirit" is to be filled with the words and teaching of the Lord Jesus. He declared: "The words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). Paul also declared that "the sword

of the spirit is the Word of God" (Eph. 6:17). A person filled with the Spirit, is filled with the sober words of truth, and well equipped to meet life's problems; whereas a person artificially stimulated by sentimentality is likely to capitulate when pressure is brought to bear on him.

The two words used in the verse before us are: *yayin* (wine) and *shekar* (strong drink). The former relates to wine in the widest sense, and is derived from a word signifying "to effervescent" *i.e.* to ferment. *Shekar* comes from a root signifying "to be tipsy".

The term "vinegar of wine" is a rendition of the word *chamets*, "to be pungent". It denotes a sour wine such as was used by the poorer people. See Ruth 2:14. The effect was the same. It inebriated.

"Neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes" — This relates to a drink made by soaking grape skins in water. Nazarites were to keep strictly apart from the fruit of the vine. For wine "taketh away the heart" (Hos. 4:11), and the vine produced the grape to make the wine. The Nazarite was taught to keep strictly apart from anything which was associated with that which could unduly influence him.

"Nor eat moist grapes, or dried" — There would be nothing intoxicating about this form of food, of course, but the Nazarite, as a witness to the world, had to abstain from eating such. Why? See the comment above, and the clue given in the next verse.

### VERSE 4

"All the days of his separation" — See margin: Nazariteship.

"He shall eat nothing that is made of the vine tree" — The margin renders this as *the vine of the wine*. This provides a reason why all things related to it were excluded as articles of food for those under a vow. There was to be observed the strictest separateness from that which produced the wine, so that the isolation therefrom would be complete.

"From the kernels even to the husk" — It is said that a drink was made of the kernels of unripe grapes, and cakes were also made of the husks (see Hos. 3:1). The prohibition, however, was to keep away from the vine completely. Then there would be no temptation to partake of its wine. The antitype is found in the exhortation of Paul to "abstain from the



very appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22).

#### VERSE 5

"All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head until the days be fulfilled" — Long hair is considered a "shame" unto a man (1 Cor. 11:14); why then did the Law of the Nazarite decree that one under the vow should let his hair grow? Because, whilst long hair is a shame unto a man, the Nazarite, during the term of his vow represented the nation whose symbol was the bride of Yahweh (Isa. 54:5). As such she was expected to be in subjection to her Lord. The long hair was the token of this subjection (1 Cor. 11:5,7). Hence, the "consecration of his God was upon his head" (v. 6). By his very appearance, the Nazarite testified to all whom he met that he was "different," he was under a vow of separation.

"In the which he separateth himself unto Yahweh, he shall be holy, and shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow" — In doing so, he would be like a wife to her husband. She separates herself from all others and devotes herself exclusively to her spouse. See the likeness to the priest: the Nazarite was holy, or separate (Lev. 21:6).

#### VERSE 6

"All the days that he separateth himself unto Yahweh he shall come at no dead body" — Once again this identified the Nazarite with the priest (see Lev. 21:10-22). The priest was to recognise his work unto Yahweh as of supreme importance, and was not to allow family considerations to interfere with his dedicated service (Lev. 21:11); and the Nazarite was to recognise his vow in the same way. Both priest and Nazarite were to see beyond death by bearing in mind the resurrection from the dead which was the hope of every true Israelite (Acts 24:14-15; 26:6-8). Christ's disciples as Nazarites under a vow of separation, must view life in a similar manner, and leave "the dead to bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22). Once "dead in trespasses and sins", they have been quickened to a newness of life in Christ (Eph. 2:1), and are expected to see beyond death in all their considerations. Like the priest, the Nazarite recognised his vow as of greater importance than natural feelings (Deut. 33:9).

#### VERSE 7

"He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die" — This was a stricter separation than that required for an ordinary priest (Lev. 21:1-2), and therefore identified the Nazarite with the separation demanded of the High Priest (Lev. 21:10-11).

"Because the consecration of his God is upon his head" — The word "consecration" is rendered as *separation* in the margin. The Nazarite was a living example of a true Israelite: the very embodiment of an "Israelite indeed". In his external appearance he showed that he was under vow to Yahweh, as Christ's followers should likewise. He was a personification of the Kingdom of priests which he represented, for, by his voluntary vow, he was restored to the status enjoyed by Israelites before the sin of the golden calf, after which the priestly functions were limited to Levi. Thus by his action, he foreshadowed the Melchizedek priesthood as established by Christ. The unshown hair of the Nazarite, which witnessed to his subjection to Yahweh, was to him what the diadem on the mitre was to the High Priest, or the straggling branches were to the unpruned vine (Lev. 25:5): a testimony to all that the time of his vow was given in exclusive subjection to Yahweh. The terms of his vow foreshadowed that separation and dedication required of Christ's followers for they are forbidden to "love father or mother more than the Lord" (Matt. 10:37), and, if necessary, they are to ignore family considerations to carry out their servitude to him (Mark 10:29; Luke 14:26). The High Priest in Israel became the ideal of the Nazarite, as the Lord Jesus, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek is the ideal of his followers.

#### VERSE 8

"All the days of his separation he is holy unto Yahweh" — The word "holy" signifies that he is given over exclusively to Yahweh's use. This epitomises the service of Christ's brethren to their God. They are designated "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" and are called upon to "consider the Apostle and High Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1). They have been elevated from lay men unto a status of priesthood in him (1 Pet. 2:9).

As one who is "holy unto Yahweh" the

Nazarite was as the High Priest. And inferior though the Nazarite was as a layman, to the anointed priest, yet in one way he was decidedly superior: the High Priest in Israel received his position as of hereditary duty and not from voluntary choice. On the other hand, the consecration of the Nazarite was essentially voluntary: a course of life and service willingly, cheerfully, and lovingly undertaken as an expression of his "delight in Yahweh" and his desire to live in absolute holiness before Him.

#### Cleansing From Defilement — vv. 9-12

*As accidents occur, and a Nazarite might be inadvertently defiled by contact with a dead body, a provision of mercy is made for this eventuality.*

#### VERSE 9

"And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration" — Notice the significance attributed to the head of the Nazarite, and bear in mind the importance placed upon Samson's hair. As a token of subjection, it was a symbol of his vow, and hence it is described as "the head of his consecration" or dedication, as the word *nezer* signifies. This provision of the law provides for when a vow might be inadvertently broken by an accident of death.

"Then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it" — Having broken his vow, though by an involuntary breach, the Nazarite had to terminate the period and commence again. He did this by an act that he was required also to do at the completion of his vow; and he did so in fulfilment of the requirements of cleansing from contact with death (Lev. 19:11).

#### VERSE 10

"And on the eighth day" — Pointing forward to beyond the Millennium when sin and mortality will cease.

"He shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" — He brought the lesser sacrifice because no personal transgression had been committed. The offering of the birds taught that the true Israelite must lift himself above the mere earthly considerations, and render a higher service unto his God.

#### VERSE 11

"And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering" — The sin offering ensured forgiveness for the breaking of the vow, and the burnt offering proclaimed the intention of the offerer to give himself completely unto Yahweh.

"And make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the death" — Though the vow had been broken inadvertently and not deliberately, it was treated as sin, and as such needed atonement or a cover. This teaches that sin has very wide borders, and that anything that interferes with God's way or right is to be treated as such. It is interesting to note that the word "dead" in this place is from the Hebrew *nephesh*, elsewhere frequently rendered *soul*, so that the Bible teaches of *dead souls* though not of immortal souls as the possession of man!

"And shall hallow his head that same day" — The Nazarite had to recommence his vow again by allowing his hair to grow. In that way he "hallowed his head" because the hair was a token of his submission to the will of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 12

"And he shall consecrate unto Yahweh the days of his separation" — To "consecrate" is to separate unto Yahweh. The Nazarite could not evade the length of his vow, and had to recommence the time again, giving it all unto Yahweh.

"And shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering" — Even though the vow had been broken inadvertently, it was treated as a trespass. This taught that the responsibility of keeping separate rested on the Nazarite. If he failed, even through inadvertence, he was accounted guilty. He should have seen to it that his separateness was complete, and should have taken care to avoid all situations where the possibility of death might be found. The lesson taught is that stressed by Paul in Romans 7:15-21. We often sin against our will. Sometimes the flesh will take over, and we will commit a sin which we will later deeply regret. Paul wrote: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me . . ." Though that was the cause with Paul, and doubtless is the case with every one of us, neither he nor we can avoid the

responsibility of sinning, merely because we have inadvertently given way to the flesh. The ordinance set before the Nazarite would teach him to closely consider every circumstance of life, so that he may avoid anything that might interfere with his vow of separation. Those who are Christ's should likewise look very well to their ways, avoiding situations that might lead them to break their vow of separateness.

**“But the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled”**

— The days of separation were lost if the vow was broken. He could not account those days as part of his vow, and cancel them off when he recommenced the period. He had to commence again from the beginning. In our service to Yahweh there must be complete consistency. A believer cannot rest upon past laurels in excusing a later decline. The principle was set forth by Ezekiel: “When the righteous turneth away from his unrighteousness, and committeth iniquity . . . all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die” (Ezek. 18:24).

#### Completion Of The Vow — vv. 13-21

*Special offerings terminated the vow, expressing the intention of the Nazarite to continue to render dedicated service in worship unto Yahweh, even though his term of separation was completed.*

#### VERSE 13

**“And this is the law of the Nazarite, when the days of his separation are fulfilled: he shall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation”** — On the termination of his period of separation, the Nazarite was to be brought to the Tabernacle, as the dwelling place of Yahweh in Israel, and there released from the limitations imposed on him during the period of his vow. In this there was prophetic foreshadowing of the time when saints will be granted release from their vow of limitation at the coming of the Lord. At that time they, too, will be presented before Yahweh in appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ. In *The Law of Moses*, Brother Roberts comments: “Taking the whole period of the Nazariteship's separation to stand, in parable, for the life of probation to which

the Gospel calls men, we may discern without difficulty the meaning of a ceremonial that proclaims the essentiality of sacrifice to the final acceptability of the most faithfully kept time of separation.” The parable of the Nazarite, therefore, sets forth the parable of those in Christ in their lives of separation unto Yahweh. Those times will terminate in the coming of the Lord.

#### VERSE 14

**“And he shall offer his offering unto Yahweh”** — The Hebrew word “offer” in this verse is different from that used in v. 11,16,17. It is the verb *qarat*, signifying “to present”. The Nazarite had to bring his offering to the Tabernacle and there place it in the hands of the priest for him to “offer” it up in the sense of sacrificing it, as expressed in v. 16.

**“One he lamb of the first year, without blemish for a burnt offering”** — All offerings point forward to the one great offering: that of the Lord Jesus Christ. But all sacrificial requirements laid down in Scripture set forth ideals for the offerer, and were not to be treated as substitutionary, i.e. instead of the offerer, as leaving him free to please himself. The Lord, as the perfect sacrifice, is set before believers as “the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). Accordingly, the burnt offering was the token of complete dedication of self unto Yahweh. In presenting it, however, the offerer was conscious of the weakness of flesh, and therefore of the need of blood shedding. This blood, as representing a dedicated life unto Yahweh, was presented at the altar. But the real motive of the offerer was an earnest desire on his part to serve Yahweh to the fullest extent of his being. This could only be fulfilled in him “presenting himself as a living sacrifice unto God” (Rom. 12:1-2). Accordingly, though the period of the vow was completed, the Nazarite recognised his duty to continue to strive to conform to the Divine will, as represented by the manner that his offering slowly smouldered on the altar, causing its fragrance to ascend heaven-wards.

**“One ewe lamb of the first year without blemish for a sin offering”** — See Lev. 4:32-35. A sin offering was required, even though no actual sin had been committed. Why? To bring home to the offerer the sinfulness of flesh, so emphasising his need to “mortify” it, or put it to death

(see Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). The ewe-lamb was appropriate for this purpose, for it recalled that sin, in the first instance, entered the world through Eve (see Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:11-15), and human nature is what it is because of her original transgression. In offering a female in sacrifice as representative of himself, the offerer acknowledged his subjection to the authority of Yahweh, the Husband of Israel (Isa. 54:4; Eph. 5:22).

The ceremony as a whole taught the Nazarite that to offer himself acceptably as a living burnt offering unto Yahweh, he must recognise the sinfulness of flesh and guard against it. John emphasised the same principle in writing: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Grammarians claim that the construction of this statement denotes the sinfulness of human nature. Notice that John did not write: "If we say we have not sinned," but, "If we say we have *no sin* . . ."

**"And one ram without blemish for a peace offering"** — The ram is indicative of strength, its very name, *'ayil*, signifying to be strong. By offering a ram the offerer proclaimed his intention of giving all his strength to fulfilling the requirements of Yahweh, and in that way seeking peace. The Hebrew word for "peace" denotes a state of being *at one*, so that the peace-offering was the offering of fellowship with Yahweh (see Lev. 3:6). In the closing ceremony of the Nazarite, this takes its proper order after the first two offerings: (1) The burnt offering representing the complete dedication of self to Yahweh's service; (2) The sin offering expressive of the sinfulness of flesh, and the offerer's determination to "mortify" it; (3) The peace offering expressing the communion of fellowship with Yahweh. Our present service will culminate in a state of "one-ness" with the Father (John 17:21) at the coming of the Lord.

#### VERSE 15

**"And a basket of unleavened bread"** — Unleavened bread represented a ritual abstinence from sin (1 Cor. 5:8). In presenting it, the offerer acknowledged his dependence upon Yahweh as the Giver of his daily bread, and proclaimed his intention of abstaining from sin, as he laboured for the food that perishes. Thus far, the Nazarite's offering was similar to that made by the priests at their consecration (Exod. 29:2; Lev. 7:13). The

Nazarite was about to return to his normal status in society, but as Israel constituted a "kingdom of priests", he recognised that the priests in their separateness represented what the nation should be as a whole (Exod. 19:6).

**"Cakes of fine flour mingled with oil"** — The word *challoth*, rendered "cakes", denotes perforated cakes such as would more easily accept the oil poured over them. Oil, as a symbol, represented the spirit (Heb. 1:9), available to believers through the Word (John 6:63). In offering these perforated cakes, therefore, the offerer declared he would open his heart so that it would be receptive to the Word. Of course, as with the animal sacrifices, the bread offered pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ as "the bread of life" (John 6). He was not only "unleavened" in that he was without sin, but in obedience to the will of the Father, he submitted to "perforation" or crucifixion on the cross. In that sense, the symbolism is fulfilled in those who demonstrate that they are Christ's by "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

The cakes were to be of "fine flour": the best of the grain. Fine flour is a combination of Yahweh's blessing in the grain, and human co-operation in processing it. The spiritual application is obvious. We can become "labourers together with God" (1 Cor. 3:5-9). In offering these cakes, the Nazarite testified that he would work hard at accomplishing the Father's will. As a prophecy of Christ, the "fine flour", being a product of the ground, foreshadowed the humanity of the Lord, his kinship with those he came to save (Heb. 2:17). Its "fineness" denoted the perfectness of his character, so that in him God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). He was the finest product of humanity.

**"Wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil"** — The word "wafers" is from the Hebrew *raqiyqey* from *raqaq*, "to beat, pound, to spread thin by beating, and thus to make thin." The three forms of food denote three developments, all of which were fulfilled in Christ. First, the unleavened bread pointed forward to the sinlessness to which he attained and at which we aim. Next, the punctured cakes which allowed the oil to easily penetrate, foreshadowed his desire to fulfil the will of Yahweh, even to the crucifixion of the flesh. Finally, the

wafers anointed with oil, symbolised the divine approval of a faith made perfect under trial. Christ was anointed at his baptism, but his complete anointing came with his resurrection. He then was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

**"And their meat offering, and their drink offerings"** — As we have noted previously, in such references, the word "meat" is better rendered "meal" or "food", and generally relates to a bloodless offering. See further comment — Num. 15:4-5. A meal offering and a drink offering combined, represented the best of life's labour, together with a dedicated life (symbolised by the wine), offered to Yahweh.

#### VERSE 16

**"And the priest shall bring them before Yahweh"** — By this requirement, the Nazarite, though he acted as a priest during the period of his vow, acknowledged his need of a high priest in order to acceptably approach Yahweh.

**"And shall offer his sin offering, and his burnt offering"** — Here the word "offer" is *asah*, "to cause to ascend" as in v. 11, and not *qarab*, "to present" as in v. 14. The Nazarite personally presented his offering to the priest, but the priest supervised the presentation of it on the altar, from whence it ascended as a "sweet savour unto Yahweh".

#### VERSE 17

**"And he shall offer the ram for a**

**sacrifice of peace offerings unto Yahweh, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering"** — The *Amplified Bible* renders this as "its meat offering and its drink offering", these being inevitably associated with the burnt offering (Num. 15:4).

#### VERSE 18

**"And the Nazarite shall shave the head of his separation"** — The Hebrew word for "separation" is *nezer*, a cognate word with *nazir*, or Nazarite. The Nazarite's status as such was indicated by his hair which was permitted to remain unshorn during the period of his vow, the reason for which we have already considered.

**"At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation"** — This was done at the most public place as a witness to all that he was now free of his vow.

**"And shall take the hair of the head of his separation, and put it in the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings"** — This was a token, on behalf of the Nazarite, publicly witnessing to the fact that his vow had been brought to successful completion, and that he enjoyed true fellowship with Yahweh. As the hair of the Nazarite was the token of his vow, it is represented as belonging to Yahweh, and therefore accepted by Him as His portion. It foreshadowed the change of nature that will terminate the successful completion of the vow of separation on the part of believers at the coming of the Lord.

## THE NAZARITE'S OFFERING AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VOW

At this stage it is profitable to briefly consider the significance of the Nazarite's offering on the completion of his vow:

1. Sin Offering (a ewe) — The recognition of the weakness of flesh.
2. Burnt Offering — The complete dedication of self.
3. Peace Offering — Fellowship with Yahweh.
4. Meal Offering — Fruits of labour returned to Yahweh with joy (being offered with oil).
5. Drink Offering — A new life of devotion.

At the conclusion of his vow, therefore, the Nazarite recognised the need to present himself as a living sacrifice unto Yahweh in the above particulars.

## VERSE 19

“And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer” — As the right, or heave shoulder, of the burnt offering was already the priest's by general rule (Lev. 7:32; Num. 6:20), this must relate to the other, or left, shoulder of the sacrifice. This was also “waved” and accepted by Yahweh as His portion to be consumed in His name by the priests, and was a further token of God's pleasure in the self-dedication of the Nazarite, and His endorsement of the fulness of communion enjoyed as a result of this. The voluntary action of the Nazarite, therefore, was publicly applauded by Yahweh.

“And shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven” — This action witnessed officially and publicly to the Nazarite's need of the services of the priest even though, by vow, he had been temporarily separated as one. The antitype is revealed in the followers of the Lord, who though acknowledged as “priests” (1 Pet. 2:9), and though appointed to act as priests in the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10), nevertheless require the ministrations of the Lord Jesus as high priest.

## VERSE 20

“And the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before Yahweh” — The sacrifice was first placed upon the hands of the Nazarite, after which the priest also supported the pieces. The sacrifice was then jointly waved towards the altar to indicate that it was Yahweh's, and then back to the priest as His representative in the nation. As the offering represented the offerer, it constituted his vow of activity in divine things presented to Yahweh through the priest.

“This is holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder” — These portions were given to the priest for his exclusive use. The “heave shoulder” related to the “heave offering” which was normally the priest's. The Hebrew word *terumah* is from a root *ruwm*, “to be high” or “lifted up”. It represented a present as offered up, or lifted out from other possessions, and given to Yahweh. In Numbers 18:8, such are described by Yahweh as “Mine heave offerings” to show that they belonged to Him, and were given by Him to the

priests, as His representatives in Israel. A “heave offering” was probably ceremonially lifted up and down to indicate fellowship between Yahweh in heaven, and His people on earth. See note Exod. 29:28.

“And after that the Nazarite may drink wine” — This perhaps relates to the sacrificial feast, in which case, the wine would represent the token of a new life of dedication unto Yahweh.

## VERSE 21

“This is the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, and of his offering unto Yahweh for his separation” — This was the minimum offering permitted the Nazarite at the conclusion of his period of Nazariteship, or separation.

“Besides that that his hand shall get” — If the Nazarite, in his gratitude towards Yahweh desired to increase the amount of his freewill offering, he could do so. Josephus (*Ant. 19:6:1*) records that later it became customary for richer people to defray the expenses of their poorer brethren, and in that manner, join with them in the tokens of separation. That was the idea behind the suggestion of the brethren to Paul when he visited Jerusalem (see Acts 21:23-26). However, it did not turn out as they expected, but instead, precipitated the riot that led to his imprisonment (vv. 27-40).

“According to the vow which he vowed, so he must do after the law of his separation” — He must scrupulously carry out his vow come what may. See Deut. 23:23; Ecc. 5:1-5. If he found that he did not have the resources to do so he had to seek assistance to that end, as in the case of those associated with Paul in Acts 21.

## The Priestly Benediction — vv. 22-27

*Following instructions concerning the Nazarite vow there is recorded the priestly benediction upon the people. This is appropriate to the circumstances. The Nazarite vow illustrates the standards required of the people as members of Yahweh's Kingdom of priests and His holy nation; the blessing that follows reveals the benefits that accrue therefrom; it invokes the divine protection, pardon and peace upon the people.*

## VERSE 22

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — It is significant that these in-

## THE NAZARITE VOW — A SUMMARY

- The Nazarite Vow made priests of laymen for the period of their vow, as the Truth does those who embrace its principles (1 Pet. 2:9).

- Strong drink was forbidden (Num. 6:3): it befogs the mind, and impairs spirituality (Lev. 10:9-11). Its counterpart is merely emotional religion that does likewise (Eph. 5:18-20).

- They were not to cut the hair (Num. 6:5; Judg. 16:17-21). Long hair was a sign of the subjection of a wife to her husband (1 Cor. 11:5,7; Eph. 5:24), and the Nazarite represented the nation as Yahweh's bride (Isa. 54:4).

- The Nazarite vow separated from the rest of mankind those who took it upon them, and consecrated them exclusively to the work and service of Yahweh. Like the priests (Lev. 21:10-12), Nazarites were to avoid becoming defiled for the dead (Num. 6:9). They must be able to see beyond death, and, like the followers of the Lord, to "sorrow not as those who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

- The Nazarite was a living example of an "Israelite indeed", a representation of Israel as a "Kingdom of priests". Though inferior as a lay man to the priests, he was, in a sense, superior to them in that his separateness was a voluntary service. Yet he was dependent upon the services of the priests (Num. 6:17), thus illustrating that the Nazarite was in need of priestly mediation, as is the follower of the Lord.

- Defilement by the Nazarite entailed a greater offence, and required a more elaborate means of cleansing than normally was the case (cp. Num. 5:2-3; 19:11-13 with Num. 6:9-19; 31:19).

Upon this, the following observations are relevant:

- Every genuine follower of the Lord is a true Nazarite. He is separated from the world, and dedicated solely to the service of Yahweh.

- His life is a life of self-denial; he mortifies and keeps the flesh in subjection to the dictates of the spirit word.

- His vow commences at baptism and continues until death or the Lord's coming. He looks beyond death to the glorious life of the future. He avoids mere emotional stimulants whilst soberly performing the requirements of his voluntary vow.

- On faithfully completing his term of service, he will enjoy the blessing of Yahweh which was pronounced upon the children of Israel as the Nazarite nation.

structions follow immediately upon the completion of those relating to the Nazarite vow.

**VERSE 23**

**“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them”** — It was one of the objects of Aaron’s consecration that he should be equipped to bless the people” — Lev. 9:22; Deut. 21:5. Today, of course, that office is assumed by the Lord Jesus Christ who is equipped to bless his people, the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16). He is the antitype of both Moses (Acts 3:22), and Aaron (Heb. 6:20).

**VERSE 24**

**“Yahweh bless thee, and keep thee”** — This section of the blessing invokes the *divine Protection* upon true Israelites. The blessing of Yahweh in this context relates to His goodness in action. See Exod. 18:9; 33:19; Num. 10:29. Hence Paul exhorts: “Behold the goodness and severity of God . . .” (Rom. 11:22). Yahweh’s goodness provides the assurance of His protection, of His arm outstretched over His own (Psa. 91:1; John 17:9-15; 1 Thess. 5:23). This is further suggested by the verb *keep*. It is from the Hebrew *shamar* which signifies “to hedge about, guard and protect”, and therefore is expressive of Yahweh’s care for His own. It is a wonderful consolation to recognise that He is interested in their welfare and destiny, and that they can be assured of his care. Sometimes life’s problems are as darkness closing in on one, so that light cannot be seen. What then are they to do who have the blessing of Yahweh pronounced upon them? Isaiah tells us: “Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God” (Isa. 50:10).

**VERSE 25**

**“Yahweh make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee”** — This section of the blessing suggests *divine Pardon*. The face of Yahweh is His presence manifested through the Elohim turned towards, or away, from man. When Yahweh’s face is turned towards him, there is Pardon and Promise (cp. Psa. 31:16; 67:1; 80:3,7,19; 119:135; Dan. 9:17). The grace of Yahweh is extended

to meet every human need (Psa. 21:6; 34:15). The word “gracious” in the verse before us is *chanan* in Hebrew, and it denotes “to bend down or stoop in kindness to an inferior” (Strong). Yahweh is prepared to do that for those upon whom this blessing is pronounced.

**VERSE 26**

**“Yahweh lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace”** — As three is the number of completeness in Bible numerics, this third aspect of the blessing finalises the process and provides for *divine Peace*. First *Protection*, then *Pardon*, finally *Peace*.

In this statement, the word “countenance”, in the Hebrew, is *paniyn* face, and relates to the presence of Yahweh as manifested through the Elohim. In v.25, the “face of Yahweh” lights up in pleasure, in this verse, it “lifts” up to help. Yahweh has exerted Himself for the benefit of the elect by providing a sacrifice by means of which there are granted the benefits of protection, pardon and peace. Accordingly the preaching of the Gospel is described as “preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Acts 10:36. See also John 14:27; Phil. 4:6-7). The Hebrew word for “peace”, *shalom* is from a root signifying *to be at one*. Therefore, it does not relate merely to the cessation of war or conflict of any kind, but the fusion of two or more persons in a unity of oneness. Peace with God today anticipates that complete “oneness” predicted by the Lord in his prayer. See John 17:21.

**VERSE 27**

**“And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel”** — See Deut. 28:10; 2 Chron. 7:14; Dan. 9:18-19. The Name is only named upon children of Israel, so that one must become of the Israel of God to bear it (Eph 2:11-13; Gal. 6:16). That requires separation from Gentilism, as Israel was called out of Egypt (Acts 15:14). Moreover, those so named are selected to exhibit the divine glory (Isa. 43:7), so the bestowal of it expresses more than the mere letters that form the Name, or that indicate how it is to be pronounced. It relates to covenant, character and nature, in that order (Exod. 3:13-14; 6:3; Psa. 8:1), and as such is expressive of Yahweh’s love (John 17:26). There is tremendous responsibility in becoming a Namebearer, for it means that the actions of such can honour or dishonour the



Name that they bear. Name-bearers are designed to reflect Yahweh's glory in character and nature. See Deut. 28:10,58; Isa. 43:7; Matt. 6:9. That means that they are in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:1-2) through divine nature (1 Pet. 1:4). This they will receive at the return of the Lord Jesus when he shall "name his Father's name" upon those who successfully overcome (Rev. 3:12).

"And I will bless thee" — From the place of His lofty eminence, Yahweh will stoop down to help those who respond to

the blessing pronounced upon them. Unfortunately, Israel failed to measure up to the privileged position it was granted. The people, in their dispersion, "profaned the name" (Ezek. 36:22). They did that, not by pronouncing the name with understanding, but by acting inconsistently to its requirements (Prov. 30:9). By refusing to use the Name, they doubtless accounted themselves unworthy of the honour, which, unfortunately, was true. Their restoration is a divine work in order that Yahweh might fulfil the prophetic requirements of the Name (see Ezek. 36:23).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CO-OPERATING WITH YAHWEH

*In the previous chapter, Israelites learn how they can voluntarily consecrate themselves to a greater measure of service to Yahweh; in this chapter the thoughtful initiative of the princes in providing means to assist in the work of Yahweh is accepted. It establishes a precedent indicating that the natural things of life can be legitimately used to further a work of Yahweh, so long as the use of such does not violate the principles laid down in the word.*

#### The Combined Freewill Offering Of The Princes Accepted — vv. 1-9

*The twelve princes of Israel, representing the tribes of the nation, present a voluntary freewill offering which is accepted.*

#### VERSE 1

"And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them" — The term "day" (Heb. *yowm*) is figuratively used in a general sense for "time". The Tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month of the second year after leaving Egypt (Exod. 40:2), but to "fully" set it up means to completely prepare it for worship which took a little

longer. The book of Numbers records incidents that took place from the following month onwards (see Num. 1:1). It was at that time, doubtless, that the offerings of this chapter were made. The RV renders the phrase as "made an end of setting up the Tabernacle". The Tabernacle was first set up, the priests were then consecrated and the various parts anointed (Lev. 8:10). Chronologically, therefore, the chapter should follow Lev. 9, but it is now introduced because the use of the wagons and their allocation to the various Levites are now revealed.

#### VERSE 2

"That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who were the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered" — These

princes have already been listed, see Num. 1:4; however their order is varied in this chapter.

### VERSE 3

“And they brought their offerings before Yahweh” — The word is *korban* or gift.

“Six covered wagons, and twelve oxen; a wagon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox” — What is meant by “covered” wagons is in some doubt. The Hebrew word is *tsab*, but this helps little. Adam Clarke renders it as “tilted” wagons, but does not indicate what is meant by that. In Lev. 11:29, the word is rendered *tortoise*, and in Isa. 66:20 as *litters*, so possibly they were covered in some way, as the tortoise wears its home on its back! The purpose of the wagons is obvious. They were given for the more convenient conveyance of the heavier portions of the Tabernacle, which could not be conveniently carried on men’s shoulders. The number six is appropriate as speaking of the limitations of flesh.

“And they brought them before the tabernacle” — The princes, like the apostles (appointed to be the princes of Israel of the age to come — Matt. 19:27-

30) acted in pairs (see Luke 6:13-16; Mark 6:7).

### VERSE 4

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — As the princes had acted on their own initiative, there was need for divine confirmation of their action.

### VERSE 5

“Take it of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” — Yahweh is pleased with individual initiative providing it does not violate His law. The gift of the wagons was a thoughtful gesture which received divine approval.

“And thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service” — Yahweh graciously accepted the gift of the princes on behalf of the people, and directed that it should be given into the care of the Levites who had the charge of conveying the portions of the Tabernacle from place to place. Thus the individual initiative of the princes assisted in the furtherance of the work of Yahweh. It set a precedent that we may also follow, exercising care that any additional aids that we might use do not violate the principles of Yahweh.



The offerings of the princes at the dedication of the Tabernacle as recorded in the Book of Numbers

## VERSE 6

"And Moses took the wagons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites" — The Levites were responsible for the conveyance of the Tabernacle from place to place.

## VERSE 7

"Two wagons and four oxen he gave unto the sons of Gershom, according to their service" — The Gershonites had charge of the Tabernacle coverings and hangings of the court etc. Num. 4:24-26.

## VERSE 8

"And four wagons and eight oxen, he gave unto the sons of Merari, according unto their service" — The Merarites had the heaviest labour. They had charge of the boards, bars, pillars, sockets etc. See Num. 4:29-33. Thus Yahweh provided help where it was needed.

"Under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest" — The whole of the arrangements were under the charge of Ithamar the son of Aaron, and not merely those of Merari (Nam. 4:28,33).

## VERSE 9

"But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none: because the service of the sanctuary belonging unto them was that they should bear upon their shoulders" — This teaches that whilst individual initiative in helping forward the work of Yahweh may be permitted, it must not vary specific instructions in any particular (cp. Num. 4:4-15). It was because David did so that failure marked the first attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. See 2 Sam. 6:13.

### An Additional Offering Of The Princes Individually Presented — vv. 10-11

*The princes having a further offering to make are instructed as to how it is to be done.*

## VERSE 10

"And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed" — The princes represented the various tribes. In that regard, they occupied a status that will be enjoyed by the Apostles in the age to come (Matt. 19:28). It could be possible that some such ceremony as this may accompany the anointing of the altar in the Age to come (Ezek. 43:13-26). In the RV, the word "dedicating" is rendered as *dedication*. It is from

the Hebrew *chanukkah* from *chanak*, "to make narrow, hence to restrict its use, to initiate and begin to use." The word is used in regard to a house (Deut. 20:5), the Temple (1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron. 7:5), as well as the training up of a child (Prov. 22:6). In training the child, the parent dedicated its future, so restricting it to a certain course. The Word that guided the child was like the oil that anointed the altar. The Altar was dedicated in the sense of being consecrated, or set apart, as a medium of worship. This was done by the anointing with oil (by which Yahweh claimed it as His own), and the blood of the initial sacrifices (by which it was cleansed from defilement due to association with Israel — Lev. 8:10,15). On the same day as that was done, the princes offered their gifts. By divine decree, however, these were ceremonially presented in a special twelve days' ceremony subsequent to that day. See v. 11.

"Even the princes offered their offering before the altar" — The phrase "offered their offering" is from two words *karab* and *korban*, "presented their gift".

## VERSE 11

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar" — The offering was a voluntary one, and the princes had advised Moses of their intention of making it. In graciously accepting it, Yahweh instructed that a special twelve days' ceremony be organised for the presentation. For proper order and solemnity to be observed, each prince was appointed a day for his part in the ceremony.

### Nahshon of Judah Offers On The First Day — vv. 12-17

*The princes advance to present their gifts in different order to the listing of Numbers 1. This new order is appointed by Yahweh, and in it Judah receives the pre-eminence as the ruling tribe, replacing Reuben, the natural firstborn. The names of each of the princes form a sentence proclaiming the divine purpose.*

## VERSE 12

"And he that offered his offering the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah" — Nahshon signifies *The oracle*, Amminadab, denotes, *People of liberality*, and Judah,

*Praise.* Together with the names of the other princes, this forms a declaration of the divine purpose as indicated below.

### VERSE 13

**“And his offering”** — The word *korban* signifies “gift”. His gift, in common with that of all the princes, symbolised the company of the redeemed, purified and wrought into divine shape by affliction, and filled with life and joy (Heb. 1:9).

**“Was one silver charger”** — The word “charger” is *ke'arath*, and denotes a deep vessel as in Exod. 25:9. In the *LXX* it is rendered by the word *trublion* which finds its place in Matt. 26:23 as “dish”. The redeemed are likened to “vessels of mercy” in Yahweh’s Temple of living stones (Rom. 9:23; 2 Tim. 2:20; Heb. 9:21). The vessels offered by the princes were of silver, the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:12-16). They, therefore, symbolised the saints as redeemed, whereas at present, such are likened to “earthen vessels” bearing the precious treasure of the truth (2 Cor. 4:7).

**“The weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels”** — In actual weight, according to the *Berkeley Bible*, this was about 3¼lb, or 1.75 kilograms. As a number, however, it is made up of 13 × 10. The former is the number of rebellion (cp. Gen. 14:4), and the latter is the number of completeness. This number, in conjunction with the silver bowl of seventy shekels (the complete number of the covenant) suggests the extension of mercy to previously rebelliousness on the basis of the covenant.

**“One silver bowl of seventy shekels”** — The word *mizrak*, rendered “bowl” is from *zarak*, “to scatter”, and indicates a bowl for pouring as would be of use in the Tabernacle. The *LXX* renders it by the word *phiale*, a word rendered *vial* in Rev. 5:8; 15:7, where it is used symbolically in relation to the prayers of saints, and the outpouring of divine judgment on guilty nations. Therefore, in the symbology of the verse before us, it can represent the redeemed in active service in the Age to come.

**“After the shekel of the sanctuary”** — This was a divinely prescribed weight (see Exod. 30:13; Lev. 5:15), and as it constituted the price of redemption (Exod. 30:12) was symbolically used in that regard. Peter makes the point that

actual redemption required the blood of Christ, which is far more precious than “silver and gold”, metals which symbolised redemption and faith (1 Pet. 1:18). The reality, of course, is of greater value than its symbolic representation.

**“Both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering”** — There is no word in the Hebrew for “meat”. The term used is *minchah* signifying “to apportion”, and usually, though not invariably, used for a bloodless offering. “Fine flour” represented the best of human endeavour labouring in the things of Yahweh’s providing, whilst oil represented the spirit, the outpouring of which will provide both life and joy (Heb. 1:9). The whole offering symbolised the work of the redeemed in divine service, particularly as it will relate to the future.

### VERSE 14

**“One spoon of ten shekels of gold, full of incense”** — The *Berkeley Bible* gives this as “about four ounces weight” (or 112 grams). Gold is the symbol of a tried faith (1 Pet. 1:7). Hence the symbol represents that of perfected faith finding exercise in prayer (incense — Rev. 5:8).

### VERSE 15

**“One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering”** — This sacrifice represents human strength, desire and obedience so absorbed in service to Yahweh as to ascend to Him in an acceptable form. In the Hebrew there is no word for “offering”. The word is *owlah*, “to ascend”. The animals were slain, carefully washed both inside and outside, placed in order on the altar so that the divine fire could pass through the members, and allowed to slowly smoulder so as to ascend as a sweet smelling savour unto Yahweh. The offering was pleasing to Yahweh because of what it represented. The fire from heaven (Lev. 9:24) represented the spirit of the word. When that burns brightly (Psa. 39:3; Jer. 20:9) a person is consumed by his zeal for God (Psa. 119:139; Isa. 59:17; John 2:17), and his actions ascend as a sweet smelling savour (Phil. 4:18). So Paul exhorts: “Quench not the spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19).

### VERSE 16

**“One kid of the goats for a sin offering”** — A kid of the goats represented

the waywardness of the flesh. The putting to death of this animal in this relationship represented the putting to death of what is described in the N.T. as "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). The action therefore represented the sacrificial condemnation of sin in the flesh. Again, as in the previous verse, there is no Hebrew word for "offering". The Hebrew has the one word: *chatta'ath* from *chata*, "to miss".

#### VERSE 17

**"And for a sacrifice of peace offerings"** — The Hebrew word for peace is derived from a root signifying *to be at one*. The peace offering, therefore, was the offering of fellowship with Yahweh, a state of one-ness with Him. The offering indicated what was necessary to attain unto that state.

**"Two oxen, four rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year"** — The oxen represented animals of strength and service. They were two in number as standing for the two great families of humanity: Jew and Gentile. On the other hand, the number of five represented grace. The sacrifice as a whole proclaimed that all strength will be given in service acceptable to Yahweh (the oxen and rams), and that all human desire and waywardness (the goats) will be brought into obedience to His will (the lambs).

#### The Offerings Of The Princes — vv. 18-83

*As the offerings of the princes are identical, there is no need to detail them here. However, as the order of the tribes differs from that set out in chapter 1, it is useful to observe the thought presented by the procession of princes and tribes in the God-arranged order by which the ceremony was conducted.*

#### The Princes

- Nahshon — *The oracle.*
- Nethaneel — *God given.*
- Eliab — *God is a Father.*
- Elizur — *God is a Rock.*
- Shelumiel — *God is peace.*
- Eliasaph — *God gathers.*
- Elishama — *God hears.*
- Gamaliel — *God recompenses.*
- Abidan — *Father of Judgment.*
- Ahiezer — *Helping brother.*
- Pagiel — *God meets.*
- Ahira — *Brother of evil.*

By stringing these names together the following sentence is formed: *The oracle is God given. God is a Father, He is a*

*Rock, He offers Peace. He will gather, hear and recompense His family at the Judgment, when through a helping brother (Christ), He will finally meet and overthrow the brother of evil.*

The order of the tribes is as follows:  
Judah — *Praise.*

Issachar — *Reward*

Zebulun — *Dwelling*

Reuben — *See a son*

Simeon — *Hearing*

Gad — *Company*

Ephraim — *Double fruit*

Manasseh — *Forgetting*

Benjamin — *The Son of the right hand.*

Dan — *Judgment*

Asher — *Blessed*

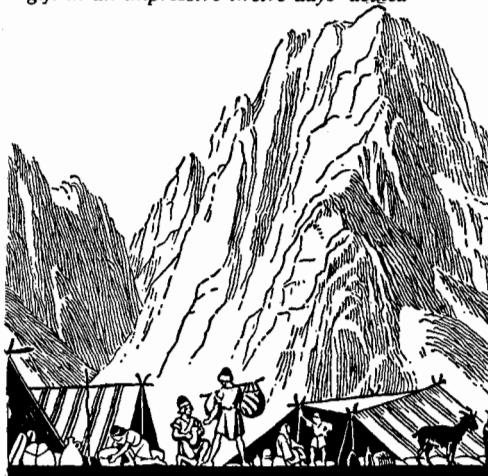
Naphtali — *Wrestling.*

The names form the following sentence: *Praise Him! for the reward of dwelling with Him, in seeing the Son, of hearing him in company of firstborns (double fruit), who forgetting the flesh join the Son of the right hand. At the judgment he will confer blessings upon those who have wrestled successfully.*

By joining each of the names together an even more extensive message is produced. For example Nahshon (*The oracle*), the son of Amminadab (*People of liberality*), of the tribe of Judah (*Praise*) creates the sentence: *The oracle (i.e. the Word) creates a people of liberality to God's praise.*

#### Dedication Of The Altar — vv. 84-88

*Each prince has his day and presents his gift in an impressive twelve days' dedica-*



tion service for the altar. Nothing is omitted, nothing passed over hastily. As free-will gifts presented by the tribal heads they have special importance as showing the spirit animating the people, the unanimity prevailing among them, and the equal place they have before Yahweh. In this section their gifts are united together emphasising the unity of the Israel of God when joined together in sacrificial service through the altar (see John 17:23). The gifts are of a nature to assist in the work of worship, so that the people are shown as co-operating with the Levites in that regard. So Ecclesial members today should co-operate in the furtherance of divine worship. A similar ceremony may be conducted at the Lord's return in the Temple at Jerusalem.

#### VERSE 84

"This was the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed by the princes of Israel" — The altar represented Christ (Heb. 13:10). It was first atoned, or cleansed, by sacrifice (Exod. 29:36), then anointed (Exod. 29:36), finally dedicated for use. As a type it pointed forward to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was first *cleansed* by a change of nature (Zech. 3:4; Phil. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:19; Heb. 7:27; 1 Pet. 2:24 — unlike us he had no sins to atone for); then *anointed* or consecrated (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:9); finally *initiated* (Heb. 5:7-9).

The atoning, or cleansing of the altar was a seven days' ceremony (Exod. 29:37), for it represented more than Christ personal; it represented the multitudinous body of Christ, and the seven days' ceremony pointed to the seven thousand years during which the altar is required because of Yahweh's covenant with the people. At the conclusion of that time, there will be no more sin, and no more death (Rev. 21:4), and therefore no further need of an altar, for "God shall be all and in all".

The dedication service, however, occupied twelve days (Num. 7:78). Twelve is the number of Israel, and the redeemed are identified as the true Israel (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-12). As such they are aligned with the twelve tribes (see Rev. 7:4-17).

As there will be a seven days' ceremony for the cleansing of the altar in the House of prayer for all nations of the age to come (see Ezek. 43:25-27), it may well be followed by a dedication service (Ezek.

43:27) of grateful thanks on the part of the twelve princes of that age representing the tribes in their fulness (Matt. 19:28). This would constitute a most impressive finale of initiation.

Brother Roberts saw this as a possibility. In *The Law of Moses* he wrote (p. 310):

"In addition to the wagons and oxen, the twelve princes made each an individual offering in connection with the dedication of the altar. There is something remarkable in the way in which this was done, and in the way in which it is recorded. The princes did not come together and present their offerings as a joint offering; but each prince, commencing with the prince of Judah, came on a particular day one after the other, during twelve days, and presented his offering before the altar; and each prince presented exactly the same collection of articles and beasts: yet though each prince presented exactly the same offering, the articles composing it are minutely and exactly enumerated twelve times over, as each prince made his present on his day: and then all are summarised in a totalling of the twelve. The particulars, in which there is so much repetition, occupy a chapter of 89 verses (Numbers 7).

"Should the idea be correct, that the twelve princes will have their antitype in the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whose names appeared in the gem-decorated foundations of the symbolic Holy City seen by John in Patmos, there may be an interesting counterpart in the inaugural ceremonies of the Kingdom, to this dedication of the altar. Christ is the true altar, and he will then be dedicated for altar use by the whole world, and it is possible that each apostle may, 'each on his day', edify and delight the whole congregation of the redeemed by the conduct of special dedicatory services in which the glory of Christ will be powerfully and thrillingly brought home to their immortal faculties. The submissive and obedient mortals in their thousands might share with acclamation in such a feast of fat things: for the feast is to be spread 'to all people'."

"Twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold" — The wagons and oxen were for the service of the Levites, these gifts were for the use of the altar. Silver and gold are the metals of redemption and faith. The utensils were of value in the work of service, so that the symbolism of the gift as a whole repre-

sented the works of redemption (what John the Baptist called "fruits meet for repentance" — Matt. 3:8), and the works of faith. The chargers of silver represented deep vessels of mercy (v. 13); the silver bowls, or vials, were vessels of judgment; the spoons of gold were utensils of usefulness, gold being the metal of faith.

#### VERSE 85

"Each charger of silver weighing an hundred and thirty shekels, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels weighed two thousand and four hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary" — See vv. 13. The shekel of the sanctuary, was the holy shekel, the value of which was established by divine decree being composed of 20 gerahs (Exod. 30:13 — note). No deviation of this shekel was permitted. The various amounts of this verse appear to be of significance. There are multiples of 13, 7 and 24. In Biblical numerology these are all significant. The first represents imperfection; the second, covenant, and the third, perfect government related to Israel after the flesh and spirit.

#### VERSE 86

"The golden spoons were twelve, full of incense, weighing ten shekels apiece, after the shekel of the sanctuary: all of the gold of the spoons was an hundred and twenty shekels" — Gold is the symbol of a tried faith, whilst twelve is the number of Israel. The combined faith as represented in the spoons provide perfect government for all the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

#### VERSE 87

"All the oxen for the burnt offering were twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the first year twelve, with their meat offering: and the kids of the goats for sin offering twelve" — So "all Israel" were provided for in all essential features of sacrifice.

#### VERSE 88

"And all the oxen for the sacrifice of the peace offerings were twenty and four bullocks, the rams sixty, the he goats sixty, the lambs of the first year sixty" — These numbers, too, are significant. Twenty-four is the number of priesthood through which fellowship with Yahweh is established. There are twenty-four courses of priests in the Temple of Solo-

mon, answering to the twenty-four elders of *The Apocalypse* (Rev. 4). Sixty is a multiple of six and ten, the former number being the number of flesh, and the latter number representing an indefinite but complete number. It suggests the fulness of the redeemed.

"This was the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed" — The dedication of the altar made it ready for general use. The altar was first atoned, then anointed, finally initiated for use. So also with "Christ our altar" (Heb. 13:10). His offering cleansed his nature in that he was made consubstantial with his Father; he was anointed (Heb. 1:9); and then initiated for mediatorial service. The type was completely fulfilled in the antitype.



## OBSERVATIONS ON CHAPTER 7

Numbers 7 is among the longest and most monotonous chapters in Scripture, but it presents powerful lessons. First there is the encouraging fact that Yahweh does not refuse gifts arising from personal initiativeness if they do not violate specific commands. Then there is the intriguing thought that a similar ceremony might be conducted in the Age to come, with the Apostles acting as the Princes of the reformed twelve tribes of Israel, and presenting gifts on their behalf for the service of the King.

The following points should be noted:

- The gifts were voluntary arising from the abundance of the princes; teaching that Yahweh is pleased to accept of our material possessions in His service (Prov. 3:9).

- The gifts were all connected with the consecration of the altar (Num. 7:84) though actually presented on succeeding days: so our offerings are all associated with the antitypical Altar (Heb. 13:10), and in anticipation of a specific day (2 Cor. 1:14).

- The offerings were for the easier conveyance of the onward movement of the Sanctuary, or for use in its service; so we should contribute to that end (Mark 12:43; Luke 12:48; 2 Cor. 8:12).

- The offerings are minutely recorded in the Word to the point of monotony: so records are maintained of those things we do pleasing unto Him (Mal. 3:16; Matt. 10:42; 25:40; Heb. 6:10; 13:16).

- Whilst a multiplicity of animals were used for the burnt offerings and the peace offerings as the princes presented their gifts, the sin offering remained the same: one kid of the goats. Let us increase the dedication of ourselves, and the fellowship that follows such action (1 Thess. 5:18-19), whilst relying upon "the one sacrifice for sin forever".

- As Yahweh spake to Israel through Moses (v. 89), let us hearken to Him as He speaks through Christ Jesus (John 12:49-50). Moses entered beyond the veil; and in Christ the veil is removed enabling us to come into the presence of Yahweh through prayer (Matt. 27:51; John 1:18; 2 Cor. 3:14; Heb. 9:8; 10:19-22).

- The peace offering was shared with others (Lev. 7:15-18), so let us call others to share with us our joy in Yahweh. We do that by preaching the Gospel.



## YAHWEH WITH HIS PEOPLE

### 7:89-10:10

*This is the seventh sub-division of the first section of the Book of Numbers. It records the great help that the people received from Him during their wilderness wanderings. He assisted them by audible instruction in the Most Holy, by the light in the Holy Place, by the provision of the Priests and Levites to minister to their service, and to educate and assist the people, by the control exercised through the silver trumpets, and by the ever-present cloud which was the symbol of His guiding protective Presence.*

*Inserted in this section is further instruction regarding the Passover, with the provision of a second Festival for those who, for some reason or other, could not keep it at the proper time. Following this, information is given relating to the pillar of cloud by day and the fire by night to lead and protect the people. Whilst the Passover Festival offered fellowship; the pillar of cloud and fire symbolised guidance. In proper order, therefore, the Book of Numbers records the organising of the people for war (Chps. 1-2), the separation of the Levites for service (Chps. 3-4), the instruction of the camp in holiness (Chps. 5-8), and now the culminating lesson of fellowship and guidance (Chps 9:10:10).*

#### **The Voice In The Most Holy — v. 89**

*Yahweh's approval of the action of the Princes is demonstrated in that Moses is audibly addressed when he made his way into the Most Holy.*

#### **VERSE 89**

**“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with Him”** — The privilege of access into the Most Holy was granted Moses. This was in fulfilment of the promise of Yahweh that He would speak with him from above the Mercy Seat between the Cherubim (Exod. 25:17-22). The privilege granted Moses was greater than that

granted Aaron who was strictly limited in his approach into the Most Holy (Lev. 16:2). In that regard, Moses foreshadowed his great antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ (see John 12:59-60; Heb. 1:1). An example of Moses entrance into and return from the Most Holy is recorded in Num. 11:24.

**“Then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubim: and he spake with him”** — The angel, as representing Yahweh, doubtless spake to Moses in the Hebrew language (Acts 26:14), the language of the future age (Zeph. 3:9).

## CHAPTER EIGHT

*This Chapter instructs Israel in the importance of causing the light to shine brightly in the Holy Place, and of the Levites to meticulously carry out their duties before the people. It records the manner in which the Levites were ceremoniously cleansed in readiness for their sacred duties whilst on the march. Some of the instructions have already been given to Moses, and this is now recapitulated in final preparation of the Levites.*

### The Light In The Holy — vv. 1-4

*It is vital both to hearken to the Voice of Yahweh, as to cause His Light to shine forth. Accordingly, in the Tabernacle, both are shown in conjunction with each other.*

#### VERSE 1

“**And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying**” — Yahweh spake to Moses when he entered the Most Holy as recorded in Num. 7:89, so that all that follows was then told him. Earlier, when the Tabernacle was first set up, Moses was not able to enter because the cloud of glory filled it. However that was subsequently withdrawn, and the privilege of entering was granted. See notes Exod. 40:35.

#### VERSE 2

“**Speak unto Aaron**” — Similar instructions had already been given to Aaron, but it was so important that they should be carried out properly that they are here repeated.

“**And say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps**” — The word rendered “lightest” signifies *to cause to ascend*. This could mean to light, or to so trim the wicks, or replenish the oil, as to cause the lamps to burn brightly with an increased ascending flame. Josephus claims that the lamps never went out, but gave forth a continuous light. See notes on Exod. 27:20. The lamps were burning when Moses entered the Tabernacle, for he, himself, had lit them (Exod. 40:25). Aaron’s duty was to so minister to them that they burned brightly.

“**The seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick**” — The number

seven is significant, for in spiritual numerics it denotes the covenant number. The seven-fold lights, therefore, suggest the illumination of the covenant. The lamps shone in the darkness of the Holy Place, as the Truth shines in the world of darkness that characterises Gentile night (Isa. 60:1). The term “over against” in the Hebrew is *paneh*, and signifies the front or the face. It suggests the face of the lampstand shining with the joy and the glory of the light it radiated. As the lampstand represents the Ecclesia (Rev. 1:20), so its members should “shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15). This, of course, needs the help of our high priest and law-giver, the antitypical Moses. The light of the lampstand not only illuminated the Holy Place, but also revealed the beautiful design and symbolic pattern of the lampstand itself (see Exod. 25:31-40). It is the duty of saints to “let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father in heaven” (Matt. 5:15-16; 25:7; Luke 12:35).

The light illuminated the darkness of the Holy Place, causing the table of shewbread, the lampstand, the incense altar, the elegant walls and patterned ceiling to be seen in their full glory. In similar manner, the illumination of the Word brings every aspect of divine service into proper and beautiful focus. To obtain the best view, the light needs to shine brightly: the Word needs to be understood, and to be proclaimed with simplicity and vigour. See Acts 13:47; 2 Cor. 4:4-7; Eph. 5:14; 2 Pet. 1:19. See notes on Exod. 27:21; 37:17-20. The priests were appointed to supervise the replenishment of the oil each evening, and to dress the

lamps every morning. The oil was supplied by the people (Lev. 24:1-3), and stored by the priests for such use (Num. 4:16). The attention given to the lamps was designed to cause each to give forth greater light, so each contributed with its fellow to destroy the darkness (Exod. 39:37). The type illustrated the co-operation needed within an Ecclesia for the light to shine forth with full power.

### VERSE 3

**"And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as Yahweh commanded Moses"** — Aaron tended the lamps so that the light burned brighter. As noted above, Moses had already lit them.

**"And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold"** — The intricate design so skilfully wrought, was revealed in all its beauty by the light, as the Gospel is by the light of truth. Though gold is heavy in weight, it is the most malleable and ductile of all metals, and may be beaten into leaves less than .000005 of an inch thick. A single ounce of gold can be drawn into a wire fifty miles long, or into a sheet some 100 sq. feet in area. A three inch cube can be beaten out to cover the area of an acre! Gold leaf can be beaten to less than a tenth of a thousandth of an inch thick, and as such was used by ancient Egyptian craftsmen. Gold can be beaten so thin as to be almost transparent, a fact that illustrates the statement of Rev. 21:21: "The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass". The symbology suggested by gold is remarkable. Like faith it is extracted from the depths of the earth. Mines extend deep in order to extract gold. On the Central Rand some extend deeper than 9,300 ft. below surface; and down in those dark depths men search for the precious metal, as Yahweh does the precious metal of a tried faith in the depths and darkness of human earth (1 Pet. 1:7). To purify it the metal is subject to intense heat. Gold can be heated to 1,064°C. when it will melt to form a green liquid. Gold remains among the most precious of metals, and whilst there is no slackening in the world's demand for it, uranium, which is extracted from gold mining ores is being extensively developed, so that today many mines are making that their chief work.

Bezaleel, who was mainly responsible for the intricate pattern of the golden lampstand (Exod. 36:1), was highly skill-

ed in such labour. However, in addition to his natural ability, he was assisted by the outpouring of the Spirit, and so was able to produce an article of furniture extremely detailed and beautiful. There was nothing more elaborate in the Holy Place than the Lampstand; there is nothing more elaborate and diversified in our possession than the Word of which it was a symbol.

**"Unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work"** — According to *The Century Bible*, the meaning of this statement apparently is that the lump of gold was beaten out as if from the middle of the central stalk, one way towards the base, and the other way towards the flower-shaped oil-cups. It was all of *beaten* work, implying the disciplinary labour necessary to produce that article of furniture. As a symbol it illustrates the care and skill necessary to extract the greatest benefit from the Word of God in study thereof. Gold is a symbol of a "tried faith" (1 Pet. 1:7), and not faith in the abstract, hence the beaten work which is suggestive of trial.

**"According unto the pattern which Yahweh had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick"** — The lampstand was of divine design not of human contrivance. So also is the Truth we have espoused.

### The Levites Cleansed And Consecrated For Service — vv. 5-22

*The Levites are appointed to labour in the outer court as ministers or servants to the priests. For that purpose they have to go through a process of cleansing and consecration for such labour. The instructions now given summarise those previously set forth. The ceremony of consecration is appointed as a public function so that all might know and appreciate their labour in the Court. Whilst they are appointed to act as servants to the priests, they are also servants to the people, assisting them as well in their labour of worship. The ceremony involves sprinkling with water, symbolising the cleansing impact of the Word; shaving, suggesting the removal of the mere growth of nature; the washing of clothes, implying the purification of habits by the pounding of the Word. After the ceremonial cleansing, the Levites were publicly presented to Yahweh, as representatives of the nation.*

### VERSE 5

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — This introduces a new sub-sec-

tion, dealing with the consecration of the Levites.

#### VERSE 6

**"Take the Levites from among the children of Israel"** — The first act was one of separation. That, also, is the first act of any who desire to serve Yahweh today.

**"And cleanse them"** — This was one of the many ceremonial cleansings significant of the inward purity required of those who serve the altar of Yahweh. The water used for this purpose is described as sin-water, that is water to cleanse from sin. It was probably taken from the Laver (Exod. 30:18) which foreshadowed the cleansing influence of the Word.

#### VERSE 7

**"And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: sprinkle water of purifying upon them"** — The same word translated "purifying" is rendered *sin offering* in vv. 8, 12, and is given as *expiation* in the R.V. This water can be compared with the "water of separation" referred to in Num. 19:9, 17, 18. It was designed to figuratively wash away sins, and therefore is similar in effect to baptism. Baptism, however, is only effective when a person understands and accepts the Truth. Such knowledge transforms a bath into a baptism, so that the true cleansing influence is in the Word itself.

**"And let them shave all their flesh"** — This action was similar to that required of a leper at the time of his cleansing (Lev. 14:7-9). To shave the flesh is to remove a natural growth out of the flesh, and, figuratively, to remove deep-seated habits.

**"And let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean"** — There was a difference shown between Priests and Levites, in that the former were given new clothes to wear (Lev. 8:13), whereas the latter had to wash their old clothes. The word "wash" in this place is from the Hebrew *kabas*, and denotes *to trample*, describing a method of washing common in the East where clothes are trampled on or beaten with a stick. It contrasts with the usual word used for washing the person which is *rachats*, *to overflow*. Bathing the flesh was usually done by pouring water over the body, but the Levites had to wash their clothes, by a process of beating or of trampling, sug-

gesting a vigorous cleansing from sin so as to remove all spots and blemishes (cp. James 1:27; Jude 23; Rev. 3:4). Such a washing would suggest the trials of life which drive a faithful man or woman to God, and helps in the building of a character acceptable to Yahweh.

#### VERSE 8

**"Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil"** — For the significance of the bullock offered in sacrifice, see notes on Lev. 1:1-4. In presenting it for that purpose, Levites vowed to give all their strength to the work of Yahweh, allowing His word and will to consume them as the fire did the offering. For the meal offering, and its significance, see earlier notes, and cp. with Lev. 2:1-3; Num. 28:12-14.

**"And another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering"** — No actual sin had been committed, but the sin offering witnessed to the need of "mortifying the flesh", or putting to death its desires that could lead to sin. See notes Lev. 4:14.

#### VERSE 9

**"And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation"** — The Levites were brought before the Tent of Meeting to be publicly inducted into their high office. Thus they were displayed before all Israel as an object lesson, as the saints witness to the world today (1 Pet. 2:12).

**"And thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together"** — The word "assembly" in this place is *edah*, and signifies *witness*. However, it would have been impossible for the whole concourse of Israelites, of over two million people, to be brought before the Tabernacle, so doubtless this was done representatively by the heads of families and of tribes. They witnessed the induction of the Levites as in Lev. 8:3.

#### VERSE 10

**"And thou shalt bring the Levites before Yahweh"** — Like an animal to be offered in sacrifice unto Yahweh, the Levites are officially presented unto Him. In fact, sacrificial animals under the Law did represent the nation.

**"And the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites"** — This was done by representative men of each tribe,

and in so doing, the nation as a whole endorsed the appointment. But what was the appointment? It was that the Levites, as representing the nation, should sacrifice the normal pursuits of men in order to give themselves to Yahweh. In that way, the Levites became as a "living sacrifice" in the midst of Israel, a pattern of saints in Christ (see Rom. 12:1). In restricting their lives so as to conform to Yahweh's will, they presented a representation of what the whole nation should exhibit among other nations (Deut. 28:9-10). A similar practise of putting on of hands, was followed in the early ecclesias, in regard to those who were officially appointed to conduct its work. Accordingly, Paul advised Timothy to "lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. 5:22); in other words, do not appoint one to high, or responsible office, in an ecclesia without thoroughly examining his credentials and his ability to conduct the work set him to do. In that regard, particularly, a novice must not be appointed to office even though he might manifest an aptitude for it (1 Tim. 3:6). Timothy is warned of the unfortunate circumstances that can follow if such advice were not carried out.

#### VERSE 11

**"And Aaron shall offer the Levites before Yahweh"** — The word in the Hebrew is *nuwph*, "wave" as in the margin. Ct. with v. 12. The Levites were "waved" before Yahweh by Aaron pointing to the Levites, and then waving his hands (cp. Lev. 7:30) indicating that they were given to a life of activity in the service of Yahweh. Then the Levites, as a wave offering, were given by Yahweh to the priests (see v. 19).

**"For an offering of the children of Israel"** — The word "offering" is *tenuwphah*, signifying to branish, and denoting a wave offering, or a sacrifice of activity to Yahweh. The Levites were separated from the nation for that purpose, and constituted Israel's wave offering, replacing the firstborn in that regard. As separated from the rest of the people they became an Ecclesia (called out ones) of firstborns (Num. 3:9-13), foreshadowing the Ecclesia of today which is also described as "the Ecclesia of firstborns" (See Heb. 12:23 in *The Diaglot*) because it has replaced Israel after the flesh as the firstborn nation. The Levites were given no tribal inheritance (Num. 18:23), but they were given special cities throughout

the land, and so dispersed among the nation, as Ecclesias today are scattered among the Gentiles (Num. 35:2). They were exempt from war in the normal sense, but they pitched about the Tabernacle in a spiritual warfare that guarded it from pollution (Num. 1:47-54). As the nation's wave offering, their ministry in relation to the divine worship was carefully defined (Num. 3:5-51), and as such offerings were given to the priests, they became their servants in the ministry they conducted (v. 19).

**"That they may execute the service of Yahweh"** — The word "execute" is 'abad, and denotes the labour of a bondsman. This, also, is the status of a believer in Christ. (Rom. 1:1. See also 1 Cor. 7:22). In performing the service of Yahweh, the Levites took the place of the firstborn, for they, originally, performed that service. See Exod. 24:5.

#### VERSE 12

**"And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks"** — When the representatives of the congregation placed their hands on the Levites (v. 10), they endorsed their appointment, and identified themselves with them in their service. Now, in turn, the Levites placed their hands on the sacrificial animals identifying themselves with the offerings. By so doing, they proclaimed their readiness to offer themselves as living sacrifices in the service of Yahweh.

**"Thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering unto Yahweh, to make an atonement for the Levites"** — Though Moses was directed to do this, he probably performed it through Aaron. The sin offering and the burnt offering revealed what was required of the Levites. No specific sin was brought to mind, and therefore this, the first of the offerings, merely took heed of the sinful nature of flesh, and showed that to properly serve Yahweh, it must be "mortified" (Col. 3:5) or put to death. The burnt offering, on the other hand, represented a life entirely devoted unto Yahweh, consumed with zeal in His service. There were two sides to the offerings — negative and positive aspects: a repudiation of the flesh, and a giving of oneself to God. By that means, "an atonement" was effected. The word signifies "covering". The sacrificial offering provided a robe of righteousness (Isa. 61:11).

## VERSE 13

**"And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto Yahweh"** — Aaron and his sons, as priests, represented Yahweh to the nation, and on His behalf now accepted the Levites.

## VERSE 14

**"Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel"** — As in the case of believers in Christ, separation was required of the Levites. They stood apart from the rest of Israel, a moral lesson to the nation to remain separate from the Gentile world.

**"And the Levites shall be Mine"** — They were separated for that purpose. So also are saints in Christ. The very important instruction concerning separation recorded in 2 Cor. 6:17-18 seems to be based upon this induction of the Levites into their high office. It is important to notice that Paul emphasises that the relationship of believers with the Father is predicated upon their separation from the world: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and (conditional upon this) I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you . . ." As we remarked earlier, the Levites were separated unto Yahweh instead of the firstborn (Num. 3:41); so, in Christ, the spiritual firstborn are granted the status of honour originally enjoyed by the firstborn nation (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).

## VERSE 15

**"And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation"** — The word "service" in this place signifies to labour as a servant. It was in that capacity that the Levites did "the service of the tabernacle" acting as servants to the priests.

**"And thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them for an offering"** — This had to be done in the manner already prescribed.

## VERSE 16

**"For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel"** — The Levites are represented as gifts (*nathanim* — plural) unto Yahweh by the nation as a whole. They constituted a wave offering (*tenuwphah*) unto Yahweh:

a gift that was waved before Him to denote activity. They were then given as servants to the priests (see Lev. 7:34), that forming the service required of them.

**"Instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto Me"** — See note Num. 3:12,45. As such the Levites were an object lesson to lay Israelites, as believers are to the Gentiles among whom they live. As the Levites were taken "instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel", so believers in Christ have been taken unto Yahweh, as a "people for His name" in place of His firstborn nation (Jer. 2:3).

## VERSE 17

**"For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are Mine both man and beast"** — The firstborn beasts as well as the sons of Israelites were set apart for the service of Yahweh. See Exod. 13:2.

**"On the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for Myself"** — To sanctify a thing, is to set it apart for a special purpose. The Truth sanctifies believers today (John 17:17). The firstborn were separated unto Yahweh, in that they, as such, acted as priests before the appointment of Aaron superseded them.

## VERSE 18

**"And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel"** — The literal firstborn were deposed from their position of privilege when the Israelites proved unfaithful after Moses had ascended the Mount (Exod. 32). This foreshadowed what happened when Israel after the flesh rejected the Gospel message and the Apostles turned to the Gentiles. Israel was deposed from the position of privilege as Yahweh's firstborn nation (Jer. 2:3), and those who embraced the Truth as "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43) succeeded to that position. In consequence, those in Christ are described as an "Ecclesia of firstborns" (Heb. 12:23 — *Diaglott*).

## VERSE 19

**"And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among his children of Israel"** — In the Hebrew "gift" is from the same word as is render-

ed "given" in v. 16. As gifts from Israel the Levites were like the wave offerings, which being presented unto Yahweh were given by Him to the priests. The Levites were given to the priests that they might minister to them in the service of the people under the direction of the priests. Christ also "gave gifts unto men" in that he provided for those who would minister unto the Ecclesia, and whose labours in the past guide us in the present (Eph. 4:8).

**"To do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation"** — The word "service" denotes the status of service, or the labour of a bond-slave. This related to the more menial tasks on behalf of the worshippers under the direction of the priests. The Levites were servants to the priests, as the Ecclesia is to Christ (the high priest) and the Apostles (his associates). Despite their privileged status they could not please themselves in the manner they might labour, no more than can believers in Christ. In this they again constituted a living exhortation to the rest of the nation. So also with the Ecclesia today. Its ministrations are limited to the directions of Christ and the Apostles.

**"And to make an atonement for the children of Israel"** — The Levites were not permitted to offer the sacrifices for atonement, for the priests (and on the Day of Atonement, the high priest alone) were appointed to that end. But the Levites helped by assisting the priests, or by educating the people. See Num. 18:1-7. Therefore, the word "atonement" (*kaphar*, "cover") is used in a different sense in this place. The Levites acted as a screen between the Holy Place and the lay Israelites. Their ministrations *helped* "to make an atonement" for the people for they assisted the priests to that end. The phrase "make an atonement" is used in this secondary sense elsewhere. For example, in Num. 25:11-13 Phinehas is said to have "made an atonement for the children of Israel" by his action in slaying the erring Israelite. His action turned aside "the wrath of Yahweh" apart from any sacrificial offering of a normal kind. The labours of the Levites similarly contributed to sacrifices of Atonement being successfully offered. In that way they helped to make an atonement for the people.

**"That there be no plague among the**

**children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary"** — See Num. 1:53. It was obligatory for Israel to worship, but such worship was to be conducted according to Yahweh's rules and not as flesh thought desirable. "I will be sanctified in those who approach unto Me," declared Yahweh (Lev. 10:3). To "sanctify" God is to set Him apart from flesh, to recognise His high and lofty status, and pay such reverence to Him as is fit. There was no easy familiarity to be observed by the worshippers in their approach to God. This was impressed upon the people through the Tabernacle worship. They could only come a certain distance, and then had to call upon the service of the Levites; and they, in turn, had to seek the mediation of the priests. To do otherwise would be to "stumble", and that would be displeasing to Yahweh. The word rendered *plague* in this verse is *negeph*, "to stumble," and it is rendered in that way in Isa. 8:14. The root *nagaph* is also rendered "stumble" in Prov. 3:23; Jer. 13:16. It signifies to push, gore, defeat, stub (the toe), inflict (disease). The Hebrew, *negeph*, is used for infliction in Exod. 12:13; 30:12; Num. 16:46-47; Josh. 22:17; Psa. 89:23. The word "plague" as used elsewhere is a different word to that presently before us. Looking at its use here it suggests that a too-familiar approach to Yahweh by the people instead of using the means He provided, would cause them to stumble morally to their hurt. One of the duties of the Levites was to prevent this, for they were to guard the entrance of the Tabernacle from unauthorised trespass. Unfortunately, they did not always carry out their duties meticulously, and the nation suffered in consequence. The nation will be reminded of this in the Temple of the coming Age (Ezek. 44:7-8, 23-24), and will be taught that basic to true worship both then as now is the principle: "I will be sanctified in those who approach unto Me, saith Yahweh." Meanwhile, it is the duty of believers to act as the Levites in preserving the sanctity of worship (see 1 Tim. 1:18-20; 4:16, where Paul draws upon the duties of the Levites and applies them to Timothy and ourselves).

The warning of the verse before us can be linked with the promise of Exod. 15:26. Yahweh promised immunity from certain diseases if the people honoured their contract with Him; here He warns

of the consequence of violating His commands by a too familiar approach in worship. See Psa. 105:37; 107:20.

#### VERSE 20

“And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that Yahweh commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them” — This comprised a national endorsement of their status, and also of the limitations of lay worshippers.

#### VERSE 21

“And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before Yahweh; and Aaron made an atonement for

them to cleanse them” — The action of the Levites symbolised a new way of life through death. The sacrifice of atonement that was offered on their behalf illustrated that a way of life acceptable to Yahweh requires the putting to death, or setting aside, of the flesh and the dedication of self to Yahweh's service, as a wave offering of activity. In this way the Levites were consecrated to a life of activity in His service. In this verse, the word “offered” is *nuwph*, “wave” indicating that they were given over to activity before Yahweh; and the expression “as an offering” is from the Hebrew *tenuwphah*, a “wave offering” as in v. 11. By giving themselves in that way they became, as it were, a living sacrifice unto Yahweh, foreshadowing the life of

## THE LEVITES: AN ECCLESIA OF FIRSTBORNS

*As the Levites replaced the natural firstborn of Israel, so the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) replaced Israel after the flesh, the natural firstborn nation (Exod. 4:22).*

- The Levites had to co-operate in their own cleansing (Num. 8:7), so do we (Isa. 52:11; Matt. 22:12; 2 Cor. 7:1).
- The Levites were publicly displayed before the people (Num. 8:9), so also is baptism a public witness (1 Tim. 3:7).
- The Levites were called to be a living sacrifice (Num. 8:11). See Rom. 12:1.
- The Levites were bond servants to the priests (Num. 8:11). See 1 Cor. 7:22.
- The Levites were separated from the rest of the nation (Num. 8:14). See 2 Cor. 6:17-18.
- The Levites were exempt from war (Num. 1:47-54). See John 18:36.
- The Levites offered first a sin offering (as a token of mortifying the lusts of the flesh) and a burnt offering (representing a life given entirely to Yahweh). See Heb. 10:10; 12:12-13.
- The Levites were presented as gifts to Yahweh on behalf of the nation (Num. 8:19). See John 17:9-11.
- The Levites were called to a life of activity, a wave-offering before Yahweh (Num. 8:11). See 1 Cor. 6:20; 15:58.
- The Levites provided an example to lay Israelites leading to proper worship (Num. 8:19). See 1 Peter 2:12.

Hence they comprised an Ecclesia in the midst of the nation of Israel.



obedience that believers in Christ likewise are expected to offer (Rom. 12:1).

### VERSE 22

“And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons; as Yahweh had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them” — The word service is *abadah*, bond-servants, and is derived from the verb of v. 15. The Levites acted as the servants of the priests, as lay believers should be in obedience to the instructions of the Lord and his apostles.

### The Limitation of the Levites' Duties And Their Age Of Service — vv. 23-26

*A brief outline of the age of service and limitation of duties in regard to the Levites.*

### VERSE 23

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — Further instructions are given in regard to the Levites.

### VERSE 24

“This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in” — Previously the age of commencement was given at thirty years. See note Lev. 4:3. Some have suggested that the age of 30 had relationship to the work of transporting the items of the Tabernacle, and that the earlier age of 25 provided additional numbers for the duty of educating the people and so forth. However, no specific reason is given for the change. See suggestions previously given.

“To wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation” — The Hebrew renders this as the margin: *To war the warfare of the tabernacle . . .* We have commented upon this at Num. 4:23.

### VERSE 25

“And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more” — The term “wait upon” is of tremendous significance. It is from the Hebrew *tsaba*, signifying “to mass (an army or servants) assemble, perform, do service.” In Exod. 38:5; 1 Sam. 2:22 it is rendered *assembled*; in Isa. 29:7-8; 31:4 it is translated *fight*. The Levites were to be as an army, ready

to be called upon for active service at any moment. All could not serve at the same time, but all could hold themselves in reserve for that purpose. The marginal rendition illustrates the significance of this comment: *they shall return from the warfare of the service*. At the age of fifty years Levites retired from active service in their spiritual warfare and engaged in less arduous labour such as that of teaching. In such activity experience was of paramount importance. In their service the Levites foreshadowed the spiritual warfare in which saints are engaged. See 1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 2:4; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:12-15.

### VERSE 26

“But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge” — The word “keep” is *shamar*, to hedge about or to guard. The maturity of Levites over 50 assisted them in the onerous duty of guarding the charge. The word “charge” is from *mishmereth*, “to watch as a sentry at the post”. Relieved from active service, Levites from fifty years and upwards, gave themselves to carefully watching over the ordinances of the Tabernacle as a sentry would at his post. Unfortunately, as Ezekiel observes, some proved negligent in their vigilance, and permitted into the sanctuary those who should have been excluded (Ezek. 44:7). In consequence of this Israel was deposed from its high position, and the Truth offered unto Gentiles. Today a similar duty rests upon mature brethren in Christ. Accordingly, Paul draws upon these words of Moses in instructing Timothy how he should conduct himself in the Ecclesia. He, with its elders, like the Levites in Israel were to “war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18). Throughout his two Epistles, Paul instructs him as to how this was to be done. He constantly uses the expression: “I charge thee . . .” The word is from the Greek *parangelia*, a military term, denoting a proclamation or command as received from a superior officer to be carried out without question by warriors in the field of battle. That “charge” required of Timothy (and of us) that he maintain sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:3); manifest love out of a pure heart and good conscience (1:5); use his talents to war a good warfare (1:18); command and teach others likewise (4:11); instruct sisters to be blameless (5:7); manifest im-

partiality in judgment (5:21); faithfully and unswervingly carry out his Ecclesial duties (6:13-14); warn the wealthy against relying upon material possessions (6:17); deposit the gospel with other faithful trustees who may likewise be "able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul's use of terms drawn from Moses' instructions to the Levites shows that they are not to be treated as matters of mere curiosity or antiquity relating to appointments that no longer apply, but as foreshadowing what is required of believers today. They occupy similar positions as appointed Levites in the past, so that the instruc-

tions have a modern application.

"Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge" — There was a significant change in the service of Levites at the age of fifty years. Their physical labour was lessened, and the experience that maturity should have developed was brought into full use. No longer did they prepare the sacrifices and so forth, but they did continue to supervise the conduct of those about them, and thus to "keep" or overlook the charge given them. The younger Levites were expected to respect the age and maturity of their elders in that regard.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE LAW OF THE PASSOVER AND THE GUIDING CLOUD

*Twelve months have elapsed since the Passover was held in Egypt; should it be kept up in the wilderness? Instructions are given that the Passover must be kept year by year, and the second Passover is now celebrated. Any who could not attend the regular Passover for one reason or another are ordered to keep a supplementary celebration (vv. 6-14). Specific instructions are then given in relation to the guiding cloud above the Tabernacle.*

#### The Second Passover — vv. 1-5

*Twelve months having passed since the original Passover, the people are instructed regarding the annual celebration which then follows.*

#### VERSE 1

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt saying" — This was prior to the record with which the Book of Numbers commences (Num. 1:1), and was about the time when the instructions were given to Moses in relation to the Levites.

#### VERSE 2

"Let the children of Israel also keep the

passover at his appointed season" — The only instructions given to Moses to this point of time, regarding the celebration of the Passover, were that it should be kept in the Land (Exod. 12:25; 13:5; Lev. 23:10). Now, however, with the Tabernacle completed and set up, instructions are given that the Passover should be kept in the wilderness.

#### VERSE 3

"In the fourteenth day of this month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season" — In fact, the Passover was celebrated on the 15th day of the month, though the animals were prepared and slain on the 14th. The word "keep" is 'asah and signifies to do or to make in the widest sense. The word is rendered "pre-

pare" in Num. 15:5,6,12; Josh. 22:26. That, evidently, is the way in which it should be rendered here.

"According to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, shall ye keep it" — These rites and ceremonies are outlined in Exodus 12. The Israelites were to keep the Passover as closely to those rites and ceremonies as was possible. Obviously they had to amend them, or adapt them according to their circumstances in the wilderness. For example, as they lived in tents, there was no lintels or doorposts upon which blood could be sprinkled, though doubtless the tent opening would suffice. Once Israel entered the land further amendments were required, for instead of celebrating it in the homes, Israelites were required to assemble at the centre appointed by Yahweh (Deut. 16:5-7). Meanwhile, instructions were given for the keeping of it in the wilderness. It was appropriate for the feast to be celebrated, for significant developments in the ultimate deliverance of the nation had taken place, such as the giving of the Law and the setting up of the Tabernacle.

#### VERSE 4

"And Moses spake unto the children of Israel that they should keep the passover" — The celebration of the Passover was central in the worship of the Israelites, and therefore a most important occasion for them to observe.

#### VERSE 5

"And they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month at even in the wilderness of Sinai" — The word "kept" is elsewhere rendered "prepared". See Josh. 5:10. It was prepared "between the evenings" as the Hebrew expresses it. This is set at between 3 and 6 pm when the Lambs were slain for the purpose. See notes Exod. 12:6.

"According to all that Yahweh commanded Moses, so did the children of Israel" — The instructions had to be meticulously observed. As it was conducted in the wilderness of Sinai, (and, as it happened, it was the only occasion when it was so commemorated. See Josh. 5:6-11), it constituted the people's pilgrimage Passover, foreshadowing the Deliverance that believers commemorate each first day of the week. This second Passover, unlike the first, was both retro-

spective (it looked back to the time they were in Egypt when the first Passover was held) and prospective (it anticipated the fulfilment of deliverance in the Land of Promise). Therefore, like the celebration of Christ our Passover, it comprised the memorial of a past deliverance, and the pledge of a prospective inheritance in the Land. The partaking of the memorials is similar. It looks back "to shew the Lord's death"; it looks forward "until he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). Therefore, in both this people's pilgrimage Passover, as at the table of the Lord, the three great virtues of faith, hope and love are exhibited (1 Cor. 13:13). *Faith* looks back to his offering and is *strengthened* — as Israel would have been by similarly considering their deliverance from Egypt; *Hope* looks forward to his coming and is *brightened* — as Israel should have been by anticipating the promised inheritance in the Land; *Love* looks up to the Right Hand of the Father and is *deepened* — as Israel's love of Yahweh should have been by contemplation of what had been done for the nation. Deliverance from sin such as is effected through Christ is directly linked with the Passover (Luke 22:15; 1 Cor. 5:7). The Lord's passover commemorates "his decease (Gr. *Exodus* — the way out actually through death and resurrection) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). In a very remarkable manner, therefore, this pilgrimage Passover foreshadowed the communion of Christ.

#### The Supplementary Passover — vv. 6-14

A second Passover is provided for those who, for any reason at all, cannot participate in the normal festival. A person may be defiled for some reason, or may be absent from the land in a journey afar off, and so cannot participate in the regular Passover. Provision is made for such cases in a supplementary Passover. In type, it foreshadowed the present state of Israel. The nation is "defiled" by contact with death: that of the Lord Jesus Christ; it is absent in a journey "afar off" though some have returned. For them, therefore, there is appointed a "delayed" Passover, at the Lord's return. See Ezek. 45:21; Luke 22:15-16.

#### VERSE 6

"And there were certain men, who were defiled by the dead body of a man,

that they could not keep the Passover on that day" — In the Hebrew the word "dead" does not appear, and the word "body" is *nephesh* frequently rendered "soul". A person could be ceremonially defiled by coming into contact with another "defiled" person, including a leper. Contact with death certainly defiled, and this would make it impossible for an Israelite to keep the Passover (see Num. 19:11-16). In that regard, the hypocritical scrupulosity of the Jews relating to the death of the Lord should be noted (John 18:28), as well as the action taken by Joseph and Nicodemus in handling the dead body of the Lord (John 19:38-39) just prior to the Passover, which would disqualify them to partake of the festival which normally would have been celebrated that evening. Obviously they saw the significance of the message that Christ had delivered to Nicodemus early in his ministry: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness..." (John 3:14-16), and recognised that Moses' Passover had given place to one with greater meaning. On the other hand, despite the Jewish leaders' care to remain ceremonially undefiled, when pressed by Pilate they were led to shout: "His blood be on us and our children". Through their action and their words the nation which they represented was defiled by contact with death, and will not be cleansed therefrom until it has gone through the process predicted in Zechariah 12:1. Only then will it be able to nationally partake of the Passover with true meaning.

"And they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day" — This was before the command had been received that all who were defiled by the dead be removed from the camp (Num. 5:2). See note at v.1 of this chapter.

#### VERSE 7

"And those men said unto him, We are defiled by the dead body of a man: wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of Yahweh in His appointed season among the children of Israel?" — In the Hebrew, the definite article is found: "the offering". It relates to the Passover Lamb.

#### VERSE 8

"And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what Yahweh will command concerning you" — The men in

question were desirous of keeping the Passover, therefore they exhibited a willingness of mind to fulfil the requirements of Yahweh. On that basis, Moses was prepared to re-enter the Most Holy and make enquiry on their behalf (cp. Exod. 25:22; Num. 7:89).

#### VERSE 9

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — Moses evidently received this revelation from the Most Holy.

#### VERSE 10

"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you or of your posterity" — The R.V. gives "posterity" as *genealogies*, it being the same word in the Hebrew as in Gen. 6:9.

"Shall be unclean by reason of a dead body" — Defilement through contact with a body whether dead or defiled, disqualified from partaking of the Passover. It taught Israelites that they should look beyond death, even as Paul taught the Ecclesia in 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Whilst Yahweh, in His understanding mercy, can respect human sorrow (as Christ did at the tomb of Lazarus), He also expects believers to look beyond it to the life promised through a resurrection. There is also a typical foreshadowing of the Divine purpose in this law. Israel after the flesh "has no right to eat" of the altar of Yahweh's appointing (Heb. 13:10). Why? Because the nation is "unclean by reason of a dead body". When cleansed therefrom, as it is appointed the nation to be (Zech. 12:1), the people will partake of the Passover (Ezek. 45:21).

"Or be in a journey afar off" — Absence on a journey outside the Land made it impossible for an Israelite to keep the Passover. For nearly two thousand years, therefore, the nation has been "in a journey afar off" in that it was driven from the land. When the nation is restored in its fulness, the festival will again be kept, but with greater meaning than previously (see Jer. 16:14-15).

"Yet he shall keep the passover unto Yahweh" — Young renders this as "a passover". This supplementary passover was kept a month later than usual, so it was not "the passover."

#### VERSE 11

"The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it" — This supple-

mentary Passover was kept a month later than usual, so that any who were unable to celebrate the first festival could do so the following month. Hezekiah applied the spirit of this law, though he did not apply it in its letter (2 Chron. 30:2).

**"And eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs"** — It was to be kept exactly as the first Passover.

#### VERSE 12

**"They shall leave none of it unto the morning"** — See note Exod. 12:10.

**"Nor break any bone of it"** — See Exod. 12:46, and note how this foreshadowed the Lord's offering as cited in John 19:36.

**"According to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it"** — See Exod. 12:43.

#### VERSE 13

**"But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forebearth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people"** — An Israelite refusing to keep the Passover when he is able to do so shall be excommunicated. See notes at Exod. 12:15; 21:23.

**"Because he brought not the offering of Yahweh in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin"** — The expression means that he will bear the consequences of his deliberate refusal to obey the command. In this case punishment took the form of excommunication until he had fulfilled the terms that would permit of his restoration to the nation again.

#### VERSE 14

**"And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto Yahweh"** — The Hebrew word for "stranger" is *ger* and denotes a Gentile, in this case, a resident alien. Before such could keep the passover they had to accept the covenant of Moses and be circumcised. See Exod. 12:48.

**"According to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do"** — He had to observe it in exactly the same way as did the Hebrew.

**"Ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land"** — The stranger, by embracing the Mosaic covenant, became as the Israelites, and hence the one law applied to both.

On the subject of the Passover, and its restoration in the coming Age, Bro. Thomas has some excellent comments in *Elpis Israel* pp. 295-298. Concerning the present celebration by the Jewish people, he has this to say: "I am informed by a Jew that when they eat the passover they eat no lamb, but have a dry bone of one on a dish; and that all who celebrate take hold of the lip of the dish, and unitedly offer a petition. This is remarkable. They have slain the true Lamb, which believers of the gospel feed upon: while only a dry bone remains to them, strikingly illustrative of themselves. Faith in the Lamb of God supplies the absence of the lamb in the Lord's Supper. The broken bread and poured-out wine memorialize his sacrifice for believers; and the testimony, "This do in remembrance of me until I come", keeps alive the hope of his appearing in the kingdom of God. When hope becomes a reality, the supper will give place to the passover; for when Christ is come, the memorial of his coming ceases to be prophetic of the event."

#### The Ever-present Cloud — vv. 15-23

*The ever-present cloud, symbol of Yahweh's presence, is to lead the people through the wilderness. It is a symbol of divine guidance: direct, continuous, unmistakable, infallible. All plans, all routes, all camping, all marching are to be subject to "If the Lord will . . ." (James 4:15). To watch the guiding pillar is all that Israel is required to do. On that guidance the people are entirely dependent, and by following it they are absolutely safe. The lesson is clear to these times. The eyes of believers must ever be towards Yahweh (Col. 3:1), whose eyes is constantly upon them (see Num. 33:2; Psa. 32:8).*

#### VERSE 15

**"And on the day that the Tabernacle was reared up"** — This was the first day of Abib, two weeks before the celebration of the second Passover (see Exod. 12:40). The word for "tabernacle" is *mishkan*, or "dwelling place". It was the throne of Yahweh, His dwelling place, in the midst of Israel.

**"The cloud covered the tabernacle"** — The word for cloud is *anan*, and it signifies "to cover". The word relates to clouds as intervening, and covering up the brightness of sun or sky. This cloud

intervened to shroud Yahweh's glory. The Psalmist declares of Yahweh that "He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light by night" (Psa. 105:39). In that way the cloud would give protection from the fierce sun that burns with great intensity of heat in Sinai. The statement of the Psalmist suggests that whilst the pillar of the cloud ascended from the area of the Most Holy, it spread over the whole camp as a canopy protecting it from the oppressive heat of the sun, the light of which is very intense in Sinai. It provided a basis for the symbolism of Rev. 7:16: "neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat". Figuratively the heat of the sun represents persecution or anger, so that the reference suggests protection from such. Moreover, the cloud by day and the fire by night taught the principle expressed by the Psalmist: "Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. Yahweh is Thy keeper; Yahweh is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. Yahweh shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul. Yahweh shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, and even for evermore" (Psa. 121:5).

**"Namely the tent of the testimony"** — The tent of the testimony represented that part of the Tabernacle in which was the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments. Therefore the cloud ascended above the western portion, indicating that the most sacred object was found therein.

**"And at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning"** — As the sun sank in the west, the cloud gradually took on the appearance of fire, and so illuminated the darkness. This provided visible endorsement of the words of the Psalmist: "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness; He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous" (Psa. 112:4). The fire by night was an emblem of the purifying and protecting presence of Yahweh as revealed in the Word during the night of Gentile times (John 9:4). Yahweh is described as "a consuming fire" (Deut. 4:24), whilst the Cherubim, which symbolise His manifestation to men, are described as enfolded in fire (Ezek. 1:4,27; 8:2). It is also significant, that when the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles, it appeared "as cloven tongues of fire, and

it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3). The association of Yahweh with fire is most appropriate, for He invariably provides "light in darkness" (Psa. 119:105, 130; Cp. Isa. 50:10). As the pillar of fire was seen over the Tabernacle in the past, so the Temple of the future age will have its canopy of fire proclaiming the same lesson (Isa. 4:5; Zech. 2:5).

#### VERSE 16

**"So it was alway"** — See Psa. 78:14; 139:11-12.

**"The cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night"** — The cloud was dark by day, and became luminous by night. As a cloud it veiled the divine glory, as a fire it declared it (1 Kings 8:12). It was there constantly to guide Israel. It first appeared at the time of the Exodus (Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19-24), and had led the children of Israel to Sinai (Exod. 16:10; 34:5; 40:34-38). It continued to guide the Israelites through the wilderness (Numbers 10:1,12,34; 11:25; 12:5,10; 14:14; 16:42; Deut. 1:33; 5:22; 31:15). It had filled the Tabernacle when it had been erected (Exod. 40:34-38), and later was located in the Temple (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; Neh. 9:19). When Ezekiel saw the Cherubic glory leave Jerusalem, it was shrouded in cloud (Ezek. 10:3-4; 11:23). That divine glory was veiled in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14). When He ascended into heaven a cloud "received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). At the second advent of the Lord, he will be seen in a cloud, but it will be a "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) all of whom will bear the divine glory (Rev. 1:7; Ezek. 43:1-7). These references show that the cloud is the symbol of the divine presence, and the hiding of divine power (Hab. 3:4).

#### VERSE 17

**"And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed"** — Cp. Exod. 40:36; Neh. 9:12; Psa. 78:14.

**"And in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents"** — The word "abode" is *shakan*, "to dwell". It is the root from whence is derived the word *Shekinah*, "abiding" or "dwelling"; which, however, does not occur in Scripture.

## VERSE 18

“At the commandment of Yahweh the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of Yahweh they pitched” — The children of Israel accepted the movement of the cloud as a divine command.

“As long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents” — See comment upon v. 17 in regard to the verb “abode”. Note Paul’s reference to the cloud in 1 Cor. 10:1.

## VERSE 19

“And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of Yahweh, and journeyed not” — Under such circumstances there was no progress. The nation moved as an army, obeying the charge, or commandment, of Yahweh Sabaoth in regard to its progress from point to point, or its delay for any purpose. Disobedience on the part of

people would result in delays, as in Num. 12:15.

## VERSE 20

“And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of Yahweh they abode in their tents, and according to the commandments of Yahweh they journeyed” — There was strict control of all Israel’s movements. The word “abode” in this verse is a translation of the Hebrew *chanah*, “to incline”. The R.V. renders it as *remained*. Compare this word with that in vv. 17,18.

## VERSE 21

“And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed” — In this verse the word “abode” is translated from the Hebrew



Israelites making a Burnt-Offering sacrifice during the Wilderness period

heyk. The R. V. renders it as *was*, implying that the cloud was stationary.

#### VERSE 22

“Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon” — The word “year” is from the Hebrew *yomin*, “days”, indicating an undefined period of time, often equivalent to a year (Lev. 25:29).

“The children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not; but when it was taken up, they journeyed” — The statement of this verse summarises the journeying of the children of Israel, and evidently was inserted at the conclusion of the wanderings. By the control exercised through the cloud, the new generation that grew up during the 38 years of

wandering learned discipline, it obeyed the directive of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 23

“At the commandment of Yahweh they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of Yahweh they journeyed: they kept the charge of Yahweh, at the commandment of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” — These verses appear to have been inserted at the conclusion of the wanderings; they certainly summarise the experiences of the Israelites. By Yahweh’s means of control, the new generation that grew up during the 38 years of wandering learnt to discipline their lives according to the commandments and directives of Yahweh. Nehemiah commented: “Thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.”

## CHAPTER TEN

(vv. 1-10)

### FINAL PREPARATIONS

*In view of all the detailed preparations, the children of Israel must have been in a fever of excitement to be on the move. They have been at the foot of Horeb for almost a year (Exod. 19:1). One last item of preparation remains: the making of silver trumpets according to the Word of Yahweh, and instructions on their use. They learn that readiness to move, or to act, is not enough; their movements and actions must be governed by God, and they must learn to co-operate with Him. When that lesson is learnt the Israelites are ready to commence their march.*

**Divine Control By The Silver Trumpets — vv. 1-10**

*Moses is commanded to make two trumpets of silver, and is instructed that they are to be used in times of war and of worship.*

#### VERSE 1

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, say-

ing” — This constituted the final instruction before the order to move.

#### VERSE 2

“**Make thee two trumpets of silver**” — The manufacture and use of the silver trumpets are most significant, and present powerful lessons to be observed in the worship of Yahweh. There were two



## THE BEAUTIFUL SYMBOLISM OF THE SILVER TRUMPETS

*The voice of Yahweh to Israel; and of Israel to Yahweh.*

The two silver trumpets represent the witness of the spirit-word in its two-fold use of instruction and prayer: (1) as preached to mankind; (2) as pleaded before Yahweh. Therefore, it is both the voice of Yahweh in search of His people; and the voice of His people in search of Him. The primary use was: (1) for ordering the march; (2) for endorsing the worship. The spirit-word calls people from their cares and pleasures to walk to the Kingdom, and helps to present them acceptably before the throne of Grace.

A distinction of sound was made in each case. So it is with the urgent summons of the spirit-word, or in its various expressions as its influence is made evident in prayer.

Paul wrote: "Through him (Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). The "Spirit" relates to divine instruction received through the spirit-word (John 6:63; Eph. 6:17; 1 John 5:6; Heb. 1:1-2). Access to the Father is granted those who endorse the teaching of the spirit-word, and approach Him in the light of its teaching through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The former comprises their earthly advocate which enables them to pray aright unto the Father; the latter is their heavenly advocate through whom their petitions are presented (1 John 2:1). The former teaches the will of Yahweh and by that means filters prayer, revealing those things for which one should pray; the latter endorses the prayer when it is according to the divine will, and presents it to the Father. Prayer, therefore, is a blend of the word as expressing the Father's will ("*Not my will but Thine be done*"), and the worshipper's needs in the light of its requirements.

This influence of the Spirit-word in instruction and in prayer was symbolised by the use of the two silver trumpets. In 1 Corinthians 14:8, Paul makes reference to the use of the trumpets as relating to the clear, certain instruction regarding the will of Yahweh (v. 9); as well as the necessity for plain, direct, easily-understood, scripture-motivated expressions in prayer (v. 14). He declared: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle." The reference obviously is to the two silver trumpets.

The sounding of the chatsotserath trumpets brought the Assembly before Yahweh (Num. 10:3), guided the people in their wanderings (v. 5), regulated their order of march (v. 6),

brought them into remembrance before Yahweh in times of need (v. 9), ensured relief from oppression (v. 9), and presented them acceptably before Him in memorial worship (v. 10). They sounded forth clear, decisive, easily understood. Exposition of the word, and prayer, should be like the sound of those silver trumpets: clear, fervent, determined, insistent (see 2 Chron. 13:14; Phil. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:8; James 5:16). Accordingly, in prayer, worshippers should "stir themselves" to take hold of Yahweh, and so "come boldly before the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16; cp. Isa. 64:7; ct. Job 15:4).

The record in 2 Chron. 5:13, 29:27 states that "the trumpeters and singers were as one" (suggesting fellowship), and that "the song of Yahweh began with the trumpets." The sweet, insistent, penetrating, dominating and commanding notes of the silver trumpets commenced the song of Yahweh in the Temple services. The antitype, in understanding and in prayer, should do so inasmuch as in worship Yahweh's people become "as one".

There was distinction of sound in the notes of the trumpets, each variation clearly denoting specific instructions to the people. Upon this Paul comments in 1 Cor. 14:6-7 in referring to the many-sided exposition of Yahweh's will: "What shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound . . . except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known . . ."

The trumpets were sounded by the Priests, not the Levites, and therefore came with the highest authority in Israel; so the instruction of worshippers must be from the Word itself. The sounding of the trumpets organised the proper order in the marching arrangements of the tribes; so, again, in context with his reference to the trumpets, Paul declares that Ecclesial matters should be arranged "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40; see also Col. 2:5; Titus 1:5).

As a symbol of faith-motivated prayer which endorsed Yahweh's will, the trumpets were used in times of emergency such as war (Num. 10:9), or in the presentation of offerings in times of worship (Num. 10:10). They were sounded by Eleazar (*El hath helped*), and Ithamar (*the place of the palm*), and as the latter is shown to be the place of worship (Psa. 92:12), the joint names of the priests proclaimed that *El will help those gathered in worship*.

In David's day, two priests with trumpets presided over the Ark in Zion (1 Chron. 16:6), and two were before the Tabernacle in Gibeon (v. 42); for the worship was then divided, as it is today in Ecclesias throughout the world (see John 4:21-24). Seven trumpeters blew silver trumpets before the Ark as it was

conveyed to Zion, representing an act of worship based upon the covenant (1 Chron. 13:8; 15:24,28). There were 120 trumpeters in the Temple service as organised in the days of Solomon, the 12 × 10 suggesting perfect government over the totality of mankind.

There were various words used in Hebrew for "trumpets", and the title given to the silver trumpets is that of *chatsotserath*.

trumpets, suggestive of the two great families of humanity: Jew and Gentile. However, at this time they were used by Aaron's two remaining sons: Eleazar and Ithamar. Their names are significant. Eleazar signifies *El is a help*, drawing attention to the means of salvation; and Ithamar means *place of the Palm*, representing the saved (Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 92:12). Later, with the increase in the number of priests, the number of trumpets were increased. There were at least seven in David's time (1 Chron. 15:24), and 120 in the days of Solomon, when the Temple was built (2 Chron. 5:12). There were at least three different kinds of trumpets used by the Israelites. The Hebrew word for "trumpets" in this place is *chatsotserath*, from a root word signifying "to surround (as with a stockade), or to separate" (see *Strong's Concordance*). They were long, straight and narrow, with an expanded mouth, and therefore differed from the curved ram's horn or cornet, known as the shophar trumpets. The *chatsotserath* trumpets are depicted among the other spoils of the Temple on the Arch of Titus built after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

They were of silver, the metal of redemption (Exod. 30:12-15). As a symbol, they represented the sounding forth of the will of Yahweh to the redeemed, and their response to Him in prayer. And as the redeemed constitute those called out of the two great families of humanity: Jew and Gentile (the Israelites and the mixed multitude who had separated from Egypt), so it was appropriate that there should be two.

"Of a whole piece shall thou make them" — The rendition is incorrect. The Hebrew *miqshah*, rendered "whole piece" signifies *beaten work*, or *hammered work* as it is given in *The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*. "Beaten work" suggests trial, and is appropriate for the silver trumpets in view of their

symbolic use: the witness of the word and of prayer.

"That thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly" — The word "assembly" is *edah*, the feminine form of *ed*, "witness," and is appropriate to the Israel Ecclesia as indicative of its chief work: to witness. The sounding of the trumpet would indicate when those called together to represent the nation should meet in the capacity of witnessing to the Truth.

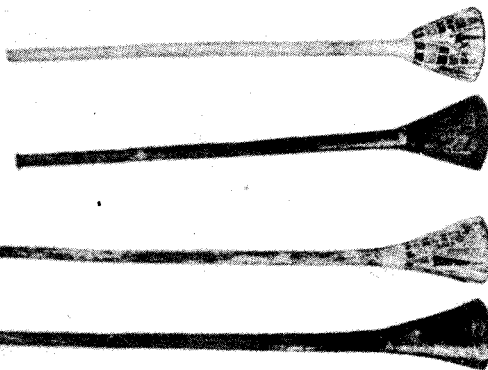
"And for the journey of the camps" — The trumpets sounded to proclaim that the time to move had come, after which the cloud would lead the way. The "journeying of the camps" figuratively represented walking in the way, which is the outworking of a true witness.

### VERSE 3

"And when they shall blow with them" — The plural pronoun indicates when both trumpets would be sounded together. The word "blow" is from the Hebrew *taqa* — to clatter, clap, suggesting short staccato notes.

### VERSE 4

"If they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are head of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee" — The sounding of only one trumpet brought only the princes of the tribes together. The word "thousands" in this statement is from the Hebrew *'eleph*, being the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet. This remarkable word, whilst designating the first letter in the alphabet, also does duty numerically for both one or a thousand. But it can also represent the head of a family, or the family itself. In that regard it presents the thought that One (even Yahweh) can become a family (the Redeemed in Him) which is actually the significance of the Name of Yahweh. It is appropriate, therefore, that this letter should stand at



*Copper and  
silver trumpets.*

the head of the Hebrew alphabet. See also Num. 1:18.

#### VERSE 5

“When ye blow an alarm” — The word is *teruw’ah*, and denotes, probably, “a protracted or repeated blowing” (Rotherham). The word occurs in Jer. 4:19; 49:2; Zeph. 1:16. The word is also used for the sounding of the shophar (Lev. 23:24). In the case of the silver trumpets, the “alarm” would probably commence with a few staccato notes, terminating in a long, drawn-out one.

“Then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward” — Judah would lead the way followed by Isaachar and Zebulun.

#### VERSE 6

“When ye shall blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys” — The tribes referred to were Reuben, Simeon and Gad.

Nothing is recorded in this chapter concerning the third and fourth sounding of the trumpets for the marching of the tribes, but the Septuagint, at this place, adds the words: “And when you blow the third alarm, the camps on the west shall begin their march; and when ye blow the fourth alarm, the camps on the north shall begin their march.”

#### VERSE 7

“But when the congregation is to be gathered together” — The word for “congregation” is *qahal*, the Hebrew word for

Ecclesia. It related to Israel as such (cp. Acts 7:38).

“Ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm” — The word “blow” is *taqa*, “to clap” and evidently relates to short, staccato notes. The word also occurs in vv. 3,4,5, but in those places is joined with other instructions. For example, to “blow an alarm” has the two words *taqa teruw’ah*, the first short staccato notes, the latter a long continuous note. In carrying out the instruction of this verse the final, drawn-out note would be omitted.

#### VERSE 8

“And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations” — Such an ordinance, being “for ever”, must have an application today. And so it has, for Paul asks the question: “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?” (1 Cor. 14:8). In this aspect, therefore, the trumpet sound applies to the witness of the Word.

#### VERSE 9

“And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets” — Cases of this are recorded in Num. 31:6; Josh. 6:5; 2 Chron. 13:14. The statement of this verse indicates the use of the trumpets after the nation was established in the land, when their purpose as announcing the order of march as mentioned above ceased.

**“And ye shall be remembered before Yahweh your God”** — The sounding of the trumpets were to call to mind the promise of Yahweh as well as to invoke His help in time of need. They, therefore, became a symbol for prayer as well as for the witness of the Word (see Acts 10:6)

**“And ye shall be saved from your enemies”** — As a theocracy the nation had to rely upon God for success in battle (see Deut. 20:1-4). The statement promises of this verse that if the people did their part, success in battle was assured (see Heb. 13:5-6).

#### VERSE 10

**“Also in the days of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings”** — The trumpets were sounded on days of national thanksgiving that were celebrated with religious services, such as the feasts of Dedication (John 10:22), and of Purim (Esther 9:19) which

were established later. They were blown in “the solemn days,” that is days that were set aside as festivals under the Law, such as are recorded in Numbers 28,29. They were also blown at the beginnings of the months which were celebrated with religious services (Psalm 81:3) as denoting new beginnings. The sounding of the trumpets was particularly associated with the burnt offerings and peace offerings, for the first celebrated the giving of oneself to Yahweh, and the second, the fellowship that was enjoyed as a result. All such services should be sanctified by prayer, and hence the use of the silver trumpets. They were used both for war and for worship (cp. 2 Chron. 20:28; Psa. 81:3).

**“That they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am Yahweh your God”** — The word “memorial” signifies a *calling to remembrance*. The purpose of the trumpets, therefore, was to bring Yahweh and His people together as one: He called them to remembrance (v.9), and they called Him to remembrance (v.10).



*The Preparations In The Wilderness are now completed (see Chapter 1:1-10:10), and the tribes are ready to leave. A sense of expectancy permeates the whole camp. The people have been at this one location for the better part of a year (Exod. 19:1), and the time spent, plus the intensive concentration on departure procedures, must have increased their anticipations to a fever of excitement. During the period of their sojourn at the Mount, they had received the Law twice, built and dedicated the Tabernacle, organised the camp, and celebrated the regular and special Passovers in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt. Their faces are now set towards the Land of Promise.*

*But the journey that commenced so hopefully ended disastrously at the very borders of the Land. The people did not anticipate the problems they experienced, and provoked Yahweh in the wilderness. Instead of enjoying the triumph of faith, Israel experienced the tragedy of spiritual shortsightedness. In the words of Peter, they "could not see afar off, and forgot that they were purged from their old sins" (2 Peter 1:9). Yet their failure stemmed from minor things. It commenced with but a little matter: a measure of natural grumbling. In this a tremendous lesson is taught. Grumbling is considered but a little sin; it is often excused as a natural fault developed by circumstances. But it was the root cause of Israel's failure (see Num. 11). When grumbling is permitted unchecked it soon becomes habitual, and then is resorted to all times, spoiling every endeavour (see Phil. 2:14; Jude 16). The grumbling on the part of a few soon spread through the camp, and led to widespread dissatisfaction. Soon the whole camp was complaining (Num. 11:10), and even the leaders were divided one against the other (Num. 12:1). This attitude demonstrated that that generation was not ready for the Promised Land. As they neared its borders the people viewed it doubtfully, wondering whether it was really what they wanted. So they sent out spies. But the faith of those spies having been undermined by the complaining in the wilderness, caused them to cast doubts upon the ability of the people to overcome the obstacles needful to conquer the land. Yahweh's help was forgotten in the report presented. The Land was spurned by a people whose eyes were centred upon present advantage rather than future blessing, and the result was the consignment of that generation to death in the wilderness. So the first generation failed because of the people's provocation of Yahweh in the wilderness. This was due to their lack of faith (Heb. 4:19), their short-sighted vision of the future.*

NUMBERS:  
BEHOLD THE GOODNESS  
AND THE SEVERITY  
OF GOD

*Section Two*

***PROVOCATION  
IN THE  
WILDERNESS***

***Ch. 10:11-19:22***

## CHAPTER TEN

### JOURNEYING AT YAHWEH'S COMMAND

*The second portion of this chapter records the departure of the people from Horeb. There is a certain amount of trepidation as to the problems they may encounter, and Moses takes the opportunity of asking his brother-in-law Hobab, who visits the camp, to throw in his lot with Israel, and so enjoy the goodness that Yahweh has promised the nation. But Hobab refused, and Moses is taught that there is no need for help outside of what is available from Yahweh alone.*

#### The Departure — vv. 11-13

*These verses summarise the whole of the journey from Horeb to Paran.*

#### VERSE 11

**“And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year”** — A comparison of this statement with that of Exod. 19:1 reveals that the duration of the stay at Horeb was about eleven months.

**“That the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony”** — Before the movement of the cloud, Moses had been informed by Yahweh that the time for departure had come (Deut. 1:6-8). At the same time, Moses sought assistance in the heavy work of leading the people, and this was granted him. At the direction of Yahweh an election of qualified leaders was arranged to appoint counsellors and judges. These were organised into an inner-council to assist Moses and the princes in their heavy labour (Deut. 1:9-18).

Moses' action in making these appointments had been stimulated by the advice of Jethro who visited the camp at Horeb and made certain wise suggestions. The account of this is given in Exodus 18, which chapter chronologically should be fitted in between Numbers 1:10-11, for the following reasons:

(1) — Prior to Exodus 19, the people

were not as yet camped at Horeb (Exod. 19:1-2), but when Jethro visited Moses they were already there (Exodus 18:5).

(2) — According to Moses' own account, he complained of the heaviness of the responsibility resting upon him in regard to the people, just as they were about to leave Horeb, at which time the council was elected and set up (Deut. 1:9-18; Exod. 18:24-26).

(3) — The appeal for help followed the conversation with Jethro (see Num. 11:10-17; Exod. 18:13-26), and this took place *after* the Law had been given (Exod. 18:16), and evidently after the Tabernacle had been set up.

The record in Exodus 18, therefore, appears to be parenthetical, and historically should be placed as the tribes were waiting to leave Horeb. About this time, Zipporah joined her husband, in order that she might continue with him to the Land of Promise. This became the cause of dispute between Moses and the other members of his family (Num. 12:1).

#### VERSE 12

**“And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran”** — This is a general summary of the journeying from Horeb to the borders of the land (see Num. 12:16; 13:3,26), the (the Israel of God — Gal. 6:16).



details of which are then given (Num. 10:14-12:16).

“According to the commandment of Yahweh by the hand of Moses” — The cloud led the way, but further instructions were received by Moses from Yahweh as promised (Exod. 25:22). In Deut. 1:6-8, Moses records the first of those commandments together with the encouraging words of the angel at the time. Those instructions, together with the advancing cloud, guided the Israelites through the terrible wilderness that stretched from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea that was to test their faith to the uttermost. See it described: Deut. 1:19; 8:15; Jer. 2:6.

#### The Order Of The Tribes — vv. 14-28

*The most orderly arrangements are made for the march of the tribes and the transfer of the Tabernacle from place to place: an object lesson for the orderly arrangement of Ecclesial matters in this day and generation.*

#### VERSE 14

“In the first place went the standard of the camp of the children of Judah according to their armies” — Judah was situated on the north eastern corner of the Tabernacle, and from that vantage point led the tribes. The term “armies” is given in the plural, because there were three tribal hosts in each camp (Num. 1:3).

“And over his host was Nahshon the son of Amminadab” — The heads of the tribes are given in the same order as in Numbers 7. Therefore, as Israel marched from point to point, it proclaimed the message of the names there given.

#### VERSE 15

“And over the host of the tribes of the children of Issachar was Nethaneel the son of Zuar” — For the meaning and significance of the names, see the note on Ch. 7.

#### VERSE 16

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon” — In addition to the names of the princes, the significance of the names of the tribes also proclaimed a message as earlier notes on Numbers have indicated. The first three tribes proclaim, *Praise, Reward, Dwelling*.

#### VERSE 17

“And the tabernacle was taken down” — The order of march is so described by Bro. Roberts in *The Law of Moses*, p. 311: “Not long after the dedication of the tabernacle, Moses received orders to march for the promised land. It was no light matter to marshal such an immense body of people. The tribes, when at rest, were pitched in four camps, with the tabernacle in the centre of all. Arrangements for the march were characterised by the consummate wisdom manifest in every part of the Mosaic system. At a blast from the two silver trumpets by the sons of Aaron at the door of the tabernacle, the east camp broke up and set forward. Then the priests to whom the work had been allocated, took down the tabernacle and the pillars and the courts with their sockets, and went forward with the wagons, leaving the Kohathites behind, in charge of the holy vessels and furniture of the sanctuary.”

“And the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set forward bearing the tabernacle” — This provides a more precise description of the method of conducting the Tabernacle from place to place than is given in Num. 2:17. There the statement is simply made that the Tabernacle would find a place in “the midst” of the marching tribes, without specifying where it was. Here we are told that the actual structure of the Tabernacle was borne in advance by the Gershonites and Merarites, immediately behind the camp of Judah. The purpose was to set it up in readiness for the sacred utensils carried by the Kohathites (v. 21).

The Gershonites had charge of the Tabernacle coverings, the hangings of the court, and so forth (see Num. 4:24-26). The Merarites had the heaviest labour. They had charge of the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets (See Num. 4:29-33). The wagons and oxen were apportioned to these families of Levi according to their labour (Num. 7:7-8), teaching that Yahweh arranges for help to be provided where it is needed.

#### VERSE 18

“And the standard of the camp of Reuben set forward according to their armies: and over his host was Elizur the son of Shedeur” — In the marching of the tribes the natural firstborn gave precedence to Judah, the appointed firstborn.

In fulfilment of the type, the natural firstborn (Israel after the flesh) gives precedence to the appointed firstborn (the Israel of God — Gal. 6:16).

**VERSE 19**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai” — See Num. 1:6.

**VERSE 20**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel” — See note Num. 1:41.

**VERSE 21**

“And the Kohathites set forward, bearing the sanctuary” — They carried the furniture of the sanctuary: the ark, table, lampstand, altar etc. Special arrangements were made for them to enter the normally prohibited sections of the Most Holy and Holy places for this purpose (see Num. 4:15-20). First Aaron and his sons entered the Holy Place and carefully removed the dividing veil to cover the Ark which then had further coverings laid upon it. Only when all the furniture was covered as directed could the Levites approach to carry it (Num. 4:4-15).

“And the other did set up the tabernacle against they came” — The Gershonites and the Merarites set up the Tabernacle, ready for the holy furniture to be installed therein. Describing this verse, Bro. Roberts notes in *The Law of Moses* p. 312:

“On arriving at a new site, the camps pitched in the same order. The host of Judah, at the head of the procession, came to a halt first, and put up their tents. The wagons behind them stopped at the same time, and the priests in charge got out the pillars and court hangings, and the boards and bars of the tabernacle, and put up the empty structure in readiness to receive the altars and holy vessels on the arrival of the Kohathites in the rear. Then the host of the Reubenites turned aside to the right, and formed their camp at the due distance; then the Kohathites came up, and found the tabernacle ready to receive the ark and the holy vessels. Then the host of Ephraim formed camp on the ground where they stood, and the host of Dan behind them defiled to the left and went forward to their camping ground on the north of the tabernacle.”

**VERSE 22**

“And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set forward according to their armies; and over his host was Elishama the son of Ammihud” — Elishama's name signifies *God (El) hears the people of glory*. This was a most appropriate name for one following the Kohathites bearing the holy vessels.

**VERSE 23**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahur” — See note Num. 1:10, for the significance of the name etc.

**VERSE 24**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni” — See Num. 1:11.

**VERSE 25**

“And the standard of the camp of the children of Dan set forward, which was the rereward of all the camps throughout their hosts; and over his host was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai” — The camp of Dan which was stationed to the north of the Tabernacle brought up the rear of the marching tribes. The word “rereward” is rendered *rearward* in the R.V. It is derived from a Hebrew word signifying to gather up, and is here used in the sense of gathering up the rest of the tribes. The significance of the names of the princes leading the tribes under Dan speak of the conquest of sin by the antitypical Judge (Dan), the Lord Jesus Christ. See notes on Num. 1:12.

**VERSE 26**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran” — See Num. 1:13.

**VERSE 27**

“And over the host of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan” — See note Num. 1:15.

**VERSE 28**

“Thus were the journeys of the children of Israel according to their armies when they set forward” — It is significant that whereas Numbers 1 lists the tribes according to natural birth, this chapter lists them according to divine arrangement. The four leading tribes pronounce the

sentence: *Praise Him* (Judah), *for See a son* (Reuben), *who shall provide Double fruit* (Ephraim), *at the Judgment* (Dan).

In their journeyings the Israelites, like Abram, moved into a land that God showed them, not knowing where they went, nor where they would next rest. The marching order was as follows:

**JUDAH** — *Praise Him*

Isaachar — *He will reward*

Zebulun — *With a permanent dwelling*

Gershonites and Merarites carrying the coverings and supports of the Tabernacle.

**REUBEN** — *See a son*

Simeon — *hear him*

Gad — *join his company*

The Kohathites bearing the holy vessels of the Sanctuary.

**EPHRAIM** — *Double fruit (will be granted).*

Manasseh — *those forgetting (the flesh)*

Benjamin — *And reaching to the Son of the Right Hand.*

**DAN** — *The Judgment*

Asher — *will provide blessings*

Naphtali — *to those who wrestle successfully.*

**Moses Invites Hobab to Join Him** — vv. 29-32

*When Jethro visits the Israelite camp bringing Zipporah and her two sons with him, Moses, in explaining the purpose of Yahweh with Israel, preaches the Gospel to him. Jethro confirms his acceptance of such teaching by special sacrifices that he offers in conjunction with Moses and the elders of Israel (See notes Exodus 18:8-12). After the departure of Jethro, Hobab his son, remains with Moses: And to him Moses explains the same divine purpose with Israel, and on his acceptance of these truths, in a moment of weakness pleads with him to remain with Israel to assist in leading the tribes. Hobab refuses the invitation at the time, but ultimately joins the Israelites and enters the Land of Promise. The descendants of Jethro constituted a group of non-Israelites within the nation that over the centuries maintained the faith even during time of apostasy.*

#### VERSE 29

*“And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses’ father in law”* — Hobab signifies *loving or cherished*. He was the son of Raguel, rendered as Reuel in the R.V. consistently with

Exod. 2:18. Reuel denotes *the Friend of God*, and his name would suggest that he was a worshipper of the one God. In Exod. 18:1, however, the father in law of Moses is named Jethro, which name signifies *Excellence or Pre-eminence*, and may have been a title. A character-sketch of Jethro is given in our notes on Exodus, and to these we direct the reader. He was evidently a worthy man, and to him Moses preached the Gospel (see notes on Exodus 18).

**“We are journeying unto the place of which Yahweh said”** — In this declaration, “the place” is analogous to the Kingdom of God in relation to the Truth today. Israel had “come out of” Egypt (Deut. 6:23), and therefore constituted the Ecclesia in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). The purpose of Yahweh was to “bring them in” to the Land of Promise (Deut. 6:23). The Ecclesia today is separated from Gentilism for a place in the Kingdom of God.

**“I will give it you”** — This is a reference to the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:7), the basis of the Gospel message (Gal. 3:8).

**“Come thou with us, and we will do thee good”** — The Gospel is described as Yahweh’s “goodness” towards Israel (Exod. 18:9). It included the promise of rest unto the people (Heb. 4:6-9) which is yet to be realised (Rom. 11:22-23, 25-26). Moses explained to Hobab that by joining the Ecclesia he would inherit the promised “good” as well. Though Hobab declined the invitation at this time, he evidently joined with Israel later, for Jethro’s descendants constituted a separate group in Israel throughout its history (Jud. 1:16; 4:11,17; 1 Sam. 15:6; Jer. 35:10-19). The Rechabites of Jeremiah 35 were descendants of Jethro, and they receive honourable mention with a promise of inheritance in the restored Kingdom of the Age to come (cp. v. 9).

**“For Yahweh hath spoken good concerning Israel”** — This “good” embraces the Gospel, described as the “goodness” of Yahweh (Rom. 11:22), and which is based upon the promises made to Abraham. In effect, therefore, Moses preached the Gospel to Hobab, and invited him to join with Israel on the basis of its promises.

#### VERSE 30

*“And he said unto him, I will not go”*

— Young gives this reply in the present tense: "I do not go!" Very decisive language by which Hobab refused the invitation. But later he evidently changed his mind, and threw in his lot with Israel, probably after first returning home. The experience of Moses with Hobab, therefore foreshadows the experience one frequently meets in preaching the gospel. An original refusal is often followed by a change of mind as the benefits of the Gospel are pressed home. That Hobab threw in his lot with Moses and Israel is implied by the statement of Judges 4:11 that his descendants were found in the land. In that place, Hobab is described as the "father in law of Moses", but the word for "father" in that place merely means a relative by marriage. The description has been changed to "the brother-in-law" by the R.V.

**"But I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred"** — To throw in his lot with Israel meant the exact reverse of this. Abram was told to "get out" of his country, kindred, and father's house (Gen. 12:1). Acceptance of the Gospel demands such action.

### VERSE 31

**"And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee"** — Evidently Moses was doubtful of his ability to lead the people through the long and bitter stretch of desert that lay between Horeb and the Promised Land. Under the circumstances, he felt that Hobab could greatly assist him. Hobab was used to the desert, and could give invaluable advice as to how best to conquer its problems. In this Moses showed a certain, natural weakness. Yahweh had promised to lead the way, and that should have been all sufficient. But Hobab declines the invitation, and never assumes that position at any time. On the contrary, a divine comment on Moses' request seems to be made in that the ark was moved out of its place in the midst of the camp, and put at its head. It was as though Yahweh was teaching that His guidance was all-sufficient, and that faith should rest on Him, not on the fallible wisdom of mere man. Though this was probably a temporary arrangement (see notes below) it provided a telling lesson for all Israel, for all time.

**"Forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness"** — This statement suggests that whilst the cloud

led in a general direction, something was left to the individual initiative of the Israelites. They were to seek divine direction in their wanderings as is indicated in v. 13, but had to carry out a certain amount of labour themselves, as is shown in v. 33. In his timidity, Moses sought the help of Hobab to that end. Hobab was used to the desert, and his advice could help the people endure the harsh conditions they would have to endure, assisting them in their search for food and water. But Moses had to learn to put implicit trust in Yahweh for all such needs. He had to learn the lesson taught Paul that Yahweh's grace is all sufficient, for "His strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Natural inability to accomplish a work of God is no bar to its success, for the person of faith should not rely upon himself. This had been revealed to Moses on an earlier occasion. When commanded to return to Egypt, he had expressed his inability to accomplish the work of Yahweh, and was rebuked for so doing (Exod. 4:10-11). When the time came to do the very thing he then felt beyond his ability to perform (educate the people and warn Pharaoh), he discovered that God provided the means. Life is no different today. Given sufficient faith, a person can accomplish many things that normally would appear to be impossible. How often has the truth completely changed a person's life, and so motivated him as to create an interest in the Bible which he once considered dull and confusing. How often has such conversion caused a person to perform labour which was previously beyond his power to do!

**"And thou mayest be to us instead of eyes"** — As indicated above, the cloud showed the general directions, but Moses considered that Hobab, having an intimate knowledge of desert life, could assist in selecting suitable camping sites, as well as in educating the people as to the best way of enduring the difficulties of the way. Then, as now, the general directions and requirements of the Truth, are quite clear, but sometimes life presents problems for which the Scriptures do not seem to provide a ready solution, and there is a tendency to seek help elsewhere. That is a challenge to faith.

### VERSE 32

**"And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea,**

it shall be, that what goodness Yahweh shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee" — In Romans 11:22 the term "goodness of Yahweh" is expressly used of the benefits of the Gospel: "Towards thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness . . ." The term is frequently used throughout Scripture, and is epitomised in our notes on Exodus 18:9. As far as Hobab personally was concerned, Moses promised that if he fellowshipped Israel's trials, and threw in his lot with them, he would also share their hopes and joys, with the promise of life eternal in the Age to come.

#### The First Stage Of The Journey — vv. 33-36

*Moses' doubts as to the ability of Israel to master the problems of the desert which are implied in his request to Hobab, and his early morning prayer, receive a divine comment in that the Ark is ordered to move out of its place in the midst of the camp and take a position at its head. It is then used to seek a resting place for the people. Moses and the people learn that there is divine guidance for every exigency in life's wilderness journey.*

#### VERSE 33

"And they departed from the mount of Yahweh three days' journey" — According to the computation of *The Companion Bible*, the following day was a Sabbath requiring a longer period of rest.

"And the ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them in the three days' journey" — What is meant by this statement? From vv. 14-17 it would appear that Judah commenced to march before the Tabernacle was taken down as observed by Bro. Roberts in his comment. Verse 21 states that the Kohathites bore the holy furniture of the sanctuary after the Gershonites and Merarites had left, and this would have included the Ark of the Covenant. Now, however, in contradiction of these arrangements the Ark is described as leading the way. Some have suggested that the Ark was represented as being at the front of the marching tribes and so leading them as a commander is said to lead his troops even though he might not be physically at the front (Num. 27:17; Deut. 31:3; 1 Sam. 18:16). Others have suggested that the cloud, in fact, led them, but as it was closely associated with the Ark, the latter is said to have done so.

None of these explanations seems satisfactory. For normal purposes of conveyance, the Ark was carefully covered over by the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy, on top of which was a covering of badgers' skins, and then, over that, a cloth of blue (Num. 4:5-6), so that it was hidden away from human eyes. Every reference apart from that before us, suggests that the Ark took its place with the other sacred furniture in the midst of the marching tribes, and not at its head.

One further suggestion remains, and it seems to us to be required by the reading of the passage, and that is that the Ark was moved to the forefront of the marching tribes for the three days specified in the verse. In other words, this was a temporary arrangement designed to show Moses, among other things, that he did not need the eyes of Hobab to search out the land, for the nation not only had the cloud to guide them in a general way, but he had recourse to the voice of Yahweh over the Ark of the Covenant, if more specific instructions were required. Yahweh had promised that He would "commune" with Moses from that holy place in the midst of Israel (Exod. 25:22). Such an occasion was now. The people were excited at the prospect of leaving Horeb for the journey to the Promised Land, but were somewhat fearful as well. They did not know what dangers they might encounter. The Amalekites had previously attacked them (Exod. 17) and might do so again. For all Israel knew, they may have been waiting for them to leave the shelter of Horeb for that purpose. Certainly, there was a state of total hostility between the two nations (Exod. 17:16; 1 Sam. 15:1-3). There could be other enemies as well. It was most likely that it was a realisation of these possibilities that caused Moses to seek the aid of Hobab. Therefore, to provide reassurance to the people in this initial movement, the Ark preceded them to search out the way, as it did, later, when the new generation passed over the River Jordan (Josh. 3:3-4). It is obvious from the instructions of Joshua that this was not the normal position of the Ark. The prayer of Moses (v. 36) likewise suggests that this was not the normal position of the Ark.

"To search out a resting place" — The word rendered "resting place" is *menuchah*, a word that implies protection and security as well as rest. The confidence of

the people in Yahweh was confirmed by this action. The verb "search out" signifies to spy out.

There is a remarkable type suggested by this incident. The Ark foreshadowed Christ. Indeed, it is specifically stated by Paul, that he is our mercy seat (rendered *propitiation* — Rom. 3:25). At his first advent, he went a "three days journey" seeking a resting place for his people, as did the Ark in the wilderness. Thence afterwards, as in the wilderness wanderings the Ark was hidden in the midst of the marching tribes, the Lord having ascended into heaven, was found in manifestation hidden in the Ecclesias. That is the case today awaiting his return.

The suggestion that the Ark went before the tribes only during the period of this "three days' journey" is supported by Rotherham's rendition: "The Ark of the covenant was going before them, a journey of three days, to search out for them a resting place." This strongly implies that this happened only during that three days' journey, as they moved into hostile country. Normally they were led by the cloud (Deut. 1:33). The relevance of this suggestion is further enforced by the action of the Israelites in the days of Eli when at war with the Philistines. In the face of defeat the Ark was brought from Shiloh so that, as the people declared: "It may save us out of the hand of our enemies" (1 Sam 4:3). Moses' morning prayer was in the spirit of this belief. It was a declaration of war against Amalek or any other enemy of Israel.

#### VERSE 34

"And the cloud of Yahweh was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp" — The cloud formed a protection above. The Psalmist declared: "He spread a cloud for a covering . . ." (Psa. 105:39). Whilst the Ark sought out the resting place, the cloud protected the people from the heat of the sun, and so made travelling more comfortable.

#### VERSE 35

"And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Yahweh, and let Thine enemies be scattered: and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee" — It was obvious from this prayer that there was a general fear of enemy action. The Israelites were in the area of the Amalekites who possibly would want to avenge their previous defeat, and these

words were virtually a declaration of war against such in the spirit of Exod. 17:16. The Ark was a protection against any enemy action. Hence it proceeded for three days into enemy land after the ceremonial prayer of Moses had been given. Moreover, it provides a remarkable type for the future, as Psalm 68 reveals. That psalm, a Messianic one, repeats the prayer of Moses and applies it to Christ. And that it is prophetic of Christ's work at his first and second advents is shown by Paul's citation of it (cp. Psa. 68:18 with Eph. 4:8-13). It is significant, in that regard, that the RV renders Psa. 68:4 as "extol Him that rideth through the deserts by His name Yah, and rejoice before Him" (v. 4). The Psalm depicts the conquests of Christ at both his first and second advents. This is appropriate to the circumstances. At the first advent of Christ, he was openly manifested as the Ark, and will be again at his second advent. But in between those two advents, his glory has been hidden within the Ecclesias, as was the Ark of the covenant during the wilderness wanderings.

#### VERSE 36

"And when it rested" — This implies a stopping place where the Ark abode for the period determined. The Hebrew word rendered *rested* in this place, is the same as that used in relation to the sabbath as recorded in Exod. 20:11, perhaps giving some support to the conclusion reached by *The Companion Bible* that the day following was a Sabbath. It is a different word to that rendered a *resting place* in v. 33.

"He said, Return, O Yahweh, unto the many thousands of Israel" — This prayer would suggest that the Ark had gone ahead of the tribes in seeking the resting place. Having plotted the course, and established the place, it could now return to its proper position in the Most Holy, so that Yahweh's throne was again set up in its glory, in the heart of the tribes. Moses' prayer is re-echoed by John in the words: "Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20). It is a plea for the antitypical Ark to return to the "thousand of Israel", that is, the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

The phrase, *the many thousands of Israel*, is given in the margin as "ten thousand thousands" of Israel. The word "many" is *rebabah*, and denotes a *myriad* without being specific as to the number

represented. The word "thousands" is the word *'eleph*, which can denote either a thousand or a family group. We met this word in v. 4, and we direct readers to our notes there. The term can signify ten thousand thousands, or ten thousand families, or more than ten thousand of either. The actual number does not matter. What is significant is that an almost identical term is used in Psalm 68:17 in relation to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. There the comment is added (according to some renditions), "Yahweh among them hath come from Sinai into His sanctuary".

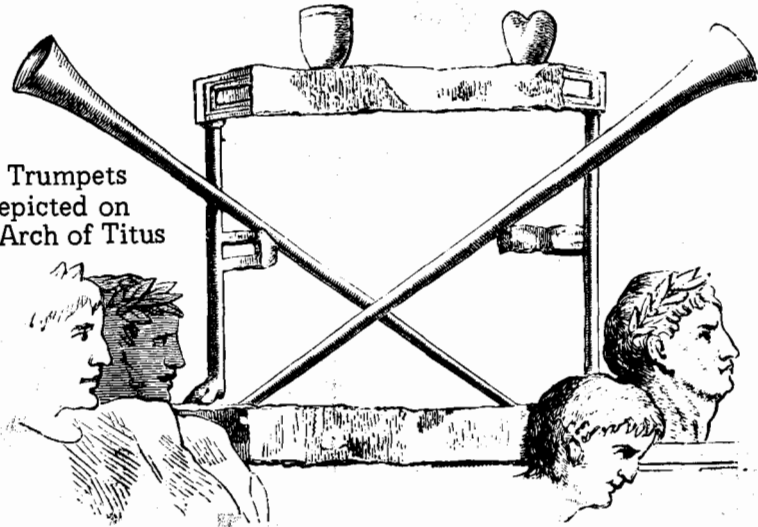
Did Moses comprehend the typical significance of all this? We believe he did. Our belief is enforced by the blessing of Moses on the tribes recorded in Deut, 33, which is prophetic of the future. There he makes mention of "ten thousands of saints", or *myriads of holy ones* as the Hebrew has it. The term does not relate to the generation that left Horeb, for it perished in the wilderness, but to those who are loved of Yahweh (Deut. 33:3), and who shall inherit the promises. It relates, therefore, to the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) in glory.

"Ten thousand" is a figurative number denoting a large, unspecified total "which no man can number" (Rev. 7:9), and therefore known only of God. The use of that number in such a manner is found in

such passages as 1 Sam. 29:5; Psa. 3:6; Song 5:10; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19. In each place the number is used figuratively of a large, unspecified, but complete group. So also here.

Therefore, in these concluding verses of Numbers 10, there is unfolded a remarkable type. It is based upon the fear of Moses which caused him to seek the help of flesh in the person of Hobab during the course of their wilderness wanderings. But that help was not available, and by command of Yahweh the Ark was brought from its hiding place into prominence before all Israel, to go before the tribes on a three days' journey to discover a resting place from the ravages of the enemy. That found, the Ark rested, and the prayer of Moses requested Yahweh "to return" to His people. To that end, the Ark again took up its abode in the Most Holy. The Psalmist's treatment of this incident applies it directly to the two advents of the Lord. At his first advent, he engaged upon a three days' journey in the sight of all Israel to obtain a resting place. He secured that rest, and invited his followers to enjoy it (see Matt. 11:28; Heb. 2:14). He now awaits the moment of "return" when the fulness of the Israel of God will gather around him to move from Sinai to the Sanctuary in Jerusalem (Song 3:6; 5:10).

The Trumpets  
as depicted on  
the Arch of Titus



## MURMURING AND DISCONTENT (Chapter 11:1-12:16)

*Though Israel has access to power that can assist it to conquer the wilderness and its enemies, and also possesses the invitation of Yahweh to do so and enter the land (Deut. 1:8), the people permit present difficulties to obscure their vision instead of keeping their eyes firmly fixed on the future glory. They therefore lack the incentive to overcome, and gradually become a nation of complainers instead of campaigners. As both enthusiasm and complaining are contagious, the lack of the former leads to discouragement, and the prevalence of the latter causes it to become habitual. Grumbling leads to complaining as the people compare the comforts they have left in Egypt with the restrictions of their wilderness journey. This influences others until murmuring is widespread, and even Moses succumbs to discouragement (Ch. 11:10-14). He seeks for further assistance in controlling the nation, and this is granted him. But when Yahweh supplies the people with their wants they fail to express proper thanks for His goodness, and this leads to further punishment and delay. Gradually the whole nation becomes depressed by complaints, so that even its leaders are affected. Miriam and Aaron turn on Moses with unjust criticism, and the punishment of leprosy is inflicted on Miriam. This further delays the progress of the nation, and undermines the foundation for success. Israel's failure commences with a little grumbling on the part of a few which leads to nationwide disaster and defeat, a warning to us today.*





## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN AND MOSES IS DISCOURAGED

*Israel's early enthusiasm is soon dissipated as the rigours of desert travel are experienced by the people. Complaints lead to grumbling and lamenting, so that even Moses is discouraged. He makes approach to Yahweh in prayer, and with infinite grace and mercy, God relieves the burden resting upon Moses by granting the appointment of elders to assist him. He also supplies the wants of the people by sending them quails that they may have flesh to eat. But whereas Moses is submissive to every requirement of Yahweh and does not mind sharing his authority with others, the people do not suitably respond to Yahweh's goodness as shown to them. The result is that tragedy strikes at them at Kibroth-hattaavah.*

**Complaints At Taberah — vv. 1-3**

*As the difficulties of the way are experienced by the people, they give themselves to complaints. This displeases Yahweh. The future of the whole camp is endangered thereby. Accordingly, fire from Yahweh destroys some of their possessions. At the intercession of Moses, it is quenched.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And when the people complained" —** The Hebrew word translated *complained* signifies according to Young, to become *habitual complainers* (see margin). As the people left the refuge of Horeb for more difficult areas of the wilderness, they tired of the march, and began to complain. They did this day after day, until it became habitual to them. This attitude of the people, developed out of a complete lack of vision, so that they marched without purpose, "provoking Yahweh to wrath" (Deut. 9:22). Paul declares that these things "happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11). He exhorts: "Neither murmur ye, as some of

them also murmured . . ." (v. 10). We may look upon grumbling as a little sin, but it was the root cause of Israel's failure. If we permit it to become habitual, as did the Israelites, it will spring on us at all times, and spoil every endeavour. See Phil. 2:14; 4:11).

**"It displeased Yahweh; and Yahweh heard it; and His anger was kindled" —** From the natural viewpoint, the Israelites had grounds for complaint. Consider the harsh, aridness of the country (Deut. 1:19; 8:15; Jer. 2:6); the monotonous diet that had to sustain them from day to day; the tiring, dusty, daily trudging; the problems of tired, irritable children. This was enough to test the patience of any, so that before condemning Israel, we should consider ourselves. The people lacked the vision to see beyond their trials, and commenced to complain until it became habitual for them to do so. Their attitude was "evil in the ears of Yahweh" (cp. margin), and aroused His anger.

**"And the fire of Yahweh burnt among them" —** The fire of Yahweh could have been a form of lightning, or it could have been the fire of the Tabernacle. It came from Yahweh in the sense that He direct-

ed it. See a similar expression: Gen. 19:24; 1 Kings 18:38.

**“And consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp”** — The words *them that were* are in italics, indicating that the words are not found in the original. They do not help the statement before us. Eliminate them, and the statement reads that the fire consumed in, or to, the uttermost parts of the camp. It swept through the tents of the people, destroying as it did so, until a trail of blackened tents spread to the uttermost confines of the camp. The statement does not necessarily mean that people were destroyed by the fire, but rather (with the words in italics eliminated) their tents. This constituted a very serious warning emphasizing the fact that Yahweh would not tolerate this attitude on the part of the people. There had been complaining before which was not so severely punished as on this occasion (Exod. 14:11-15; 15:24-26; 16:2-4,9,20,27-28; 17:2-4), but now that the people had entered into covenant relationship with Yahweh, entailed greater responsibility to obey.

#### VERSE 2

**“And the people cried unto Moses”** — In moments of emergency they turned to their great leader for help; on other occasions, they ignored him, or lifted up their voices against him. This is a human failure not incidental to Israelites. On this occasion they cried in panic to him seeking his intercession. See Ps. 78:34-35.

**“And when Moses prayed unto Yahweh”** — This illustrates James' comment regarding prayer: “The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working” (James 5:16 — R. V.).

**“The fire was quenched”** — The Hebrew is: The fire *sunk*. It died down. The fire flared through the tents of the Israelites, and then, at the intercession of Moses, it sunk illustrating the effectiveness of prayer.

#### VERSE 3

**“And he called the name of the place Taberah”** — The word means *A burning*.

**“Because the fire of Yahweh burnt among them”** — It swept through the camp as a warning against complainers.

**Murmuring By The Mixed Multitude — vv. 4-9**

*Among those who left Egypt were a*

*number of Gentiles who threw in their lot with Israel. Now that the full rigours of the desert were felt by them they recalled the luxuries they had experienced in Egypt, they became vocal in their regrets at having to give them up. This brought discouragement to many others, so that the whole camp was reduced to weeping.*

#### VERSE 4

**“And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting”** — The mixed multitude comprised those of other nations who had thrown in their lot with Israel when they left Egypt (Exod. 12:38; Lev. 24:10). In Egypt they had not suffered as did the Israelites, and had enjoyed more of the freedom of Egypt. As the difficulties of the journey increased, they allowed their thoughts to revert to “the things they had given up”. The more they exercised their minds on that subject, the greater became their sense of loss. This is suggested by the literal Hebrew which is according to the margin, and indicates that they were dominated by a consuming desire. What they needed to do was to discipline their thoughts by setting their minds on the hope set before them; instead they dwelt on their sense of loss and so aggravated their problem. Cp. Ps. 106:14. Paul says that they “lusted after evil things” (1 Cor. 10:6). They desired flesh. Normally flesh was considered good food and lawfully could be eaten, as was also the food of Egypt described in v. 5. But what is lawful or legitimate of itself can become evil when Yahweh does not allot it to us, and yet we eagerly desire it. The things enumerated by Christ in Luke 17:27-28 in relation to the days of Noah and of Lot are things that are quite legitimate in themselves, and only became evil when they were given first priority in the lives of those who should have dedicated themselves to God. When it was otherwise the pursuit of them drove the requirements of Yahweh from their minds. At first, the manna was received joyfully, with pleasure, by the Israelites, but familiarity had bred contempt for it. Their daily diet had become monotonous and the people hankered after more exotic things. Life is like that to this day.

**“And the children of Israel also wept again”** — The Israelites became influenced by the vocal expressions of the mixed multitude as they lamented the loss of the pleasures of Egypt. This is a danger in

reduced pre-publication price. The offer was open until the end of the year for Australian readers, and until the end of February for overseas readers.

All such orders have been despatched so that if the reader has ordered a copy and has not received it, he should immediately advise us.

It is now necessary to re-adjust the price, and this has been established at \$7 or £3.50 per copy. Postage should be added to this price.

### **THE EIGHT SIGNS OF JOHN by J. Ullman**

This book treats with the miracles recorded in John's Gospel as "signs" and not only describes what took place, but also the figurative significance of the miracle as a "sign". It is a feature of John's Gospel that he records eight such miracles, and in such order as to set forth in sequence the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The book has been attractively printed on high quality paper, bound in hard covers, and illustrated. We anticipate a good demand for the book as it not only describes the events but expounds their significance. Price of the book is \$4 (£2).

### **CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR**

In this series we offer:

THE BOOK OF RUTH.....\$4 (Aust., Sth. Africa); \$4.50 (N.Z., USA); \$5 (Can.); £2.

APOCALYPSE EPITOMISED.....\$5.75 (Aust., Sth Africa); \$6 (N.Z., USA); \$6.50 (Can.); £3.

### **OTHER BOOKS**

CHRISTADELPHIAN INSTRUCTOR..60¢; Overseas 80¢  
HERALD OF THE COMING AGE (Bound — 2 volumes) \$6  
THE HOLY SPIRIT & HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS \$1; Overseas \$1.20

MAKING PRAYER POWERFUL — This book is currently out of print, but we hope to reprint shortly. Any suggestions for improvement will be appreciated.

KEY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE....\$1.50 (Aust). Elsewhere \$2. £1.

## OUR NEW VOLUME

Dear Reader,

As announced in our last number, this issue commences Volume Eight of *The Christadelphian Expositor*. This means that your subscription is again due. Unfortunately, in this age of inflation, costs of production and despatch continue to rise, and recently, *Australia Post* has announced a further steep advance in postal rates for periodicals. This will increase our costs of mailing in excess of 20%. Last year, our annual postage bill reached the record total of \$16,000 Aust., which means nearly \$20,000 in Canadian currency. Therefore, we must receive in subscriptions etc. no less than \$320.00 per week to pay for merely the postage expended in the work we are attempting!

Hence, you will appreciate that your subscription assists materially to keep us afloat as far as expenses are concerned.

We have only just been advised of the steep increase of the new postage rates, and have not been able to establish the extent to which we can absorb this additional cost. So, for the time, our subscription rates will remain as below. However, we will have to revise these prices soon. For, in addition to this extra cost, there is the problem of exchange rates between Australian currency and that of overseas. In large measure this has not been fully taken into account in our previous costing. In fact, we have been too busy in the work of the Truth to do so. But this will soon become necessary, and then our subscription rates will have to advance. Meanwhile, continue to pay as directed on the back cover.

Payment can be made in United Kingdom, South Africa, or New Zealand as shown on our back cover. Elsewhere, payment should be made to Logos

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

every age. Saints, today, can be similarly discouraged if they allow their minds to be dominated by the Gentile way of life about them. Particularly in this age of affluence, when material possessions become objects of worship. Best to fill one's minds with the blessedness of our privileged status in Christ. The Israelites forgot the servitude they suffered in Egypt, and became impatient with their lot (see Psa. 106:13-14). This led them to test Yahweh, doubting His ability to provide them with life's needs, questioning whether He could provide flesh, even though He had performed so many miracles (Psa. 78:19-20). Thus they "limited the Holy One of Israel" (see Psa. 78:41), manifesting lack of trust and belief in so doing (Psa. 78:22). So their hearts became "hardened" (Psa. 95:8) or blinded to realities (Rom. 11:7).

**"And said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?"** — See Psa. 78:18; 106:14; 1 Cor. 10:6. They tired of the manna that constituted their daily bread, and desired a change of diet. We can experience the same lack of faith, if we tire of the Word, the manna of life, desiring the luxuries of Gentilism instead of the restrictions of the things of God.

### VERSE 5

**"We remember"** — It is perhaps significant that there are six things enumerated, as being remembered, for six is the number of flesh. They are listed as fish, cucumbers, water-melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

**"The fish"** — Fish is very nourishing, and Egypt was noted for such.

**"Which we did eat in Egypt freely"** — The word is *chinnam* in Hebrew and signifies for nothing, as in Gen. 29:15. It is from a root, *chen*, denoting kindness and favour. In view of the oppressions in Egypt it was insulting to Yahweh to speak of them receiving such things from the Egyptians as a mark of kindness. Though Egypt abounded in fish and the products enumerated grew profusely so that they were easily obtainable, the people overlooked the anguish of their slavery, and the bitterness of Egyptian legislation. They exaggerated the benefits of Egypt, and their own restrictions. They felt "dried up" by their wanderings in the wilderness, and the limitations of their desert life. Their fault was in making more of their losses than of their

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

gains, so treating what Yahweh had done for them with contempt. In short, their complaint really implied that they considered that what Yahweh provided was not good enough!

**"The cucumbers"** — The Egyptian cucumbers are large, about a foot in length, and very delicious.

**"And the melons"** — These were water-melons. The Egyptian water-melons are very refreshing, and were used for food, drink and medicine.

**"And the leeks"** — Young renders this word as *grass* as in 1 Kings 18:5. It probably denoted cress which was eaten by the common people as a delicacy. Or the term could relate to lettuces or such like plants.

**"And the onions"** — The Egyptian onions are similar to ours, but are milder, so that the juices do not make the eyes to water.

**"And the garlic"** — Garlic was a very common product of Egypt.

### VERSE 6

**"But now our soul is dried away"** — The Hebrew word signifies *to be disappointed*. The people had become dissatisfied with their diet.

**"There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes"** — The Israelites had become completely tired of the monotony of the daily measure of manna, and desired a change of diet.

### VERSE 7

**"And the manna was as coriander seed, and the colour thereof, as the colour of bdellium"** — This description of manna can be compared with that given in Exod. 16:14,31. In the verse before us, the comparison with coriander seed is for size, whilst that of Exod. 16:31 is for colour. The coriander is an umbelliferous plant that grows wild in Palestine and Egypt, bearing small grey, white seeds, which have a spicy flavour and are still used like caraway seed. They are sometimes mixed with bread, giving it a sweet flavour. The word "colour" is the Hebrew word *eye*, and suggests the *appearance* of it. Reference to bdellium is found in Gen. 2:12. According to Kitto, it is an aromatic gum famous for its medicinal qualities. The word is derived from a root, *radal* signifying *to divide or separate*, and of course, the manna was divided in

equal amounts to the Israelites. The description of those verses, therefore, provides an explanation of what manna looked like, what it tasted like, and how it was prepared for cooking.

**VERSE 8**

**"And the people went about, and gathered it"** — This was done first thing in the morning (Exod. 16:14); an excellent time to give thought to the Word of God, the antitypical manna.

**"And ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and make cakes of it"** — The manna was carefully prepared for eating, as care, thought and meditation should be given to the Word of God. The Hebrew word for cakes, suggests round cakes, a reminder of life eternal.

**"And the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil"** — What is meant by "fresh oil"? The word *leshad*, according to Strong signifies *juice* or, figuratively, *vigour*, therefore, oil of vigour, calculated to strengthen. *The Interlinear English-Hebrew-Greek Bible* renders the description as the *delicacy of oil*. The *Century Bible* has a *lasad of oil*, and aligns it with an Ethiopic word for butter.

Many have sought for a natural explanation of the manna that fed the Israelites through the wilderness. They draw attention to the Tarfa tree (*tamarix gallica mannifera*) or the *Alhagi Camelorum*, trees of the desert that exude drops of gum which are sweet, sticky, dark yellow, and taste something like honey. This, some claim, is the manna of Scripture. It falls to the ground during the night and melts with the heat of the sun. It is found in the Sinaitic Peninsula. However, the "manna" so described is not sufficiently profuse as to supply food for two million Israelites. Moreover, it was obtained every day of the year for forty years whereas the gum of the Tarfa tree is only obtained during certain times of the year. And finally, if the manner were a natural phenomenon, why should the Israelites give it the title of *manna*, for the word signifies *What is it?* and was so named because they did not recognise what it was (see Exod. 16:15). There is only one satisfactory explanation of the supply of manna: it was a miracle; it constituted "bread from heaven", that is bread supplied from heaven. Any other explanations make a mockery of the

record. The manna miraculously ceased as soon as the necessity for it passed away (Josh. 5:12).

**VERSE 9**

**"And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it"** — See note Exod. 16:13-14. The manna evidently fell between the dews, for in Exodus it is described as being covered with the dew. Manna is described as "angel's food", the "corn of heaven" (Psa. 78:24-25), the "bread from heaven" (Exod. 16:4; John 6:30-31). It was supplied to the Israelites as a token of the promise made to Abraham (Psa. 105:40-42; 106:43-45), and as such pointed forward to Christ, the true manna from heaven (John 6:32-35). One of the titles of Christ is that of the Word or Logos, and the manna represented the Word of God. When a believer absorbs that word, he partakes of Christ, and though the manna had to be eaten each day (for it would not carry over to the next except on each sabbath), some of it was laid up in the Tabernacle and was miraculously preserved. Hence the manna represented that which can give eternal life. Accordingly, the Lord promised: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17), a symbol of immortality.

The manna, therefore, being "bread from heaven" was a gift of God. When the Israelites complained that their souls were "dried up" with eating it, they actually criticised the divine grace that provided it and kept them alive (cp. 1 Cor. 10:3). As they tired of the monotony of the diet He supplied, so can believers tire of the limitations imposed upon them by the requirements of the Truth.

**Moses Discouraged — vv. 10-15**

*The grumbling complaints of the people discourage even Moses, illustrating how contagious are the evils of murmuring without real cause. It is hardly surprising that Moses is disturbed at the weeping of the people, for who would not be? Worn out by the cares of leading a complaining company, he temporarily feels that the work is too much for him. Besides he knows there is no way to satisfy the demands of the people for flesh.*

**VERSE 10**

**"Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families every man in the**

door of his tent" — The last part of this statement implies that there was a pre-arranged protest, so that at a given time, the heads of the families appeared at the openings of their tents. Obviously, this was the work of some agitator, and therefore a matter of great concern to Moses.

**"And the anger of Yahweh was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased"** — In view of all that Yahweh had done for the people, He was justified in being angry. Moses, also, was displeased with the people; though not with Yahweh. That interpretation of the verse is sustained by the use of the word *also*. He took side with Yahweh against the people.

#### VERSE 11

**"And Moses said unto Yahweh, Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy servant?"** — Discouraged by the attitude of the people, and wearied by their constant murmuring, Moses added his complaint to that of the people. This attitude of Moses, together with his remonstrance, may be compared with that of Elijah recorded in 1 Kings 19:4, or with Jonah's (4:1-3). As a contrast, note the statement of Abraham justifying Yahweh (Gen. 18:23). Under normal conditions Moses was an outstanding man of faith and determination, but the attitude of the people became so wearing that he was completely discouraged.

**"And wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight that Thou layest the burden of all the people upon me?"** — The terms of Moses' complaint are completely unjustified and entirely contrary to the protest he made on a previous occasion when God was moved to anger against His people, as recorded in Exod. 32:11-13. Exasperated by the constant murmuring of the Israelites, he spoke unadvisedly unto God. It is easy to do this under circumstances such as Moses experienced. Normally, Moses manifested great patience and meekness (Num. 12:3), but the constant provocation to which he was subjected caused him to sink under the vexation of despair. His language, on this occasion, reveals how imperfect and prone to succumb under trial, are the best of saints. Quite out of character to his normal behaviour, Moses:

(1) Undervalued the help of Yahweh. He claimed that the whole burden rested on him, ignoring the help received from God (v. 11);

(2) Magnified out of proportion to their real extent the responsibilities resting on him (v. 13);

(3) Expressed doubts as to whether Yahweh had the ability to supply the wants of the people (v. 13).

Moses' weakness on this occasion was only momentary, however, and was induced by the murmuring of the people.

#### VERSE 12

**"Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child?"** — This unwarranted expression of irritability on the part of Moses illustrates the depths of despair into which he had sunk. In a way, as the leader of the people, he had begotten them unto nationhood, and had a responsibility to sustain them in faith. In his repudiation of this responsibility, even though it was induced through the anxiety and pressure to which he was subjected, Moses provided a contrast to his great antitype, Christ. Though the Lord was subjected to intense stress and anxiety, he did not wilt under them, but continued to sustain those disciples given into his care (see John 17:12). See also, the tender care of Paul to those placed in his charge (1 Thess. 2:7). Those who embrace Christ are considered as being "begotten" again in faith (Isa. 49:21; John 3:3), and it is the responsibility of those who have sown the seed to provide the aftercare so that the child of God might grow to maturity through faith.

**"Unto the land which Thou swarest unto their fathers"** — See Gen. 50:24; Exod. 13:5 etc.

#### VERSE 13

**"Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people?"** — This is an expression of doubt comparable to that uttered by the Apostles when faced with the prospect of feeding the multitude following Christ (Matt. 15:33; Mark 8:4; John 6:7,9). It should be noted that Yahweh did not call upon Moses to feed the people, but promised to do so Himself.

**"For they weep unto me saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat"** — Moses was worn out by the importunity of the people in their demands for flesh. They were not satisfied with the manna, and

requested a change of diet. How often this is the case with those who seek to follow Christ, but find the restrictions imposed on them uncomfortable to bear!

#### VERSE 14

**"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me"** — When Jethro had observed the heavy burden shouldered by Moses, he had warned him that such an unwieldy task could wear him out (Exod. 18:18). Now Moses, depressed by the continual murmuring of the people, and their unreasonable demands for flesh to satisfy their lust, carried this complaint to Yahweh. See how he later recalled the occasion towards the end of the wanderings of the people (Deut. 1:9-12). In this complaint he presented a contrast to the Lord who bore patiently with the murmuring of his people. Even at the moment of his greatest trial, when all forsook him, he did not give way, but placed his confidence in his Father of Whose presence he was ever conscious (John 16:32). Thus, great as Moses was, he was a lesser man than the Lord; he was the *servant* of Yahweh in comparison with the *Son* (Heb. 3:5-6). As for the people in their murmurings and demands for flesh, they characterised those whom Paul castigates as "their god is their belly" (Phil. 3:19).

#### VERSE 15

**"And if Thou deal thus with me"** — Feeling that the burden was beyond his power to bear, Moses became unreasonably impatient, and gave way to words of folly.

**"Kill me, I pray Thee, out of hand"** — The expression "out of hand" is from the Hebrew *harag*, "kill". The word is repeated for emphasis, and therefore is rendered *out of hand*. Moses desired the salvation of the people, but felt the burden was too much for him to bear. He would rather die than see the failure of the people. In that, he was like Elijah (1 Kings 19:4), Jonah (4:3), and Paul (Rom. 9:3). He was prepared to die for the nation. However, Yahweh is not interested in substitutionary sacrifices, but desires the sacrifice of self.

**"If I have found favour in Thy sight"** — This statement is motivated by the weakness of the flesh. It is the sort of reaction that depression of mind, and complete tiredness of body through difficult and frustrating endeavour can in-

duce. Jeremiah reacted similarly (see Jer. 9:1-2; 20:7-10). Such incidents in the lives of these men remind us that though they were great men of faith, they also were of "like passions" as ourselves. Their weaknesses can encourage us in the realisation that though we may stumble, we can be restored and revived through faith. In view of the heavy burdens laid upon Moses at the time, the frustrating and depressing complaints of the people, the feeling of hopelessness and despair that seized him because of their murmurings, Moses deemed death a favour that would provide rest from his trials. His hopes were not with the present but in the future. He kept in mind "the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:26), and therefore death appeared as a short-cut to glory. In view of his depressed state of mind, it is illuminative to consider the words of Psalm 90:1-17, penned by him in the wilderness.

**"And let me not see my wretchedness"** — As this expression stands in the A.V. it implies the total failure of Moses' efforts and hopes. However, *The Companion Bible* claims that this should be rendered as "Thy evil", it being one of the emendations supplied by the *Sopherim*, the Jewish revisers of the text. In that light, Moses pleaded for death so that he may not see the evil Yahweh would bring upon the people. According to other readings, the expression can be rendered, "their wretchedness" or evil; that is, the evils experienced by the people. Moses pleaded that he may be saved from seeing further evils suffered by the people. Any one of these readings is appropriate to the context. Yahweh subjected the people to trial, and therefore it was "His evil" that was brought upon them; they themselves were deserving of the discipline to which they were subjected because of "their evil" ways; and Moses was personally made wretched by the lack of faith of the people, and so experienced "his evil".

#### Seventy Elders Appointed To Assist Moses — vv. 16-17

*Yahweh instructs Moses how to relieve the problem resting so heavily upon him. Like many leaders, Moses is carrying too much of a load and is advised to delegate some of his work to others. A committee of seventy elders is appointed to assist him.*



## VERSE 16

**“And Yahweh said unto Moses”** — Yahweh viewed Moses’ state with compassion, and advised him how it could be relieved.

**“Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel whom thou knowest to be elders of the people”** — Moses was told to select seventy elders of the people who were known by him to be leaders of integrity, respected by the people. A similar choice had been made earlier at the urging of Jethro (Exod. 18:13-25), and the elders then selected were given administrative duties to carry out. Now their labours were to be extended and their appointment given divine endorsement. Moreover, they were to be set to educate the people in spiritual matters. Accordingly they were to publicly stand with Moses, as representing the spiritual leadership of the nation, and by accepting the responsibilities imposed on them, alleviate the emotional strain on their leader.

In addition to the seventy, the people were invited to appoint subordinate rulers (Deut. 1:13-18) to act as judges over varying numbers of Israelites, but answerable to Moses (Deut. 1:17). The general organisation, therefore, anticipated that subsequently set up by Christ. Moses’ organisation consisted of himself as chief, the twelve princes who led the tribes, the seventy elders, and numerous lesser judges. Christ established a similar organisation: himself as chief; the twelve apostles; the seventy subsequently appointed (Luke 10:1); and lesser men of authority such as Timothy and Titus. Christ’s Kingdom will have a similar organisation. He will be chief; the twelve apostles will reign with him over a restored and regenerated Israel (Matt. 19:28); the seventy may well represent those who will be made chief over the nations, for seventy is the number of Gentile nations (Gen. 10); and there will be the general order of saints exercising authority over various cities (Luke 19:17-19), and ruling as the King-priests of the age to come (Rev. 5:9-10). Seventy is a symbolic number. It is a combination of seven, the number representing an oath or covenant, multiplied by ten which denotes a large unspecified number. It can relate to the number of the elect (“a great multitude which no man can number” — Rev. 7:9), or to the great multitude of humanity separated into the nations of the earth,

and constituted the mortal subjects in the Age to come.

**“And the officers over them”** — These were men who had proved themselves to be of sufficient ability to govern various sections of the people as described in Deut. 1:15-16.

**“And bring them unto the Tabernacle of the congregation that they may stand there with thee”** — This ceremony was for their public and official endorsement. The seventy elders and the subordinate officials had been gradually brought to the fore during the oppression in Egypt, and the wandering through the wilderness (See Exod. 5:6,10,14,15,19; 24:1,9), and therefore were “known” of Moses as this verse required (see Deut. 1:15). Their status and authority, however, were now to be given divine endorsement, confirming their earlier appointment (Exod. 18:13-24). They were to depute for Moses, and therefore were required to stand with him. The word rendered “elders” is from *zagen* and denotes those of age, and therefore of experience. The word for “officers” is *shoter* and signifies a writer or recorder. Both words imply men of ability able to assist Moses in his onerous task. The Greek word for *shoter* as rendered in the *LXX* is *grammateus* or “scribe”. Accordingly, the officers were scribes or secretaries who exercised their ability in subordinate positions under the elders. Their official presentation with Moses before the Tabernacle endorsed their standing before the people.

## VERSE 17

**“And I will come down and talk with thee there”** — Yahweh doubtless did this through “the angel of His presence” (Isa. 63:9). In singling out Moses to speak with him intimately before the people, He testified to his superiority in status over the elders and officers (see Deut. 34:10). See a similar principle manifested through Christ (John 12:49; 14:10).

**“And I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them”** — The word “take” is *'atsal*, to separate or withdraw (see *Strong* and *Rotherham*). It should be clearly noted that the record does not say that Yahweh would take away from Moses portion of the Spirit given him, but that He would “take of the spirit” which he already had received, and would put it upon the others. Therefore, Yahweh not only endorsed the

status of Moses, but demonstrated that he was the channel through whom the Spirit was given to others. In this, too, Moses typified Christ. See Psa. 68:18; Eph. 4:7-8.

By this bestowal of His Spirit, Yahweh endorsed the authority of those so appointed, thus confirming the provisional arrangement made earlier (see Exod. 18:17; 24:9).

**“And they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone”** — This sharing of labour with Moses by the appointed elders and officers, foreshadowed the burden shared by the Apostles with Christ (see 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 11:28-29), and which in lesser measure should be assumed by all those who hope to share Christ's glory in the Age to come (Gal. 6:2). The sharing of one another's burdens demonstrates true fellowship in action.

#### The People Are Promised Flesh — vv. 18-23

*Yahweh now attends to the problem of the people's wants. He calls upon them to sanctify themselves, and so fit themselves to receive His blessing. They are near the point of rebellion when He promises that they will receive meat in abundance until they come to loathe it. They look upon their wants as needs; they are to learn that what they consider a blessing is really a plague (Psa. 106:15). Moses is astonished at the angel's answer and finds it unbelievable that in the wilderness flesh can be provided in such abundance.*

#### VERSE 18

**“And thou shalt say to the people, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow, and ye shall eat flesh”** — For the significance of the term “sanctify” see the note on Exod. 19:10. The people were required to prepare themselves morally and physically to receive the divine blessing. This is a prerequisite to the acceptance of Yahweh's help at any time.

**“For ye have wept in the ears of Yahweh, saying, Who shall give us flesh to eat?”** — The Israelites, in their lack of faith, had limited Yahweh's power to provide, and therefore He was prepared to gratify their desire in order to demonstrate His ability to accomplish that which is considered impossible. This would show that the utmost confidence can be placed in His providence. See Psa. 78:20, 21,41; 106:13-15; 1 Cor. 10:1-11.

**“For it was well with us in Egypt”** — This was the unworthy basis of their complaint. They forgot the trials of Egypt, the bitterness of their bondage, and the sorrow of their state; they overlooked the sting of the lash, the death sentence issued against their young, and the agonising cries that ascended to heaven. Trials that appear difficult when they are to be faced, soon fade with time and under new circumstances, and the lessons they are designed to convey are forgotten. Then lesser difficulties appear greater by contrast. That was the case with the Israelites. Their complaints were not only unwarranted but completely false. They were the expressions of base ingratitude. Cp. v. 5 with Exod. 1:14-22.

**“Therefore Yahweh will give you flesh, and ye shall eat”** — They would receive that for which they craved: flesh to eat.

#### VERSE 19

**“Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, or twenty days”** — On the previous occasion they had received flesh for one day (Exod. 16:13).

#### VERSE 20

**“But even for a whole month”** — A month marked off a specific epoch of time in the Hebrew calendar (See margin). Meanwhile, the progress of the Israelites towards the Promised Land apparently was delayed for a month whilst they stayed at this place to eat flesh!

**“Until it come out at your nostrils, and it be loathsome unto you”** — The complainants would be given flesh until they thoroughly tired of it. The gratification of the lust of the flesh has that reaction. A person soon tires of it. There is nothing sustaining in the temporary satisfaction it provides. The Israelites soon learned that lesson. The Psalmist declared: “They did eat, and were well filled for He gave them that they lusted after”. The word “lusted” signifies *pleasure, desire, satisfaction*. Again: “He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul” (Psa. 106:15). They had complained of “leanness” when craving flesh, but the granting of their desire brought no lasting satisfaction, but instead “the graves of lust” (Num. 11:24).

**“Because ye have despised Yahweh which is among you”** — This statement expressed the truth of the matter: they

despised Yahweh. The word signifies *to spurn, to reject*, and is so rendered in the R.V. (see Psa. 78:18-19,22,36-37,41). Their action was a rejection of the way of Truth in favour of a desire for variation in food. They forgot Yahweh Who was among them, figuratively dwelling in the Tabernacle, and therefore they refused to honour Him. Let us beware lest we manifest a lack of faith in those things we permit (see Rom. 14:22).

**“And have wept before Him, saying, Why came us forth out of Egypt”** — The Israelites lacked the faith to clearly discern “the joy set before them” (Heb. 12:1). And “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). Faith is “a confident anticipation of things hoped for” (Heb. 1:1 — J. Thomas translation), and that the people lacked. Paul sums up the matter by stating, “They could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb. 3:4). The word “unbelief” is *apistia* in the Greek and signifies “no faith”. Without faith difficulties assume insuperable proportions; with faith every mountain of trouble can be overcome (Mark 11:23). John taught: “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). Because the Israelites lacked that kind of faith, victory for them was turned into defeat. Their faithlessness limited their vision. They failed to comprehend the purpose of their call out of Egypt. It was to glorify Yahweh, not to satisfy flesh (Jer. 13:11; Deut. 28:9-10), though if they had proved obedient, they would have received more than heart could desire (Prov. 3:15). But they were too shortsighted in regard to the divine purpose in them to comprehend that (cp. 2 Pet. 1:8-9). The fundamental purpose of the Gospel likewise is a call to glorify the name of Yahweh (Acts 15:14). A person accepting Christ is “bought with a price” and therefore is not his own (1 Cor. 7:23). As purchased by God he should aim to “glorify Him” in body and spirit (1 Cor. 6:20). But Israel asked, “Why came us forth out of Egypt”? In so questioning the purpose of Yahweh, they rejected the basic purpose of their call, and so justified the punishment that was meted out to them. These things, wrote Paul, “happened unto them for examples; and they are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11). We are wise to heed the type and exhortation.

#### VERSE 21

**“And Moses said, The people, among**

**whome I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and Thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month”** — Previously flesh had been given them for a day (Exod. 16:12-13), now it is promised for a month: thirty times more the miracle witnessed then! In view of the magnitude of what was now promised, Moses without doubting the ability of Yahweh to perform it, wonders at its extent and questions whether he has heard aright. See a similar reaction on the part of the Apostles (Matt. 14:15). For references to this incident, see Psa. 78:26-28; 105:40.

#### VERSE 22

**“Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them?”** — During the wilderness wanderings, the Israelites had to show restraint in the way they gratified their desires for flesh. They had to await entrance into the land before they could do so to the full (cp. Deut. 12:14-16). Even the sacrificing of animals was curtailed in the wilderness (cp. Lev. 17:3-4; Deut. 12:8-11). For example, though the Law required a leper to sacrifice for his cleansing, nothing is mentioned of such being offered for Miriam (Num. 12:14), nor for lepers generally (cp. Num. 5:2).

**“Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them?”** — To Moses, the miracle promised was beyond the bounds of normal possibility. The fact that he mentioned the sea in this context suggests that the Israelites were in its proximity, thus providing a further proof in support of the traditional route of the wanderings. They were not far from the Gulf of Aqaba.

#### VERSE 23

**“And Yahweh said unto Moses, Is Yahweh’s hand waxed short?”** — Israel failed because they “limited” the power of the Holy One (Psa. 78:41). Yahweh has the ability to fulfil His purpose irrespective of the problems that face its accomplishment. His question to Moses is repeated by Isaiah in regard to the salvation of Israel, and in view of the mighty problems involved in accomplishing that purpose (Isa. 59:1-2). It is also asked in regard to the important and difficult work of personal redemption (Isa. 50:2). But the manner in which the questions are posed provide their own answer. The redemption of individuals, and the redemption of Israel as a nation pose tremendous

problems, greater than any miracle, for they involve the resurrection from the dead. But Yahweh's power is adequate to the fulfilment of His purpose. See Luke 1:37; Matt. 19:26.

**"Thou shalt see now whether My word shall come to pass unto thee, or not"** — Both Moses and Israel were to witness the strength of Yahweh's arm to accomplish His purpose, even to redeem. This manifestation of power would demonstrate that He must not be measured by ordinary standards of flesh. He is not a man that He should repent. See Num. 23:19; Ezek. 12:25; 24:14.

**The Spirit Given To The Elders — vv. 24-30**

*Yahweh's spirit is placed upon the seventy, so endorsing their appointment. However, two of the seventy, having failed to fulfil the injunction of Moses to come before the Tabernacle prophesied as the others. The matter is reported to Moses and arouses the jealousy of Joshua for his leader. He calls on Moses to stop them on the grounds that it may challenge his authority and status. However Moses refuses to be moved by envy and declares that his desire is that all might prophesy.*

**VERSE 24**

**"And Moses went out, and told the people the words of Yahweh"** — Evident-

ly he entered the Most Holy to commune with Yahweh as he was invited to do on such occasions (see Num. 7:89). Now he returned to report the result of his communications to the people.

**"And gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people"** — Seventy elders had been appointed previously (Exod. 18:24), and now their position is re-affirmed by Yahweh. For the circumstances as to how this was done, see v. 16; Deut. 1:9-17.

**"And set them round about the tabernacle"** — They surrounded the Tabernacle thus facing all the tribes unto whom they were to minister.

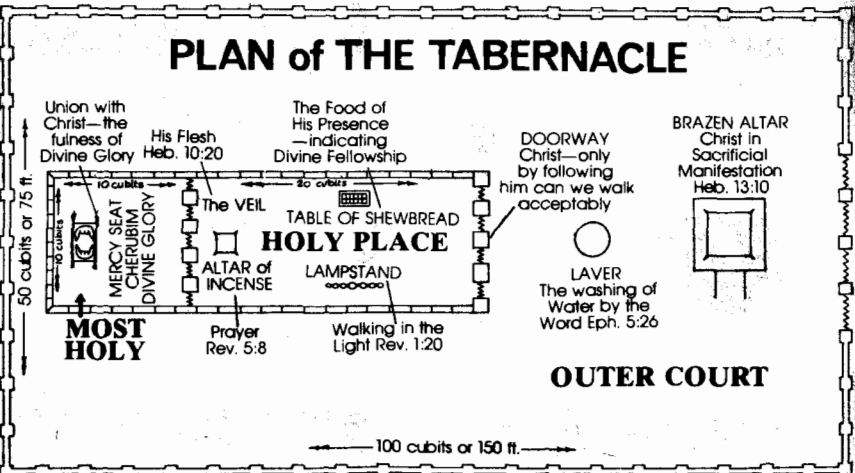
**VERSE 25**

**"And Yahweh came down in a cloud"** — Cp. with v. 17; Num. 12:5. The Hebrew includes the definite article "the cloud", suggesting that the cloud referred to was that of the Tabernacle. The theophany of divine glory appeared in the cloud over the Tabernacle. It probably shone forth in brilliant luminosity.

**"And spake unto him"** — The voice of the angel speaking on behalf of Yahweh would audibly confirm the arrangements made.

**"And took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders"** — The record does not say that the Spirit

**PLAN of the TABERNACLE**



The seventy elders were strategically placed around the Tabernacle facing the twelve tribes.

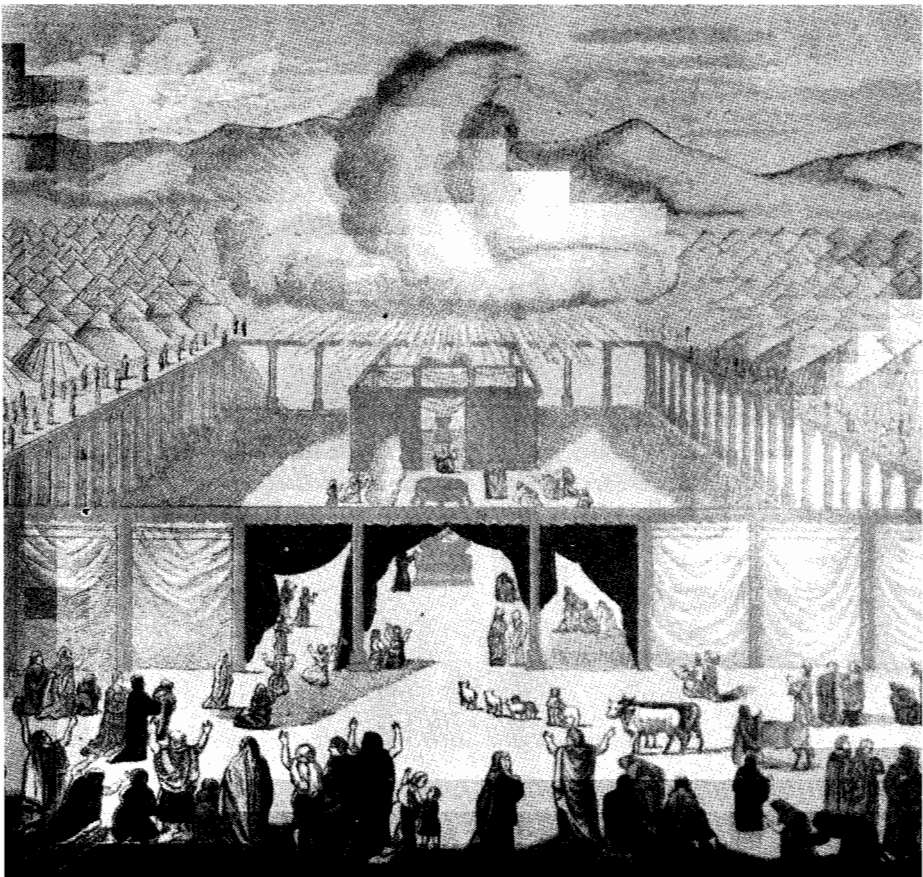
## CHAPTER ELEVEN

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

was taken "from Moses" to distribute among the seventy, but rather that they were granted a measure of the spirit already given him. There was no diminishing of Moses' glory, or the Spirit possessed by him, but an extension of the power granted him to include the seventy. This was similar to the bestowal of the Holy Spirit first upon the Apostles, and then in lesser measure upon other followers of the Lord.

**"And it came to pass when the spirit rested upon them they prophesied"** — To "prophesy" is not necessarily to predict the future, but to speak in the name of Yahweh to "edification and comfort" (1

Cor. 14:3). The Hebrew *naba'*, "to prophesy" signifies "to cause to bubble up", hence to pour forth words abundantly as is done by those who speak with ardour, enthusiasm, or divine elation of mind. Such "prophesying" included singing and praising (1 Sam. 10:11; 19:20; 1 Chron. 25:2-3). To "prophesy" also described one so under the impulse or influence of something external to himself, as to be beyond his power to control. He therefore acted as if possessed, or as not responsible for what he said or did (1 Sam. 18:10; 2 Kings 9:11; Jer. 29:26). In the N.T. it implies speaking in a miraculous way as with tongues, and so giving evi-



The cloud above the Tabernacle was the token of Yahweh's presence among the people. At times of particular manifestation of glory or anger it glowed with light (Num. 14:10).

dence of Yahweh's appointment to authority. When the Spirit came upon the Seventy they found the ability to exhort and strengthen the people spiritually. They probably warned them against the frame of mind into which they had fallen, and urged upon them to seek the comfort of God. But, if so, it was to no avail (vv. 33). These seventy men did this but once, and then the Spirit was withdrawn. Their authority had been established by this manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

**"And did not cease"** — This rendition is incorrect. The Hebrew word *yacaph* signifies "to add to" or "repeat". The RV renders, "and did so no more". The Holy Spirit was given as a sign of authority, and then was withdrawn, or ceased. This was a foreshadowing of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in Apostolic times. It was given as a sign of authority, to reveal the purpose of Yahweh, and then was withdrawn as predicted by Paul (1 Cor. 13:10).

The *Hebrew Greek English Interlinear* renders: "and not did they continue". It was a once-only manifestation of divine power.

#### VERSE 26

**"But there remained two of the men in the camp"** — No information is given as to the identity of these two men. Whoever they were, for some reason not stated, they did not, or could not, comply with the request of Moses to assemble at the Tabernacle. This does not mean that they were wantonly rebellious, but that they were accounted unclean at the time, and could not appear. See other examples of this in 1 Sam. 20:26; Jer. 36:5.

**"The name of the one was Eldad"** — *El is love*.

**"And the name of the other was Medad"** — His name denotes *affectionate love in action*. The fact that their names are recorded, and that they are exonerated by Moses from any deliberate disobedience, would suggest that they had a love of God which was manifested in action, as their names indicate. Moses' attitude towards them strongly suggest this.

**"And the spirit rested upon them"** — This was divine endorsement of their appointment.

**"And they were of those that were written"** — Evidently the names of all those appointed were recorded in writing.

**"But went not out into the tabernacle"** — The cause of their action is not given, but may well have been legitimate, as noted above.

**"And they prophesied in the camp"** — The Spirit moved them to do this. To prophesy is the greatest of the spirit gifts according to Paul (1 Cor. 14:3).

#### VERSE 27

**"And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp"** — The Hebrew *ha-na'ar* has the definite article before it: "the young man". Who was the young man? We are not told. Some suppose him to be Gershom, the son of Moses. Perhaps it was one chosen to represent the firstborn sons who had recently been superceded by the Levites, and therefore, may have taken exception to others being appointed to positions of authority whilst they were overlooked. They may have reported the incident to Moses hoping that he may restrain them.

#### VERSE 28

**"And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of the young men"** — The term "young men" in this verse is from the Hebrew *bechurim*, from a root signifying to *select*, and implying a group of selected men who were deputed important duties. Joshua was of their number, but stood in a special relationship to Moses as his minister, as the word *servant* signifies (see Exod. 24:13).

**"Answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them"** — Joshua took exception to these two officers prophesying in the absence of Moses, as he felt that this lessened the status of his beloved leader. He felt they either should have stood by him, and so manifested their subordinate position, or remained silent. Joshua's loyalty for Moses exhibited itself in jealousy lest his leader's authority and glory be dimmed. In this he was like John who called upon the Lord to forbid the use of his name to those who followed not with the Apostles (Mark 9:38; Luke 9:49).

#### VERSE 29

**"And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all Yahweh's people were prophets, and that Yahweh would put His spirit upon them"** — The importance of the gift of prophecy was also testified by Paul when he used

similar words to those of Moses: "I would that ye all . . . prophesied", for "he that prophesieth edifieth the Ecclesia" (1 Cor. 14:4-5). Moses' reaction to the loyal and warm jealousy of Joshua revealed the outstanding greatness of his character. He loved his people more than he loved himself. Even his mistakes stemmed from this great love. When a man is really great and good he longs that all should be as he is, and even better. Moses was such a man as that.

## VERSE 30

"And Moses gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Israel" — The camp was a more convenient place to minister to the people, and they dispersed among them for that purpose.

## Flesh Supplied — vv. 31-32

*The people having demanded meat; Yahweh now supplies an abundance of it. A strong wind drives tired birds over the camp in a way that enables the people to*

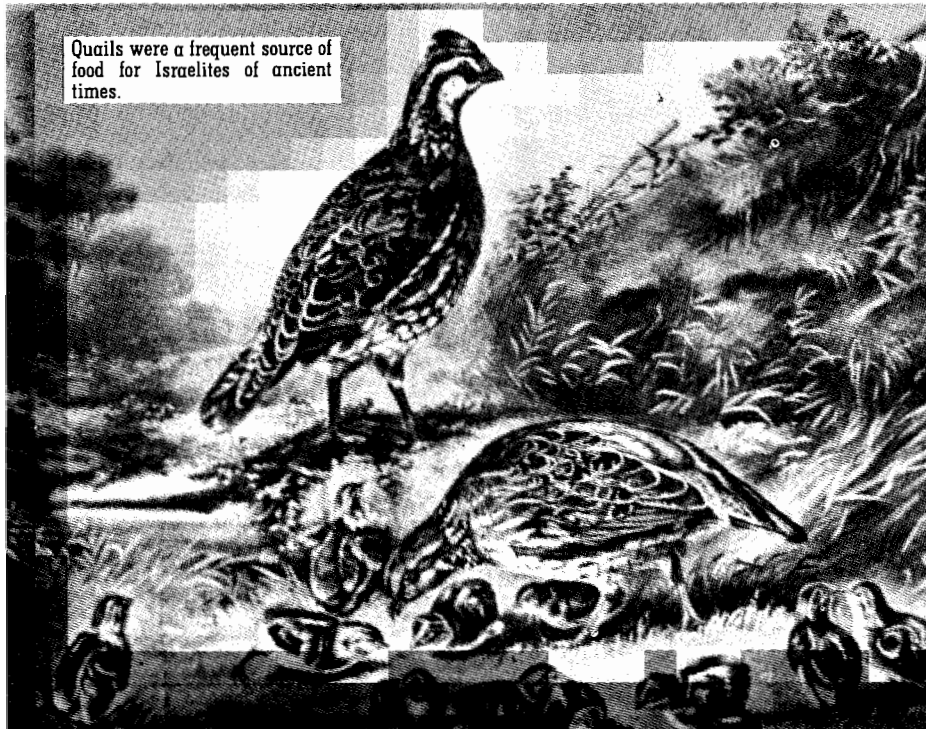
*capture them easily, in great quantities.*

## VERSE 31

"And there went forth a wind from Yahweh" — An east wind sprang up, and then moved around to the south (Psa. 78:26-28). This drove the birds out of their course and tired them so that they flew low over the camp of Israel.

"And brought quails from the sea" — The Hebrew word for the birds is *salvim* which signifies *sluggish*. This is a characteristic of quails. In the spring they move north from Africa, and follow the coast of the Red Sea until they come to its bifurcation by the Sinaitic Peninsula which they cross at its narrow part (see *Natural History of the Bible*, Tristram). They fly from Africa during March, April and return to the south in September. They only fly short distances at a time, thus illustrating the significance of their name. Being slow, they are easily netted. However, it is claimed that over-eating can cause sickness. The *Century Bible*

Quails were a frequent source of food for Israelites of ancient times.



states: "It is said that eating to excess causes more than ordinary indigestion". All of which illustrates the story now before us.

**"And let them fall by the camp"** — The word "fall" is from the Hebrew *natash* which signifies *to smite* (as though beating out), *to pound*. The statement would be clearer if rendered *threw them down on the camp, or dispersed them by the camp*. The wind not only drove the birds out of their normal course, but so buffeted them as to tire them, driving them low over the camp.

**"As it were a day's journey on this side and as it were day's journey on the other side, round about the camp"** — A day's journey is rated about thirty miles (see *The Companion Bible*), whilst the camp itself would occupy about nine square miles. The statement therefore means that the tired quails were beaten by the wind and driven low for some miles above and around the camp of the Israelites.

**"And as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth"** — Young renders this statement "two cubits *from off the ground* . . ." The RV has *above the ground*. The quail flew low about 3 feet from the ground so that they were caught with ease.

#### VERSE 32

**"And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day"** — They did this as successive flocks of birds came flying low over the camp. They worked hard enough for the meat that perishes (John 6:27), whereas a spiritually clear-sighted person will give first priority to that which does not perish with the eating.

**"And they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers"** — According to *The Companion Bible*, an homer is about 8 bushels, so that they gathered in a tremendous harvest. The homer (Heb. *heap*) contained ten ephahs (Ezek. 45:11), and one ephah, as representative of the whole, was the amount paid back in sacrifice (see Exod. 16:36). According to Fuerst, originally the homer represented an ass load (see Unger). That being the case, the Israelites gathered more than they could carry. They laboured hard for this, working day and night to do so. They were not so active in labouring for the food that leads to life eternal. Evidently, Yahweh looked with

displeasure at their inordinate activity to gather the flesh, their subsequent greed and lack of appreciation. How important it is for true Israelites to place their priorities in correct perspective!

**"And they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp"** — They dried them in the hot sun of the desert so as to preserve the meat. But all they did was "for themselves."

#### The Graves Of The Greedy — vv. 33-35

*Some of the Israelites gorging themselves on the raw meat are mortally smitten by plague. In consequence of this, the place was called Graves-of-Greed.*

#### VERSE 33

**"And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed"** — Evidently, the greed of some for flesh was so great, they could not wait to prepare the food properly, nor pause to give thanks to Yahweh for it. Greedily they seized the food and stuffed it in their mouths in order to satisfy their lust.

**"The wrath of Yahweh was kindled against the people, and Yahweh smote the people with a very great plague"** — The word "kindled" is rendered *glowed* by the Interlinear *Hebrew English Bible*. It suggests that in some way there was a visible manifestation of anger; perhaps by the cloud becoming exceedingly luminous. And this was followed by plague. The word in this place is *makkeh*, and is derived from a root signifying *to strike*. What form this took is not revealed, but its results were apparent, for many died, and the people had to turn from eating to burying. They had a very vivid illustration of the truth of Paul's warning: "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). There is a need for "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) to learn to use the things of "this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. 7:31). The greedy Israelites sought only to gratify their lust, and suffered accordingly, as will all who do likewise.

#### VERSE 34

**"And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah"** — The name signifies *The Graves of the Greedy*. The *Amplified O.T.* renders it as *Graves of Sensuous Desire*. The greedy among the people suffered a grievous and mortal



sickness which caused the place to become gradually dotted with graves during their month's sojourn. The place has been tentatively identified with Ruweis el-Ebeirig, close to Taberah, a few miles north-east of Mt. Sinai (Grollenberg). According to *The Century Bible*, Hazeroth may be Ain Khudra a few miles further on.

**"Because they buried the people that lusted"** — It is important to recognise that the sin for which the people were punished was more serious than the sin of complaining, or the sin of gluttony. The real sin was the sin of unbelief, of lack of faith (see Psa. 78:22). The people "despised Yahweh" as Moses was told (Num. 11:20), and that resulted in their greed and the consequent plague. Their lack of faith resulted in no less than ten sins recorded in this chapter. They are: (1) Complaining — vv. 1,18-20; (2) Lusting for flesh — v. 4; (3) Weeping and mourning in bitterness against Yahweh — vv. 4,10,18,20; (4) Falsely contrasting the luxury of Egypt with their present hardships — v. 5; (5) Expressing regret at leaving Egypt — v. 20; (6) Expressing dissatisfaction with the provision of Yahweh — vv. 6, 18; (7) Provoking Yahweh to anger — vv. 1,10; (8) Provoking Moses to speak unadvisedly — vv. 10-15; (9) Manifesting unbelief in Yahweh's ability to provide — vv. 4, 18; (10) Despising Yahweh — v. 20.

The people "despised Yahweh" in that they did not truly believe His promises or heed His warnings. They loved the creature comforts of Egypt more than the hope of the future. They valued their own judgment and their own perspective of the situation more than the discipline and trials to which Yahweh would subject them for their own benefit, and to train them for the Promised Land.

#### VERSE 35

**"And the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattavah unto Hazeroth"** — Hazeroth has been identified with Ain el-Khudra, or Wady Huderah as it is rendered by A. P. Stanley in his book *Sinai and Palestine*. Concerning this site he wrote as follows:

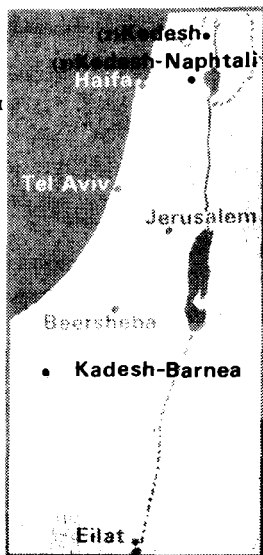
"In connection with this incident of the 'quails', may be mentioned the fact, that on the evening and the morning of our encampment, immediately before reaching the Wady Huderah, the sky was literally darkened by the flight of innum-

able birds, which proved to be the same large red-legged cranes, three feet high, with black and white wings, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, which we had seen in like numbers at the First Cataract of the Nile. It is remarkable that a similar flight was seen by Schubert near the very same spot. That any large flights of birds should be seen in those parts at any rate illustrates the scripture narrative." (p. 82).

**"And abode at Hazeroth"** — In Deut. 1:1 it would appear that Hazeroth was close to Dizabab which is identified with modern Di Zahar on the Gulf of Elath. Ain el-Khudra, mentioned above, is in a valley that meanders around towards the area of Dizabab. It is an impressive site in the Sinaitic Peninsula. At this point, a narrow valley widens out into a broad plain from out of the sandy wastes of which rise isolated granite mountains. On a nearby cliff-face are ancient inscriptions of travellers who gathered or camped at the site, and left their mark in an appropriate place. And adjacent to it is a copious spring of water from which it derives its name of Ain Khudra.

The Hebrew name Hazeroth signifies *enclosures*, but being in the feminine gender it could denote *The place where She was Separated* from a root denoting *enclosure* or *separated place*. The people "abode" here, pausing in their journey

It was from Kadesh-Barnea that the spies were sent forth to search the land. Afterwards it became a centre for the wandering Israelites, the first generation of which were doomed to perish in the wilderness.



onwards. Why? Because of the sin of Miriam which resulted in her dwelling in a "separate place" for seven days (Num. 12:14), and so delaying the progress of the tribes. Therefore, early in the march

from Sinai, problems were encountered that caused delays and foreshadowed the further frustrations that finally resulted in the sad rejection and condemnation of that generation.

## THE TEN GREAT PLAGUES OF THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

In addition to the ten plagues poured out upon the Egyptians, the narrative in Numbers records ten plagues that were poured out upon the Israelites (an additional plague is mentioned in Exod. 32:35).

1. Fire: for grumbling — the misuse of the tongue (Num. 11:1-3).
2. Sickness: because of a planned revolt stimulated by lust for Egypt, excited by the tongue (Num. 11:4-35).
3. Leprosy: Misuse of the tongue caused through jealousy (Num. 12:1-16).
4. Plague: rebellion stimulated by the tongue (Num. 13:31-14:37).
5. Earthquake: usurpation of authority excited by the tongue (Num. 16:1-3; 29-33).
6. Overthrown in the wilderness: provocation incited by the tongue (Num. 14:11-35).
7. Fire: evil example stimulated by the tongue (Num. 16:34-35)
8. Divine wrath and plague: evil accusation by the tongue (Num. 16:41-49).
9. Fiery serpents, complaining — stimulated by the tongue (Num. 21:5-9).
10. Slaughter and plague: idolatry and adultery — excited by the tongue (Num. 25:5-9).

In view of the evil influence of the tongue, compare the exhortation of James 1:26; 3:5-8; 1 Peter 3:10.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

MIRIAM AND AARON MURMUR  
AGAINST MOSES

*Leadership of a movement is never tested more severely than when dissension arises from close associations or relatives. Moses now has to face that test. Miriam and Aaron challenge him on the grounds of his marriage and status. They claim equal authority with him.*

**Dissension Among The Leaders — vv. 1-3**

*Nothing is more depressing nor contagious than murmuring. In the case of the Israelites it commences with but a few complaints, but it spreads throughout the camp until even Miriam and Aaron are caught up with the general state of dissatisfaction. They now raise their voices against Moses.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Miriam”** — Her name can signify *Rebellion*, and if so she now lived up to it. The fact that her name is placed before that of Aaron suggests that she initiated the complaint against Moses. This is also indicated by her punishment which was more severe than that of Aaron's. Perhaps she imagined that her own position among the Israelitish women was being challenged by Moses' wife. Certainly, the fact that she, a woman, as well as Moses' sister, initiated the criticism against Moses was most reprehensible. She should have been silent, as Paul commands (1 Cor. 14:28,34; 1 Tim. 2:11-12).

**“And Aaron”** — He, too, as High Priest should have set an example for the rest of Israel. His attitude brought his position into disrepute.

**“Spake against Moses”** — On no less than ten occasions was Moses subjected to critical murmuring against his leadership.

**“Because of the Ethiopian woman he had married”** — The Hebrew is “the Cushite woman.” However, “Cushite”, in this context, may be derived from *Kushu*, or Cushan, a tribe associated with

Midian (Heb. 3:7), and therefore could have related to Zipporah. There are three areas in the Bible related to the Cushites. Originally, they were located by the Euphrates (Gen. 2:13). They subsequently migrated south towards the area of Midian (Hab. 3:7), so that the record refers to “the Arabians that were near the Ethiopians” (2 Chron. 21:16). They then continued further south to occupy the territory today known as the Sudan (Isa. 18:1; 45:14; Zeph. 3:10). Finally they occupied the area known today as Ethiopia, adjacent to the Sudan. The “Ethiopian woman”, therefore, could have been Zipporah.

**“For he had married an Ethiopian woman”** — From the account of Exod. 4:24-25 it is obvious that Zipporah submitted to the requirements of the Truth, whatever her original attitude may have been. However, Miriam may have criticised her neglect to circumcise her son as an excuse to bring up an occasion against her brother, though this is mere conjecture.

**VERSE 2**

**“And they said, Hath Yahweh indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?”** — This is the second complaint against Moses, and doubtless the main one as far as Miriam and Aaron were concerned. They were motivated by jealousy, and claimed equal status with Moses. It was true that Yahweh had used them in communing with the people (Exod. 4:15; 7:1-2; 15:20; Mic. 6:4). Miriam was a prophetess (Exod. 15:20-21), and Aaron, was the High Priest.

Nevertheless, both should have been subordinate to Moses. However, the general discontent throughout the camp affected even these two, so that they raised their voices in criticism of Moses, though in so doing they acted entirely out of character to their normal behaviour. Murmuring and strife can do that, and defeat the work of Yahweh. Accordingly, Paul exhorted: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings; *that ye may be the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world*" (Phil. 2:14-15). For the moment, swayed by the general spate of murmuring, the leadership of the nation became divided and antagonistic. In their attitude, Miriam and Aaron had succumbed to their environment. See the warning of Prov. 13:10; Rom. 12:3,10; 1 Pet. 5:5.

"**And Yahweh heard it**" — There is an ominous note about this statement of fact; it usually signifies that He takes heed in order to act. See Num. 11:1.

#### VERSE 3

"**Now the man Moses was very meek**" — Meekness should never be confused with weakness. Moses, like Christ (see Matt. 11:29; 21:5) was meek, but he was not weak. In fact meekness is a sign of strength, for it shows that the one concerned has the strength to conquer self. Meekness denotes the recognition of one's need and dependence upon Yahweh. Concerning the meek, the Scriptures teach:

- Yahweh will guide and teach them (Psa. 25:40; • He will bring to them the Gospel (Isa. 61:1); • He cares for them so as to appeal to them (Zeph. 2:3); His saints are expected to receive the Truth in meekness (Jas. 1:21; 3:13), and to expound it in like fashion (1 Pet. 3:15; Tit. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:25; Eph. 4:2; Gal. 6:11; 2 Cor. 10:1; 1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:1).

The meek are promised a rich reward in the future:

- Yahweh will beautify them with salvation (Psa. 76:9; 149:4); • elevate them (Psa. 147:4); • fully satisfy them (Psa. 22:26; Isa. 29:19); • cause them to inherit the earth (Psa. 37:11; Matt. 5:5); • to triumph in it (Psa. 45:4); • and enable them to judge the nations with equity (Isa. 11:4; ct. Amos 2:7).

Meekness is not inconsistent with anger. Both Moses (Lev. 10:16) and Christ (Mark 3:5) were moved with anger

at appropriate times. Paul exhorts: "Be ye angry and sin not" (Eph. 4:26), and he taught that there is a righteous anger (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

"**Above all the men which were upon the face of the earth**" — This is a wonderful testimony to the character of that great man. The Lord Jesus also was meek; and as such submitted to many indignities, leaving it to Yahweh to justify him, as He promised to do for all such (Psa. 76:9; Rom. 12:19).

#### The Vindication Of Moses — vv. 4-9

*Yahweh interrupts the accusations levelled against Moses by ordering the three to come to the Tabernacle where He publicly vindicates Moses.*

#### VERSE 4

"**And Yahweh spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam**" — The Hebrew word rendered "suddenly" also denotes unexpectedly. Yahweh preemptorily interrupted the argument to vindicate Moses.

"**Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation**" — By this means they were brought publicly before all Israel, for evidently the dispute had become general knowledge.

"**And they three came out**" — It must have been a most dramatic moment when they were isolated in front of the Tabernacle in the sight of the representatives of the people. It must have been particularly embarrassing for Aaron.

#### VERSE 5

"**And Yahweh came down in the pillar of the cloud**" — See also Num. 11:25.

"**And stood in the door of the tabernacle**" — The reference is to Yahweh in manifestation, the angel of His presence. See Gen. 18:22; Exod. 23:20-21; Isa. 63:9. Stephen declared that Moses received his instruction through Angelic ministration. In that regard, one angel exercised greater authority than others. He represented Yahweh in His authority, and so bore His name.

"**And called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth**" — This brought these two into even greater prominence before the whole congregation.

#### VERSE 6

"**And he said, Hear now my words**" — Though this speech was directed particu-

larly to Aaron and Miriam it was designed for all Israel to hear.

"If there be a prophet among you, I Yahweh will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" — The Hebrew has "your prophet" (See Rotherham). Any claiming to be a prophet, or any whom the people may consider or appoint as such, must be able to justify his position or appointment by divinely given visions or dreams. Whether these visions or dreams could be established as coming from Yahweh could be determined by submitting the so-called prophet to the appointed "test". See Deut. 18:20-21. That was the test imposed by Jeremiah upon the false prophet Hananiah (Jer. 28).

## VERSE 7

"My servant Moses is not so" — Moses is described as Yahweh's bondservant (Heb. *ebed*). However Paul, in his reference to this statement (see Heb. 3:5) used the word *therapon*, which described a more honourable position than that of *doulon* (bondservant). *Therapon* indicates service of an affectionate and hearty nature such as Moses undoubtedly rendered to Yahweh. Moses' status as Yahweh's servant is recorded frequently in

Scripture: Num. 12:7,8; Josh. 1:1,2,7,13, 15; 2 Kings 21:8; Mal. 4:4; Heb. 3:5.

"Who is faithful in all Mine house" — Paul arrives at some important conclusions from this statement. He declares that it was made "for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after" (Heb. 3:5). He reasoned that Yahweh's testimony in support of Moses' faithfulness guaranteed the trustworthiness of the matters he reported as receiving from God. Moses foretold and foreshadowed the greatness of Christ (Deut. 18:18-19). He typed him in a remarkable manner. The following are some of the ways in which he did so: • his meekness (Num. 12:3); • the personal revelations made to him (Num. 12:8); • as mediator (Num. 12:13); • as servant (Num. 12:7); • as lawgiver; • as prophet. Moses was no ordinary prophet, but an outstanding one (see Deut. 18:18-19; 33:10).

This verse describes Israel as "Yahweh's house". That also is the title given the Ecclesia (1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:2,5). When Christ told the Apostles: "In my Father's house are many mansions" or "abiding places" (John 14:2), he was referring to the Ecclesia as the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). In explanation of this, Paul adds the comment: "Whose house

## TEN CAUSES OF MURMURING AGAINST MOSES

*On ten occasions the Israelites were found murmuring against Moses:*

1. For Water — Exod. 15:24-26.
2. For Food — Exod. 16:2-8
3. For Water — Exod. 17:3-7.
4. Out of jealousy — Num. 12:1-5.
5. Through fear and cowardice at the spies' report — Num. 14:2-38.
6. Through Korah's rebellion — Num. 16:1-35.
7. Through bitterness — Num. 16:41-50.
8. Through the Levites' jealousy — Num. 17:1-10.
9. For Water — Num. 20:1-13.
10. For Food — Num. 21:4-9.

Half of the murmurings were for this world's goods, three times they arose out of jealousy, twice they were prompted by bitterness and cowardice. All stemmed from lack of faith. See Psa. 78:18,41,56; 95:9; 106:14; 1 Cor. 10:9.

are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope (i.e. the "hope of Israel" — Acts 28:20) firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). He describes Moses as a servant in the house of God, and Christ as the son. Accordingly, Christ exhorted the disciples to "abide in him" for the house is named as his (John 15:4,6,7 etc.). The Greek word rendered "mansions" in John 14:2 (*monay*) is from the verb *meno*, "to abide". It is necessary for one to abide in that house if he would attain unto life eternal.

#### VERSE 8

"With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently" — To speak "mouth to mouth" is to speak directly and openly, allowing questions and discussion upon that revealed (see Exod. 33:11; Deut. 34:10). This form of revelation and instruction is set forth in contrast to that given by visions and dreams (Num. 12:7). The communication to Moses was done through angelic ministrations (Acts 7:38), including the audible voice from the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy (Num. 7:89). Therefore to speak "mouth to mouth" or "face to face" is to speak plainly without ambiguity (see 1 Cor. 13:12). To speak "apparently" is to speak clearly as in the giving of the Law.

"And not in dark speeches" — The expression is derived from the Hebrew *chydath*, from a root signifying "to tie a knot", hence to speak in a riddle as in Jud. 14:12. See 1 Kings 10:1; Psa. 49:4. To employ "dark speeches" is to proclaim a matter obscurely in parables, or to express prophecies clouded with symbols or figures of speech.

"And the similitude of Yahweh shall he behold" — The word "similitude" denotes the appearance or manifestation of Yahweh. Young gives it as *form*. It is from the Hebrew *temunath* signifying *shape, embodiment, manifestation*. The root word *miyn* denotes to *portion out, a sort, i.e. a species*. The word is rendered "kind" (Gen. 1:21 etc.) which argues the corporeal existence of Yahweh in accordance with the statement in *The Declaration*, that "God dwells corporeally in heaven" (see James 3:9). Moses saw the glory of divine beings in the angels who appeared unto him (see Exod. 33:5-6; Num. 20:16; Acts 7:38; Gal. 3:19). But if Yahweh has not corporeal existence in heaven, how could Moses see "His simi-

tude"? And how could it be said that the Lord Jesus is "the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3)? The fact that the Lord Jesus is described as the Son of God argues the corporeality of Deity for it is a divine law of creation that a son must manifest the image of his father. The use of the word *kind* (Gen. 1:21) which is the root of the word before us likewise argues the truth of the doctrinal principle set forth in *The Declaration* as noted above.

"Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" — The high honour paid Moses by Yahweh should have induced respect for him on the part of Israelites generally, and his own relations particularly. The principle of respect should likewise be shown towards those who minister in a responsible manner to Ecclesias (see 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Heb. 13:17).

#### VERSE 9

"And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against them, and he departed" — The expression "was kindled" suggests the awesome shining forth of divine light in wrathful manifestation so as to cause Miriam and Aaron to fear. They evidently were rendered speechless. So, with no further comment, the angel departed.

#### Miriam Smitten With Leprosy — vv. 10-16

*Miriam, as initiating the attack on Moses, is smitten with leprosy which witnesses to the gravity of her offence. Despite the pleading of Aaron to Moses, and the intercession of Moses with Yahweh, she is compelled to bear her shame, and is excluded from the camp for a period of seven days: that being the normal requirement of lepers.*

#### VERSE 10

"And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle" — It departed with the angel of Yahweh (v. 9), for until then it had been waiting as the chariot of heaven (Psa. 104:3; 18:9-11).

"And behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow" — The exclamation *Behold!* implies the startled horror with which her condition was viewed by her brothers and the Israelites generally. For the stigma of leprosy, see Lev. 13. This was a disease of Egypt from which Yahweh promised immunity if people were

obedient (Exod. 15:26). Leprosy is treated in Scripture as a living death, the symbol of active sin. A leper had to seek the help of priests not a physician in his malady.

It will be noted that the word *white* is in italics. It should be eliminated. For if Miriam appeared white, she would be pronounced "clean" (see Lev. 13:17; Isa. 1:18). Remove that part of the description and the statement appears: "Miriam became leprous as snow". Snow is usually moist and wet, and therefore, the expression "like snow" suggests raw flesh or an ulcer, the sign of leprosy (Lev. 13:10-11). This also fits in with the description of v. 12 that Miriam's flesh was "half consumed".

"And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous" — The Law required that the leper be "brought unto Aaron" (Lev. 13:2). It must have been a very sad moment for the High Priest seeing that he was a party to the transgression! Leprosy was considered as most defiling, and the sufferer was publicly proclaimed as unclean (Lev. 13:45). See notes Lev. 13.

#### VERSE 11

"And Aaron said unto Moses" — In view of his participation in the transgression, Aaron felt incompetent to handle Miriam's case, and so was compelled to appeal unto Moses, whose authority he had previously questioned (v. 2). With perfect justice, Yahweh made the punishment fit the crime.

"Alas, my lord, I beseech thee" — Thoroughly humbled, Aaron now acknowledged the superior status of his brother by addressing him as my *Adon*, i.e. master or lord. The word "beseech" is *pray* in the Hebrew.

"Lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned" — This was a humble confession of guilt, and an expression of regret for the sin committed. As in the case of the golden calf, Aaron had allowed himself to be drawn into a false position. Like many weak men, he was of an affectionate disposition (Lev. 10:19), and liable to become emotionally involved in situations in a manner he later regretted. Now, however, in addressing Moses as lord, and abjectly confessing his sin, he acknowledged his fault and his subordinate status before all Israel. Indeed, he

sought the mediatorial services of Moses for the forgiveness of his sin. Normally, Israelites would have approached the High Priest for such help; but in view of the circumstances, Aaron was humbled to seek the assistance of his brother. This constituted a complete reversal of the terms of complaint as made by him in conjunction with Miriam.

#### VERSE 12

"Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh



Forms of leprosy. In extreme cases fingers and toes and other parts of the body are eaten away by the dread disease. Yahweh promised immunity from this "disease of Egypt" if the people continued obedient.



Mutilation of the hands in leprosy.

out of his mother's womb" — Leprosy was considered as a living death, and treated as most defiling, the sufferer publicly proclaiming his uncleanness (Lev. 13:45). The skin becomes ulcerated, covered with sores that give forth a feculent discharge, and tender to the touch, hence soft as that of a new-born baby. See comments on v. 10.

### VERSE 13

"And Moses cried unto Yahweh, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech Thee" — Moses willingly acted as mediator for his sister, completely ignoring the harshness and injustice of her attack and accusation against him. In doing so, he appealed unto Yahweh Ropheka seeking His intervention to effect a cure. The word "God" is *El*, expressive of power.

### VERSE 14

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days" — The verse describes an act of extreme contempt (Job 30:10; Isa. 50:6). Miriam had set an extremely bad example. Her petulance had got the better of her, and she had spoken against her brother in a manner unbecoming any Israelite, let alone a woman. She was deserving of the public rebuke and disgrace she subsequently experienced (Deut. 25:9). To ignore her sin might have encouraged others to sin in similar fashion.

"Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again" — This appears to indicate that she was leprous for that length of time. Therefore she was excluded from the camp as was required by the Law (Lev. 13:46).

### VERSE 15

"And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days" — It was a very sad occasion when a woman so prominent as Miriam was excluded from the camp (cp. Mic. 6:4). As a young girl she had faithfully watched over her baby brother; as a woman she had joyfully led the other women in celebrating the victory of the Red Sea crossing; she had acted as prophetess to other women in Israel; and in view of her past services it must have been grievous for those who loved her to witness her disgrace. Particularly as she was now an elderly woman of about 90

years of age! The statement that she was "shut out from the camp" seems to have lent itself to the meaning of the name Hazeroth: *The Place Where She Was Separated* (See note Num. 12:35). The Law required a period of seven days' exclusion for a leper, see Lev. 13:5-6.

"And the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again" — This endorses Num. 11:35: "The people . . . abode at Hazeroth". They did so for at least seven days. Thus rebellion and sin delayed the progress to the Promised Land. Meanwhile, Miriam was cut off from the fellowship of Israel, and from access to divine worship at the Tabernacle. Her exclusion was a temporary excommunication. Then she was "brought in again". The reception of a leper back into the camp signified to the nation that a cure had been effected (see the ritual of the cleansed leper outlined in Lev. 14:8-11). The same Hebrew word *acaph*, "brought in" is rendered "recover" in 2 Kings 5:6,11 and there applied to Naaman. The *Septuagint* renders it as "was cleansed". Both Miriam's public exclusion from the camp and her restoration constituted a salutary warning to Israel to avoid the sin of which she was guilty. Accordingly, the incident is given special mention in the Law (Deut. 24:9). It established a precedent in Israel.

### VERSE 16

"And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran" — Paran is a harsh, barren wilderness in the Sinaitic Peninsula. The word is derived from a root signifying *to gleam, to vaunt self*, which Israel did in this wilderness. The wilderness extends from Kadesh in the north to Elath on the Red Sea (Num. 13:26; Gen. 14:6). It lays east of the wilderness of Beersheba (Gen. 21:14,21), gradually merging into the wilderness of Zin (cp. Num. 13:26 with 20:1). It thus included the plateau or mountainous country south of Canaan (Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:3). Most of it is from about 600 m to 700 m (1800 ft. to 2300 ft.) above sea level. Its harsh, arid, barren conditions are described in Deut. 1:19; 8:15; Jer. 2:6. The wilderness of Paran brought Israel to the land of the Amorites whom Yahweh had consigned to destruction because of their wickedness (Deut. 2:19; Gen. 15:21). Hence, both country and its inhabitants appeared hostile to Israel.



### 3. ISRAEL'S LACK OF FAITH AND REJECTION (Ch. 13:1-14:45)

*This section marks a turning point in the travels of the Israelites. Having arrived at the southern border of the Promised Land, the opportunity is theirs to enter and occupy it. They fail to do so through lack of faith. Their timidity getting the better of them they seek permission to send spies through the land so as to make proper preparations for taking it. The faithless report of the spies confirms the fears of the people. They tearfully decide that it is better to return to Egypt than to face the difficulties of conquest. They claim their decision is based upon fears for the wellbeing of their children. Because of their faithlessness, Yahweh condemns them to wander through the wilderness until death claims them; but their children for whom they had expressed fears would enter the land. A refusal on the part of the people to accept the decision of Yahweh is met by further punishment.*



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE SPIES' EXPEDITION THROUGH CANAAN

*At the request of the people twelve spies are selected to enter the land and report on conditions. They return to report that the land is as described by Yahweh, a wholly desirable inheritance; but the problems of winning it are beyond the ability of the nation. Their faithless report weakens the determination of the people to grasp the promised inheritance, and leads to the failure of the whole project as far as that generation is concerned.*

#### Spies Selected — vv. 1-16

*The names of the twelve spies representing the twelve tribes are outlined.*

#### VERSE 1

“**And Yahweh spake unto Moses**” — Yahweh’s instructions were in response to the people’s request as recorded in Deut. 1:22-23. On the very borders of the land they hesitated. One bold push forward, and their feet would have trodden on the earth of their inheritance. But, as is so often the case, courage oozed out at the decisive moment, and cowardice disguised as prudence, called for further information. This is frequently the case with the fainthearted.

#### VERSE 2

“**Send thou men**” — The word “men” is *enoshim*, a word that denotes men in their weakness. It was the weakness of human nature that caused the people to ask that a report be first obtained regarding conditions in the land. The fact that Yahweh granted this request of the people (Deut. 1:22) does not justify it or show that it was right, any more than the granting of the people’s request for a king in the days of Samuel justified their actions then (see 1 Sam. 8:6,22; Hos. 13:11). Yahweh had already “espied the land” for them (Ezek. 20:6), and the people should have trusted Him. But they desired to walk by sight not by faith. They declared “we will send” (Deut. 1:22), and Yahweh humoured them.

“**That they may search the land of Canaan which I give unto the children of Israel**” — The word “search” is from the Hebrew *tuwr*, “to wander, guide”, and so tour the land! Because of this the Israeli Government Tourist Department uses the insignia of Caleb and Joshua bearing the grapes on a pole as its trademark. In doing so it unconsciously commemorates the failure of the people. The description of the land as that “of Canaan” draws attention to the people of the curse who inhabited it. It was occupied by seven mighty nations (Deut. 7:1).

“**Of every tribe of their fathers send a man**” — The word for “man” is *ish*, implying a great or chief man.

“**Every one a ruler among them**” — The word “ruler” is *nasi*, one exalted. A comparison of the list given in this chapter with that given in ch. 1 shows that they were not the princes of the tribes, but appointed heads (v. 3). The men listed in Ch. 1 are described as “those who would stand with Moses” (Num. 1:5), that is, the princes. Those now described as “rulers among them” (the people) were a different order of men, apparently exalted to the positions now given them for the purpose in view. The fact that they occupied so exalted a status made their subsequent rebellion all the more serious.

#### VERSE 3

“**And Moses by the commandment of Yahweh sent them from the wilderness of**

**Paran; all those men were heads of the children of Israel**" — Though they were sent by "the commandment of Yahweh", the request for this to be done was first made to Him by Israel (Deut. 1:22). Those sent were "heads of the children of Israel", evidently the captains over thousands (Exod. 18:25). Thus the rebellion that followed, was initiated by the leaders of the nation. The word "men" in this place is *enoshim*, denoting man in his weakness. In the lack of faith that they subsequently manifested, they certainly revealed the weakness of flesh.

## VERSE 4

**"And these are their names"** — Apart from Caleb and Joshua there is no mention of them elsewhere. The meanings of the names are significant.

**"Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur"** — Reuben signifies *See a son*; Shammua, *Renowned*; and Zaccur, *Mindful*. The sentence formed is: *See a son, for he that is impressed shall be remembered.*

## VERSE 5

**"Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori"** — Simeon means *Hearing*; Shaphat is *Judge*; Hori is *High*. The sentence formed: *Hear the Judge to be Elevated.*

## VERSE 6

**"Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh"** — Judah means *Praise*; Caleb is developed from a root that can signify either *Dog* or *Wholehearted*; and Jephunneh denotes *For whom a way is prepared*. The names in conjunction spell out the message: *There will be Praise for the Wholehearted (or for Gentiles), and for them the Way is prepared.*

In view of the fame of Caleb, a few additional comments are here appropriate. His name can signify a dog, an animal used to describe a Gentile (see Matt. 7:6; 15:26-27; Phil. 3:2). Caleb was of Gentile extraction (Josh. 14:6,14), and possibly was of the "mixed multitude" that came out of Egypt with the Israelites. However, because he "wholly followed" Yahweh (Josh. 14:14), he was given "a part among the children of Israel, according to the commandment of Yahweh to Joshua" (Josh. 15:13). He obviously rose in the estimation of the tribe until, he assumed a standing of

importance in it. Accordingly, on this occasion, he was appointed to represent it in spying out the land. It will be noted that he was not "head of the house of his fathers" according to the enumeration of Num. 1:4, for there the leader of Judah is Nahshon. Caleb's integrity had resulted in his elevation. Though a Gentile by birth, he was "an Israelite indeed" (John 1:47), and so a type of those Gentiles in every age who faithfully embrace the hope of Israel (Eph. 2:11-13).

## VERSE 7

**"Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph"** — These three names signify: *Reward*; *Avenge*; *Increase*. They spell out the statement: *He will reward, avenge and increase the faithful.*

## VERSE 8

**"Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun"** — These three names signify: *Double fruit*; *Salvation*; *Perpetuity*. Hence the sentence: *A double reward and perpetual salvation is reserved for the faithful.* As with Caleb, so with Joshua. He was not the Prince of Ephraim as enumerated in Num. 1:10. His prominence in the tribe resulted in his elevation to the status now appointed him.

## VERSE 9

**"Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu"** — These three names denote: *Son of his right hand*; *Delivered*; *Cured*. And the significant sentence: *The Son of His right hand will deliver and cure.*

## VERSE 10

**"Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi"** — The meanings: *Dwelling*; *God's company or fortune*; *Confide in*. The significant sentence: *My dwelling and my fortune or company is in God in Whom I confide.*

## VERSE 11

**"Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi"** — Manasseh, being the firstborn of Joseph, is identified with his father in this enumeration of the tribes. Joseph signifies *Increase*; Manasseh, *Forgetting*; Gaddi, *My company*; and Susi, *My horse*. The sentence can denote: *There will be an increase after forgetting my company and my horse (i.e confidence in the flesh).*

## VERSE 12

“Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli” — Dan means *Judge*; Ammiel means *People of God*; and Gemalli, *Camel driven*. The sentence: *Judgment will be given the people of God who are burden-bearers (i.e. camel-like).*

## VERSE 13

“Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael” — Asher means *Blessed*; Sethur, *Hidden*; and Michael, *Who like God*. The sentence: *Blessed are the hidden who are like God.*

## VERSE 14

“Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi” — Naphtali means *Wrestling*; Nahbi, *Secretive*; and Vophsi, *Additional*. The sentence: *Those who wrestle in secret shall receive additional help, or reward.*

## VERSE 15

“Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi” — Gad signifies *A Company*; Geuel, *The majesty of El*; and Machi, *My pining*. The sentence formed: *A company manifesting the majesty of El (God) shall success in spite of pining or poverty.*

## VERSE 16

“These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land” — The meanings of the names are given above are taken from *Strong's Concordance* or *A Dictionary Of Proper Names* by J. B. Jackson. In conjunction, the names of the spies proclaimed the glory of God, and the divine purpose in calling mankind to the Gospel; but, unfortunately, their actions and report belied the messages that their names conveyed. Similarly, in these times, God is “taking out of the Gentiles a people for *His name*” (Acts 15:14); but the possibility remains that those who have been so called may likewise belie the Name they bear.

“And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua” — See v. 8. Oshea signifies *Salvation*; but *Yahoshua* is *Yah's salvation*. The emphasis is taken from the flesh to God. *Yehoshua* is the Hebrew equivalent of *Jesus* or *Yashua*. The action of Moses in changing *Joshua's* name shows that there is significance in the meanings of the names. He changed *Oshea's* name because of the importance of his role in leading the nation into the Promised Land. The alteration emphasises

ed that the success of the venture depended upon *Yahweh* more than *Joshua*.

## Moses Instructs the Spies - vv. 17-20

*Moses briefs the spies, instructing them to move north into the whole territory and report on conditions. They are to see what kind of land it is, what the inhabitants are like, how they live, and what kind of food it produces.*

## VERSE 17

“And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan” — For the word “spy” (Heb. *tuwr*) see comments on v. 2.

“And said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain” — The spies were instructed to move north into the land, ascending the mountainous area of the south then inhabited by the Amorites (see Deut. 1:44). One of the reasons for the survey was to ascertain the strength or otherwise of the opposition the Israelites were likely to encounter in the war of extermination they were to conduct. See v. 29; Gen. 15:16; Exod. 17:16; Deut. 7:1-6; 9:5-6; 1 Kings 21:26.

## VERSE 18

“And see the land what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many” — The spies were to report on the strength or otherwise of the land's inhabitants so that adequate preparations might be made.

## VERSE 19

“And what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad” — *Yahweh* had declared that the land was good, and if the people of Israel had been motivated by faith they would have accepted His word. But they had requested permission to search out the land (Deut. 1:22-25), and, accordingly, Moses briefed the spies as to what they should observe so as to confirm *Yahweh's* word. There is no harm, but often good, in seeking confirmation of the Word so as to increase faith. The people of Israel, however, were in ignorance of the condition of the land, and doubted their ability to occupy it.

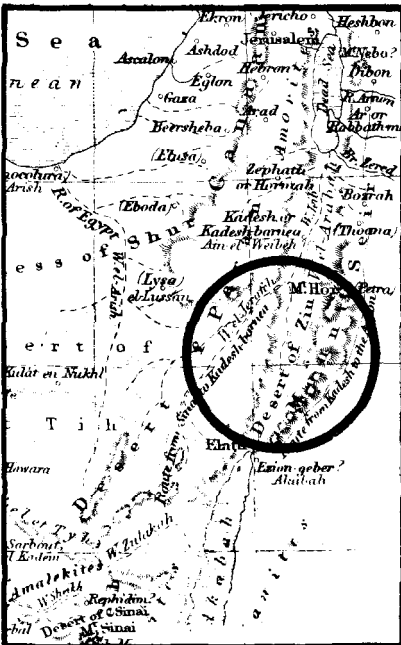
“And what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds” — The word for “tents” is *machanim* and signifies *encampments*. Moses requested that the spies report whether the warriors

of the land dwelt in encampments or in walled fortresses. This was for the purpose of properly planning the campaign. Though faith places confidence in Yahweh, it is wise to take proper precautions or to make proper preparations to assist the successful completion of a project. Our own activities provide scope for the divine blessing which we should likewise seek.

**VERSE 20**

**“And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not”** — This report would either confirm or contradict the description of the land as given by Yahweh, demonstrating whether it was worth fighting for. For the fertility and pleasantness of the land, see Neh. 9:25; Ezek. 34:14.

**“And be ye of good courage”** — Whatever the results of their investigations the spies were called upon to exercise courage. They were to add this to their faith.



Kadesh-Barnea is to the north of the Wilderness of Zin. From there the spies were sent forth to search the land. Afterwards Kadesh became a centre for the wandering Israelites, the first generation of which perished in the wilderness.

See the exhortation in Deut. 31:6,7,23; Josh. 1:6.

**“And bring of the fruit of the land”** — A sample of the fruit of the land would supplement the spies’ report, and demonstrate to the people that the land was even as Yahweh described it.

**“Now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes”** — The time indicated was the end of July. The Israelites broke up their camp at Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year of their departure out of Egypt, corresponding to the early part of May. Therefore, they had occupied nearly three months in making their journey to Kadesh.

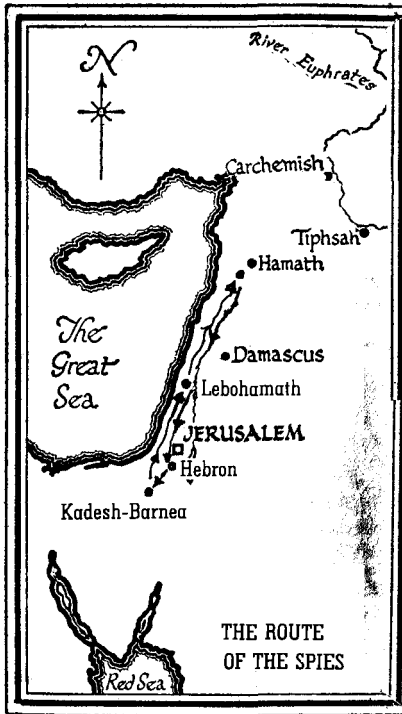
**The Expedition — vv. 21-25**

*The spies set out and traverse the whole land from the southern border to beyond Mount Hermon in the north. On their way back they cut down a cluster of grapes which with other products of the land they take back to Moses. Their expedition occupies forty days.*

**VERSE 21**

**“So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin”** — The wilderness of Zin merges into the wilderness of Paran. The name signifies *A thorn* according to Young, and *A dwarf palm* according to Davis. It is an arid wilderness forming the southern continuation of the Jordan valley west of Edom. It presents an appearance of shifting sands whose surface is broken by innumerable low hills and undulations. A few stunted trees grow among the sandhills, but generally there is little vegetation.

**“Unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath”** — Rehob signifies *Open space* or *Street*. It is located in the tribal area of Asher (Josh. 19:28), so that they continued as far north as Hermon. There is no word for “men” in the original. The expression: “As men come to Hamath” reads *Lebo-hamath*, and denotes the name of a place: *The Entrance of Hamath*. This describes the Pass some sixty miles beyond Hermon along the Berkaa Valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. The Pass is some 8 to 9 miles wide. Hamath (*Fortification* or *Citadel*) is a fortress on the Orontes some 120 miles north of Damascus (Josh. 13:8). The spies evidently followed the main route to Syria. They made a thorough coverage of the land.



## VERSE 22

“And they ascended by the south, and come unto Hebron; where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the children of Anak, were” — The names of these three chieftains respectively denote: *The Brother of a gift, Whitish, Accumulate*. These names suggest bribery, hypocrisy, and materialism. They were descendants of Anak, a race of giants whose name signifies *Long-necked*, probably relating to their height. The obvious might of these giants, the strength of their fortifications, and their dominance over the southern section of the land, greatly perturbed the spies. Controlling that portion of the land, they presented an immediate obstacle to the Israelites in their advance north.

The progenitor of the Anakim was Arba (Josh. 14:15; 15:13), and as originally Hebron was called Kirjath-Arba or *The City Of The Four* (Gen. 23:2,19), it could have been that Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmi, together with Anak their father, constituted the four who gave

their names to the meaning of city. The names were probably inherited by powerful tribes of giants descended from these four whose appearance gave the spies deep concern.

“(Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt)” — This cryptic statement, sandwiched in the account of the expedition of the spies, reveals the value of names and places in the Bible. Hebron signifies *Union, Confederate or Fellowship*. It was the place where the tribes were united as one nation under David. But originally it commemorated the union or fellowship established between Abram and the Amorite chieftains, Mamre, Eschol and Aner, on the basis of their acceptance of the Abrahamic covenant (see notes Gen. 14:13). Hebron thus stood for *fellowship* or *union* between God and man on the basis of His covenant. The reference to “seven” is significant, for the Hebrew word also denotes an *oath*, and so “seven” is the number of the covenant, for an oath confirms an agreement. The union, or fellowship, suggested by Hebron took precedence over Zoan, the symbol of Egyptian wisdom (see Isa. 19:11).

Zoan can signify *Traveller* or *The Place of Departure*. This was a strange name for the seat of Egyptian power as Zoan was when the Israelites were slaves in the land! Yet it was appropriate, for Isaiah (Ch. 19:11-17) predicted the departure of wisdom and power from Egypt — and Zoan represented both! The name Zoan, therefore, provided a striking indication of how transient is worldly power and glory. Hebron, though dominated by giants, could be conquered by those who had departed from, or left, the wisdom of Egypt in favour of the covenant of Yahweh; for fellowship with God had been established before the wisdom and power of Egypt. The attitude of the Amorites who were confederate with Abram having accepted the covenant in him, demonstrated this principle at this very place that had been founded before Zoan.

The statement, therefore, must be considered as a parabolic illustration of God's power and purpose, established before those of the flesh.

Historically, Zoan was situated on the north-eastern frontier of Egypt, on the east bank of the Tanaitic Nile. Extensive buildings have been excavated there, the inscriptions claiming that they were built by slave labour. A city had been estab-

lished as early as the 6th dynasty by Pharaoh Pepi 1, and it later became the headquarters of the Hyksos when they dominated Egypt. According to *The Biblical World*, they named the city Avaris. A monument found there called *The Four Hundred Stele* is dated by archaeologists from the founding of the Hyksos capital at about 1700 B.C. The reference in the verse before us could relate to that time, demonstrating the antiquity of Hebron. The Hyksos (Semitic conquerors of Egypt for a time) were expelled by Ahmose 1, the father of Rameses 11, the Pharaoh of the oppression, who made it his royal residence. Rameses practically rebuilt the place, and renamed it Raamses (Exod. 1:11). Among the buildings excavated was the Temple of Tanis, one of the royal structures of ancient Egypt, measuring about 1000 ft. (304.8m) long. It contained a colossal statue of Rameses some 92 feet (28m.) high, weighing 900 tons. Its large toe is the size of a man's body! Zoan, therefore, was a token of Egyptian wisdom, pride and power, as well as being the scene of Israel's humiliation and slavery. But it also witnessed to Yahweh's strength in pouring out judgments upon the nation, and in delivering His people.

It is highly probable that whilst ten of the spies were completely discouraged by the giants of Hebron, Joshua and Caleb sought to allay their fears and stimulate their faith, by reminding them of the significance of Hebron in comparison with that of Zoan, and of the remarkable victory won by Abram in the face of the apparently overwhelming strength of Chedorlaomer's forces. And perhaps that is the reason why this comment is found at this place. But if they did so, they exhorted their fellow-spies in vain (cp. Num. 32:9).

### VERSE 23

**"And they came unto the brook of Eshcol"** — This is rendered "the valley of Eshcol" in Num. 32:9, as it is in the margin at this place. Eshcol is adjacent to Hebron. The word signifies *Cluster*, and commemorates Eshcol the Amorite who was "confederate with Abram" (Gen. 14:13), and who joined Abram in his successful attack on Chedorlaomer. The meditations of the faithful spies must have been stimulated by the incident, but the other ten were discouraged by the

presence of the tribes of giants in its vicinity. Indeed, it seems as though their presence, more than any other obstacle, undermined their confidence, and therefore their faith in the hope of victory (see Num. 32:9).

**"And cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes"** — It was appropriate that the spies should do this for the vine is used constantly as a symbol for Israel. In that regard, the Scriptures refer to the ideal vine (Gen. 49:11,22), and to the quality of "wine" that is "pleasing to God", namely, a life of sacrificial dedication unto Him (Judges 9:13). But the Scriptures also refer to the tragic failure of the Israel vine (Psa. 80:1-14; Isa. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:21; 6:9; 8:13; 12:10; Ezek. 15:1-8; Hos. 10:1; Joel 1:7,12 etc.), and its replacement with the true vine (John 15:1), and its branches the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).

**"And they bare it between two upon a staff"** — The spies did this, not merely because of the size of the cluster, but to prevent bruising. Figuratively, the fruit of the Christ-vine is borne by two: Jewish and Gentile believers. The general idea is that the two who bare the cluster were Joshua and Caleb, and they did so to impress the people with the fertility of the land. Certainly, such a suggestion is appropriate to the type, for Joshua as a faithful Israelite, and Caleb as a converted and equally faithful Gentile, foreshadowed the fruit of the vine represented by Christ and those in him (John 15:1), both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 1:16).

**"And they brought of the pomegranates"** — The pomegranate is a very significant fruit in Bible symbolism. Its Hebrew name *rimmon* is derived from a root word signifying *elevation*, implying the exaltation of those represented thereby. The fruit is purplish in colour when ripe, and purple, being a blend of scarlet and blue, denotes God manifest in the flesh. The fruit itself is packed with seeds and red juice. When it is cut in halves, the red juice pours out, and the closely packed white seeds are revealed. The symbolism illustrates Isaiah 53:10: "When Thou should make his soul an offering for sin (blood shed), he shall see his seed." The Israelitish spies would have been familiar with the symbolism of the fruit, for it was associated with divine worship by being displayed upon the garments of the High Priest (Exod. 28:33). As a prophecy, the

purple fruit, the red juice, and the white, closely-packed seeds, pointed to the nation united as one by the blood of the covenant; and to the multitudinous Christ, united as one through his blood.

**"And the figs"** — Next to bread, the fig was a common support of life in the Land. Its sweet, nourishing fruit was welcomed by all and used extensively. It is described as "good fruit" (Judges 9:11), and is used as a symbol of Israel (Joel 1:7; Luke 21:29). Grapes, pomegranates and figs are described as "the fruit of the land" (v. 26). The first were the product of the vine (true Israel); the second symbolised God manifestation, the ideal set before such; and the third can be related to the sweet, "fruits of the spirit" as described in Gal. 5:22, which are the several features of such manifestation.

#### VERSE 24

**"The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence"** — The Hebrew word rendered "brook" is *nachal*. It denotes a dry valley in which water runs during the rainy season. The

R.V. renders it in this place as *valley*. Here, previously, dwelt the Amorite Eshcol who confederated with Abram rather than with his native tribe (Gen. 14:13). Now to it came the Israelitish spies to praise the fruits of the land, but, also, to manifest such fear and faithlessness as to prevent them conquering it. It was renamed Eshcol, receiving a new significance to the old name because of the *cluster* of grapes obtained there. It is identified with Beit Ishkahil about 4 m. n.w. of Hebron.

#### VERSE 25

**"And they returned from searching of the land after forty days"** — See note on v. 20. As in Israel grapes begin to ripen in July, the return of the spies took place some time in September: about the opening of the Hebrew new year, and the feast of Atonement. "Forty" is a significant number in spiritual numerics denoting *probation*.

#### The Report Of The Spies — vv. 26-33

*On returning to the camp, the spies present their report. Displaying the fruit that they had brought with them, they praise the land for its fertility and the quality of its produce, but then exaggerate the problems facing the people should they attempt to conquer it. The majority report that it is beyond the ability of them to do so, drawing attention to the physical prowess of the various races of people inhabiting the land. At that point Caleb interrupts the account, claiming that with faith and courage the land can be conquered. However, he is unable to prevail against the doubts so persuasively presented in the one-sided report of the ten. In the face of his appeal an even more exaggerated description of the problems to be overcome is reiterated.*

#### VERSE 26

**"And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh"** — The spies having returned, presented their report to Moses, Aaron and representatives of the tribes. The word Kadesh signifies *Sanctuary*. It probably was so called because the Tabernacle was set up there.

**"And brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land"** — By display-



The pomegranate was significant in Bible symbolism.



ing the fruit of the land, and praising its fertility, the spies pretended to present an unbiased report, but, in fact, it was one-sided, calculated only to weaken the people in their resolve to conquer.

## VERSE 27

**"And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey: and this is the fruit of it"** — They confirmed Yahweh's description of the land (Exod. 3:8). Elsewhere, it is described as "a good land" (see Deut. 8:7-9; 11:11-12).

## VERSE 28

**"Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great"** — The term *nevertheless* is an expression of doubt due to walking by sight and not by faith. See Moses' recapitulation of these events in Deut. 1:25-43.

**"And moreover we saw the children of Anak there"** — As in the case with Eve in Eden, the sight of the eyes deterred these spies from carrying out the will of Yahweh. "We saw the children of Anak there". This fleshly view of things blinded the eyes of the spies to the possibilities of faith. Their attitude was a great contrast to that of the faithful Paul who declared: "We look not at the things that are seen . . ." (2 Cor. 5:18). Faith enables one to see beyond difficulties and thereby surmount them. But as observed, the spies were faithless (Heb. 3:19). The final factor governing their discouraging report was the presence of the giants of Hebron. See notes on v. 22.

## VERSE 29

**"The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south"** — To support their biased report, the spies outlined the difficulties that would face the Israelites if they attempted to conquer the land. From the fleshly viewpoint the nations enumerated were all far better equipped for war than was Israel. See Deut. 7:1. The Amalekites are described by Balaam as the first or foremost of the nations (Num. 24:20). Their name signifies *Warlike*, and Israel had already suffered from them. See note Exod. 17:8.

**"And the Hittites"** — The name signifies *Terror*, and this their reputation induced in the Israelites. The Hittites were a very powerful race that extended their

influence throughout the land. Their headquarters were in Asia Minor, but they had spread throughout Syria, and down through the Land of Canaan. It was from Hittites that Abraham had purchased the field of Ephron as a burying place (Gen. 23:10).

**"And the Jebusites"** — The name Jebusite signifies *To tread down* implying ruthless power. They were a thorn in the side of Israel until the days of David when they were reduced under his power.

**"And the Amorites, dwell in the mountains"** — The word "Amorite" is derived from a root denoting *height*. This could relate to their build, or to the mountain fastnesses which they occupied. The reputation of the Amorites was so dominant that their name is sometimes used for Canaanites in general (Josh. 24:8).

**"And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan"** — The whole land swarmed with powerful enemies. The word "coast" used in regard to the Jordan is from the Hebrew *yad*, "hand", and perhaps is better rendered *side*.

## VERSE 30

**"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses"** — Dr. Young renders "before" as *concerning* Moses. Murmurs against him broke out as the people listened to the report. They were interrupted by Caleb who attempted to still the people.

**"And said, Let us go up at once, and possess it"** — Caleb was for instant action. His words literally rendered are: "Going up we go up".

**"For we are well able to overcome it"** — This was the voice of faith in Yahweh Sabaoth (ct. Ps. 78:40-41). It contradicted the opinion of the ten on the basis of what they "saw" (v. 28). Their vision of faith was obscured by present difficulties. This led Israel to "despise" (Heb. *spurn, turn from*) the pleasant land. "They believed not His word" (cp. Ps. 106:24-25). Faith in the true-hearted Caleb caused him to declare: "Let us go up at once; we are well able to take possession!" But most had no faith. Paul commented: "All these things are recorded as types . . . Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:11-12; Deut. 9:7).

## VERSE 31

**"But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we"** —

The very men who went with Caleb had no sympathy with his viewpoint. His protest and declaration caused the ten to unequivocally and angrily retort that the task was absolutely beyond them, so the hearts of the people were discouraged (Deut. 1:28; Josh. 14:8).

**VERSE 32**

**"And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel"** — In presenting their evil report they, in effect, slandered Yahweh's inheritance (Num. 14:36).

**"Saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof"** — This expression denotes that the land would consume or destroy those who attempted to inhabit it. In fact, these words of the faithless spies proved true (see Jer. 15:7) because of the faithlessness of the people. It is significant that the declaration of the spies finds a place in a prophecy relating to the future. Ezekiel predicts of the land that it "shall no more henceforth bereave them" (Ezek. 36:12). Why? Because the people will be "all righteous" (Isa. 60:21).

**"And all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature"** — See note above v. 30. The Egyptians were generally of smaller stature than the Canaanites, and that may well have been an Israelite characteristic also, due to their slavery in Egypt. In any case the fleshly sight of the eye deterred the spies from the task before them.

**VERSE 33**

**"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants"** — The spies constantly referred to the Anakim, forgetting how Abram and his associates through faith defeated Chedorlaomer and his forces, attacking them from the very centre of the giants.

**"And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight"** — They viewed the Canaanitish men of war without faith, and suffered from an inferiority complex. Caleb and Joshua did not do so, however. In their sight the inhabitants were "as grasshoppers" (cp. v. 30). The grasshopper is used in Eccles. 12:5 and Isa. 40:22 as a symbol of weakness.

## ISRAEL'S FAILURE AND REVOLT

Paul advances the account of Israel's failure on the border of the Promised Land as a prime example of "unbelief" (Heb. 4:11). The word signifies lack of faith, a lack which manifested itself in disobedience. The Psalmist comments: "They despised (*spurned, turned from*) the pleasant land, they believed not His word" (Psa. 106:24-25). Though that was the case at that point, the seeds of doubt and revolt had been planted long before the people had reached the borders of the Promised Land. The growth of the seeds was manifested by the complaining and grumbling that stemmed mainly from the mixed multitude (Num. 11:1-5), and which blossomed into full bloom in this revolt which ended their hopes of entering the land.

The record reveals:

- That the Israel of God was brought nigh to the promised rest; almost within sight, and actually within taste of it.
- That the people refused to enter through lack of faith.
- That they were sentenced to hopeless exile.

- That afterwards they vainly attempted to enter in their own strength.
- That they became aimless wanderers in the wilderness, and no longer pilgrims.
- Their object in life become mere self-preservation.
- Their progress stopped, but not their declension. It ripened into complete apostasy (Amos 5:25-26), so that the covenant sign of circumcision was abandoned (Josh. 5:2-6).

Consider the following:

• **THEIR SITUATION.** The people of Israel were in the "wilderness of Paran" (Num. 12:16); that "great and terrible wilderness" (Deut. 8:15). But they were also in "the wilderness of Zin", which led to the very threshold of the Land of Promise. The worst of the journey was behind them. They had reached the foot of the plateau that leads to the highlands of the southern portion of the Land. Only one steep climb and they would have reached their haven of rest. A little patience, faith and fortitude, and they would have reached their goal.

• **THEIR REQUEST.** The people of Israel were not prepared to move forward in faith notwithstanding the evidences of divine goodness and providence they had experienced: deliverance from Egypt, defeat of the Amalekites, daily provision of food and drink. Instead they requested that representative men of the tribes spy out the state of the land (Deut. 1:22-25). Their request was granted. Yahweh delights in His children acquainting themselves with "the riches of the glory of His inheritance" (Eph. 1:18). Christ also advocated that one should "count the cost" of any venture relating to salvation (Luke 14:28-33), so as to make adequate preparation to meet any obstacle to the attainment of it. An appraisal of difficulties does no harm so long as it is designed to gather up sufficient resources in faith to meet them (1 John 5:4). In searching the land, the spies were able to observe its beauty and to taste of its fruits. This fortified them to be able to report on the benefits that would accrue by a faithful invasion of it. Unfortunately they lacked faith, and becoming obsessed with the difficulties weakened the hands of the Israelites by over-stressing them. The Israelites heard the description of the land, and had opportunity to view and taste of its fruits, but they lacked the faith to boldly and courageously face up to the problems, and to "lay hold" upon their inheritance (cp. 1 Tim. 6:12). The New Testament counterpart to the spies were the Apostles who reported the results of their investigations of the hope of salvation in Christ (John 17:20-21; Rom. 8:18; Heb. 2:3-4; 1 John 1:1). In contrast to the 12 spies the Apostles reported faithfully what they heard and saw.

• **THE SPIES' REPORT.** The spies gave undue emphasis to the problems facing the Israelites, without also giving equal emphasis to the power available to them to overcome such. *Yahweh's strength is adequate for every need as had been shown by the deliverance from Egypt, and His care of the nation during its wanderings.* The expression, "*We saw!*", three times stated in the account, shows that the sight of the eyes blinded the spies to the vision of faith. In consequence of this they brought an "evil report" on the land (Num. 13:32), so uttering "a scandal" against it (Num. 14:36).

• **THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE.** The fruits of the evil report were first mourning (Num. 14:1), then murmuring (Num. 14:2), finally the madness of rebellion (14:4). The people proclaimed their intention of returning to Egypt! But, dependent upon Yahweh for their sustenance, how could they do so? Their bitter disappointment and frustration made worse by their faithlessness caused them to demand that they turn back and this demonstrated that they were unworthy of the inheritance (Luke 9:62). Actually the proposition to return to Egypt was as unfeasible and stupid as it was wicked (cp. Heb. 10:38-39).

• **THEIR EXCUSE.** They claimed that it was consideration for their children that caused them to refuse to enter the land. They concluded that it would be better to die in the wilderness (14:2-3). Such an attitude was faithless and cowardly. However, their words were uttered before God Who took them on their face value. Care should be exercised in the words we use before Him.

• **THEIR FATE.** Yahweh gave the Israelites what they requested: death in the wilderness! That generation perished in the wilderness, their graves being strewn along the route they took (1 Cor. 10:5). On the other hand, their children, whose fate they declared was in jeopardy, actually entered and conquered the land (see Num. 14:28-33).

• **THE SPIES' OBSCURITY.** It is greatly significant that of the spies selected to represent Israel ten sank into complete obscurity. Absolutely nothing is known of them apart from the incident here recorded. Their names have been blotted out of the book of life. On the other hand, Caleb and Joshua attained unto great honour in their inheritance. It is also significant that at the moment when they proclaimed the hopelessness of fulfilling the project set before them, Yahweh re-emphasised His intention of accomplishing His purpose (see Num. 14:21).

**ALL THIS HAPPENED WHEN ISRAEL WAS ON THE EVE OF SUCCESS: WITHIN SIGHT OF THE PROMISED LAND! NOTE THE WARNING OF 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13.**

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## THE PEOPLE REVOLT AND ARE CONDEMNED TO DIE IN THE WILDERNESS

*Discouraged by the report of the ten spies, and ignoring the appeal of Caleb and the example of Joshua, the people revolt and proclaim their intention of electing a new captain to replace Moses and lead them back to Egypt. In return, Yahweh threatens to disinherit and abandon the whole nation, but is dissuaded by the intercession of Moses. He agrees to save the nation, but not that faithless generation which He condemns to die in the wilderness. Meanwhile, the people elect their captain, but recognising the hopelessness of making their way back to Egypt, attempt to obtain the land by their own efforts in rebellion against Yahweh. They are defeated by the Canaanites with much loss of life.*

**The Dismay And Faithlessness Of The People — vv. 1-5**

*On hearing the spies' discouraging report, the congregation spends a sleepless night in fruitless weeping and lamentation. Next morning, the leaders of the people voice their complaints to Moses and Aaron, and then plan to appoint a captain to lead them back to Egypt.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried"** — Contrast this statement with their rejoicing when they passed through the Red Sea. Then they "sang" (Exod. 15:1). However, neither their singing nor crying were motivated by faith. Having heard the spies' report of the warlike ability of the Canaanites, fear moved the people, and expressed itself in loud complaints.

**"And the people wept that night"** — Their fears became the subject of family discussions that continued throughout the night. The more they moaned, the more desperate their situation appeared. They claimed that Yahweh was no longer interested in their welfare, but was about to

abandon them to the Amorites (see Deut. 1:27). The whole faithless congregation seethed with the spirit of revolt (Psa. 106:25).

**VERSE 2**

**"And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron"** — Murmuring against Moses became almost habitual on the part of the people! There are recorded ten occasions when this occurred: See p. 131.

**"And the whole congregation said unto them"** — In the morning, after a sleepless and worrying night, depression settled over the camp. The faithless fears of the people flamed into open rebellion, and marching on Moses and Aaron, they made their cowardly demands. They added their slander against Yahweh to that which the spies had pronounced against the land. See their comments as recalled by Moses (Deut. 1:27-28).

**"Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!"** — So much did depression govern them that they claimed that Yahweh hated them (Deut. 1:27). There was no excuse for such disgraceful be-

haviour. Yahweh had promised to lead them into the land successfully, just as He had led them that far; and after all that He had done for them, it was completely irrational that they should doubt His power now! In expressing their wish to return to Egypt the people conveniently overlooked the bitterness of their slavery.

**"Or would God we had died in this wilderness"** — Overwhelmed with disappointment caused by the depressing report of the spies, the people of Israel spake childishly and foolishly without proper thought. They did so in the language of prayer, invoking God to grant their request. Such senseless, petulant talk bears its own condemnation. Yahweh accepted it on its face value, and gave the people what they requested (vv. 27-29), so that ultimately they did perish in the wilderness! This incident teaches the need to exercise care in expressions and vows uttered in prayer, for Yahweh will require them of us. When we pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", we need to carry out the conditions upon which we ask forgiveness, otherwise we may be condemning ourselves. Christ warned that idle words uttered in such a context will be required of those who so speak (Matt. 12:36).

### VERSE 3

**"And wherefore hath Yahweh brought us into this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?"** Note the hypocrisy. The men of war (!) claimed that they were not so concerned for themselves as for their wives and little ones. Yahweh's response is given in v. 31: the children for whom the Israelites expressed concern would enter the land, whilst all the adult males would die in the wilderness, in accordance with their expressed desire! How often have disciples allowed consideration for wives and children to divert them from a faithful course! "We do it for the children's sake, to keep them to the truth", is often advanced as an excuse to justify forms of behaviour or relaxation that, in fact, can draw away from the Truth. The word for "children" in this verse signifies very young toddlers. The RV renders the word as *little ones*. A further statement made at the time, and Moses' reaction thereto is recorded in Deut. 1:25-32. The people rejected his exhortation.

**"Were it not better for us to return to Egypt?"** — The word "better" is rendered *good* by Young, who declares there is no comparative form in the original. The Israelites did not compare the state of things in Egypt with their present condition, but simply declared that they wanted to return, that it would be "good" to do so. They forgot the harshness of the slavery in Egypt, and the bitterness of the cry that they had then raised to heaven for help.

### VERSE 4

**"And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt"** — They actually appointed the captain (Neh. 9:17), but he availed nought. It possibly was this captain who recommended that they attempt to invade the land by force though rejected by Yahweh (see v. 40-44. See also Deut. 17:16; Hos. 11:5; Acts 7:39).

### VERSE 5

**"Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel"** — Overwhelmed by sorrow and shame, Moses and Aaron humbled themselves before the people and before Yahweh. They did so in order to plead with the former to abandon the folly of their proposal. The "assembly of the congregation" is *qahal edath*, "ecclesia of witness". The term probably denotes representatives of the tribes. The word "children" is better *sons*, and could relate to men in authority. The stirring exhortation by which Moses and Aaron attempted to dissuade those gathered before them from proceeding with their project is given in Deut. 1:29-31. The reaction of the men with whom the two brothers pleaded is reported by Stephen: "They thrust him (Moses) from them" (Acts 7:39).

### Caleb and Joshua Exhort The People In Vain — vv. 6-10

*Caleb and Joshua now plead with the people. Sharing the anguish of Moses and Aaron they tear their cloaks to indicate their sorrow, and then appeal to the people to reconsider their intentions. They remind them of the quality of the land, and declare that Yahweh is able to deliver it to them if they trust and obey Him. But the people spurn the appeal of faith. Irritated beyond all measure they make ready*

to stone these courageous two, but Yahweh intervenes.

## VERSE 6

**"And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes"** — These two courageous men stood before the angry people and pleaded with them. They tore their cloaks in the age-old sign of bereavement, to demonstrate the intensity of their feelings. But they were only two against ten; two out of the whole congregation of two million! Nevertheless, they ultimately won an inheritance in the land whilst the majority died in the wilderness. Let us heed the lesson, and take courage (1 Cor. 10:11).

## VERSE 7

**"And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land"** — The people may have heard this with impatience, for they had already heard this from the other spies (Num. 13:27; Deut. 1:25). But it was reiterated by Joshua and Caleb to remind the people that as such it was worth fighting for.

## VERSE 8

**"If Yahweh delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us"** — In stating this, Joshua and Caleb reiterated portion of Moses' exhortation to the people at this time, as recorded in Deut. 1:29-31 though not included in Numbers. Moses had already stated that Yahweh would fight for the nation, and had reminded the people of how He had protected them throughout their wilderness "as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place" (Deut. 1:31). But the people remained unmoved. Nor did the exhortation of Joshua and Caleb, supplementing that of Moses, change their hearts. The word "delight" as used by Joshua and Caleb signifies to *incline* towards the nation. See its use in 1 Kings 10:9; Psa. 18:19; Isa. 62:4, and note the tender expressions of Jer. 29:11-14 illustrating the meaning of the word.

**"A land which floweth with milk and honey"** — Again Joshua and Caleb reiterated the quality of the inheritance that the people were giving away, emphasising the value of fighting for it. See note Exod. 3:8; Num. 13:27.

## VERSE 9

**"Only rebel not ye against Yahweh"** — Note also Moses' comment — Deut. 9:23-24.

**"Neither fear ye the people of the land"** — See also Deut. 7:18; 20:3. For "the fear of man bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in Yahweh shall be safe" (Prov. 29:25).

**"For they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them"** — This has been rendered: "They (are) like our bread, their shadow hath turned aside from off them." The bread of Israel was the manna, described as "light bread" in Num. 21:5. It melted when the sun shone on it (Exod. 16:21). Joshua and Caleb claimed that the Canaanites would do likewise if attacked in faith, as the Song of Moses predicted (see Exod. 15:15). In the margin "defence" is rendered as *shadow*. Shadows depart before the light of the sun, and Caleb and Joshua reasoned that the Canaanites would be destroyed by the power of Yahweh Who is described as a Sun (Psa. 84:11). To use the expression in another way, the Canaanites, as bread, could be "eaten up" of Israel. See Num. 24:8; Josh. 2:9,11.

**"And Yahweh is with us"** — As Yahweh was with Israel, the Canaanites could not successfully resist them (see 2 Chron. 32:7-8; Psa. 34:7-8; Rom. 8:31; 1 Pet. 3:10-13).

**"Fear them not"** — This was the constant exhortation of Moses to the second generation of Israelites when they were about to enter the land. See Deut. 1:21, 29; 3:2,22,28; 7:18,21 etc.

## VERSE 10

**"But all the congregation bade stone them with stones"** — The word "congregation" in this place is *edah* from a root denoting "witness" but in this action it witnessed to its own destruction.

**"And the glory of Yahweh appeared"** — The cloud above the Tabernacle probably appeared exceedingly luminous "like devouring fire" as in Exod. 24:16-17.

**"In the tabernacle of the congregation"** — Here the Hebrew for "congregation" is *mo'ed* and signifies *appointed time* (see note Lev. 1:1), denoting the tabernacle, or tent of meeting.

**"Before all the children of Israel"** —

The tents of Moses and Aaron were on the east of the Tabernacle in front of its entrance. Therefore, when the representatives of the nation converged upon it, they also approached the tents of these leaders. But at that point Yahweh dramatically intervened in the dispute, probably by His glory shining forth brilliantly in the cloud above the Tabernacle. This ominous sign reminded the people of His power, and caused all murmurings to cease. It also saved His faithful servants from being stoned to death by the disappointed, impatient and treacherous congregation.

#### Yahweh Provoked To Anger — vv. 11-12

*In view of the base provocation of the faithless people, Yahweh warns Moses that He will smite them with pestilence and disinherit them (see Psalm 106:26).*

#### VERSE 11

“And Yahweh said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me?” — “How long” signifies *to what extent* do they think they can provoke Me? The word “provoke” is rendered as *despise* in the R.V. and by Dr. Young.

“And how long will it be before they believe Me” — The word “believe” is from the Hebrew *aman*, and signifies “rely upon”, “trust in”, “have faith in”, and not *believe* in the sense of assent. It is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *pistis* which denotes faith in the sense of trust and full reliance. The “signs” were many that Israel received and which should have stimulated such a faith in them. They included the provision of food, drink, clothing, protection against enemies such as Amalek, and other forms of divine help (see Deut. 8:3).

#### VERSE 12

“I will smite them with the pestilence” — The Hebrew word signifies *destruction*, and is rendered by the LXX as *death*.

“And disinherit them” — Young renders this as *dispossess*.

“And will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they” — This offer of Yahweh comprised a public test on Moses, and his refusal of the honour demonstrated to the people his disinterestedness in leading them. He did so because he was deeply interested in their welfare, and not in his own glory. His

attitude on this occasion revealed to all that those who stand for Yahweh lose nothing by so doing. The threat Yahweh made to the disobedient generation, was not mere idle words, for, in substance, it was carried out on it; for that generation perished in the wilderness.

#### The Intercession of Moses — vv. 13-19

*Moses rises from his despondency to intercede for the people. He advances two objections to Yahweh's plan, and on that basis urges his plea. First, he declares, other nations will hear of the failure of Israel to enter the land, and will conclude that Yahweh lacks the power to establish His purpose. Second, he quotes Yahweh's own words regarding Himself, proclaiming His goodness and mercy. On the basis of these two considerations, he pleads with God to reconsider His decision.*

#### VERSE 13

“And Moses said unto Yahweh” — Interesting references to Moses' appeal to Yahweh at this time are found in Deut. 9:26; Psa. 106:23.

“Then the Egyptians shall hear it, for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them” — Moses previously had successfully interceded for the people on this basis (Exod. 32:12). Whilst his prayer evinced the greatest love for them, its first principle is that Yahweh's name should be universally honoured and respected. See Deut. 32:27; Ezek. 20:9,14.

#### VERSE 14

“And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that Thou art Yahweh among this people” — See Exod. 15:14. Knowledge of Yahweh's acts in overthrowing the Egyptian forces and other powerful enemies circulated throughout Canaan and undermined the confidence of the people in being able to resist Israel. See Josh. 2:9-10; 5:1.

“That Thou Yahweh art seen face to face” — The Hebrew *ayin* signifies the eye as in Isa. 52:8 where the same expression is used. The eyes are the most revealing organs of the body. When one gazes into the eyes of another, the true intentions of such are revealed. The mouth might speak or smile hypocritically, but if the eyes do not reflect equal warmth, care needs to be taken.

“And that Thy cloud standeth over



them, and that Thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night" — See Exod. 13:21. The syntax of these verses are disjointed in the Hebrew. Moses, as did Paul in writing to the Corinthian brethren when greatly moved (particularly his second epistle), pressed his arguments one upon another without regard for grammatical finesse. The style reveals an urgency as though he was apprehensive of some imminent, drastic outbreak of divine wrath unless it could be arrested. This he attempted to do by crowding in every argument and intercession that he could muster. He first did so on the basis of the *honour* of Yahweh's name (vv. 13-14); then on its *power* (vv. 15-17); finally on its *glory* (vv. 18-19).

These verses express four things that the heathen pondered in regard to Israel:

1. That Yahweh was among them.
2. That He had manifested Himself intimately to them ("face to face").
3. That the cloud (symbol of His care and guidance) overshadowed them continuously.
4. That they were under divine protection.

The congregation (*Edah*, "witness") witnessed to this, but the disobedience of the people destroyed the "witness" and provided cause for the enemies of Yahweh to blaspheme (2 Sam. 12:14). The heathen always watches Israel seeking opportunity to condemn. See Josh. 2:8-11; 4:22-24; 1 Tim. 3:6-7.

#### VERSE 15

"Now if Thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard of the fame of Thee will speak, saying" — Instead of fame, the *LXX* has *name*. Yahweh's name guarantees the perpetuity of Israel as a nation (Exod. 3:15; Rom. 11:26-30).

#### VERSE 16

"Because Yahweh was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness" — Moses urged that Yahweh have mercy on Israel and turn from His intention to destroy the people because His action would be misinterpreted as indicating a lack of power to fulfil His purpose. See Deut. 9:28.

#### VERSE 17

"And now, I beseech thee, let the power

of my Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying" — According to *The Companion Bible*, this is one of the places where the *Sopherim*, the Jewish revisers of the text of Scripture, altered *Yahweh to Adonai*, so that it appears in our text as Lord instead of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 18

"Yahweh is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty" — In pleading the cause of the people, Moses quoted Yahweh's own words about Himself (cp. Exod. 34:6-7. See also Psa. 103:8; 145:8; Jonah 4:2). Yahweh is longsuffering in that He bears long with His people, "remembering that they are dust" (Psa. 103:14). He had also proclaimed Himself great in *mercy*. The Hebrew word in this place is *chesed* and relates to the favour He bestows upon those of His choice, rather than relating to the forgiveness of sins. A closely related word is found in Psalm 86:2 and is there rendered holy. However, the margin gives, *one whom Thou favourest*. The favour of Yahweh is of great value, for He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17), and He bestows such particularly upon those whom He claims as His own. Some give the meaning of the word as "loving loyalty", or "lovingkindness". Moses effectively pressed home that aspect of Yahweh's character.

Yahweh is also noted for "forgiving iniquity and transgression". The verb is from the Hebrew *nasa*, "to lift up, to bear with". Young renders it as borne, as in Gen. 4:13; 13:6. Sin will be borne away or forgiven by Yahweh when it is confessed, forsaken, and atoned for (1 John 1:9). But despite Yahweh's mercy, He will not forgive one who continues in sin and rebellion. Hence Moses' statement: "by no means clearing the guilty". The verb is *naqah*, "to make clean". In Zech. 5:3 it is rendered "cut off"; and is used of purging out liars and perjurers. God will not endlessly purge out such, but will limit such action to the fourth generation.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" — See comment on Exod. 20:5, and note the important addition there stated: "the fourth generation of them that hate Me". The children will not suffer for the sins of their fathers unless they imitate their evil ways. See Ezek. 18:14-17.

**VERSE 19**

**“Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people”** — Moses had previously successfully interceded for the people in similar terms (see Exod. 34:9). His petition is the prayer of one who recognises that sin has been committed. See Luke 18:13.

**“According to the greatness of Thy mercy”** — See v. 18, and cp. Psa. 106:45.

**“And as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even unto now”** — See Psa. 78:38 for a comment upon the measure of Yahweh’s forgiveness of His rebellious people.

**The Nation Forgiven But Criminals Condemned — vv. 20-25**

*Yahweh grants Moses’ request and the nation is saved. Nevertheless, God warns that the salvation of the nation will not change the fate of that rebellious generation. As unrepentant sinners the people belonging to it will perish in the wilderness though the faithful among them will be saved.*

**VERSE 20**

**“And Yahweh said, I have pardoned according to thy word”** — The pardon was extended to the nation as such, and at the request of Moses (see Psa. 106:23; James 5:16), but the pardon did not extend to the criminals among it: the generation that came out of Egypt.

**VERSE 21**

**“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh”** — Five times (the number of grace) this statement, or one similar to it, is found in Scripture (See Psa. 72:19; Isa. 6:3; 11:9; Hab. 2:14). Yahweh’s glory is first intellectual, then moral, finally physical. Israel was called out of Egypt to manifest this glory (Deut. 4:6-8; 28:10), and when that generation failed to do so, it was abandoned to perish in the wilderness. However, this temporary failure of the nation did not mean the abandonment of the purpose. Israel shall yet reveal the object that Yahweh had in mind in calling it out of Egypt (see Jer. 13:11; 33:8-9; Rom. 11:26-27). Meanwhile, God is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), that is, a people designed to reflect His glory. The manifestation of such is necessary to their

salvation, otherwise, they, too, “shall be cut off” (Rom. 11:22). In the statement before us, the two words *as* are in italics, indicating that they are not found in the original. If they are eliminated, the statement becomes a more definite declaration of fact: “Truly I live (and) all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh”. Though Israel had the Tabernacle in its midst and mouthed the name of Yahweh, the people acted as though He were not a reality, as though He did not live! The world today acts similarly. Some are so bold as to declare that “God is dead!” But when Yahweh moves to re-establish His rule on earth, flesh will be brought to realise the fact that “He lives!” How will that be done? The context of the statement before us proclaims Yahweh’s intention and vow that sin on earth will be put down, and His sovereignty established therein. Christ’s reign on earth will bring all into subjection to Him (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:10; Rev. 20).

**VERSE 22**

**“Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice”** — In confirmation of this statement, see Deut. 1:35; Psa. 95:11; 106:26; Heb. 3:17-18. Young renders the statement “have seen My glory” in the present tense: *who are seeing My glory* (see v. 10). The word “miracles” is *owthoth*, “signs” such as in Gen. 1:14. The remarkable manner in which Israel was sustained throughout the wilderness wanderings comprised a tremendous sign as stated in Deut. 8:1-7. The reference to the “ten times” that Israel had tempted Yahweh need not be taken literally for in spiritual numerics, ten signifies a numerous, though undisclosed number (cp. 1 Sam. 29:5; Psa. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19 etc.). Nevertheless, as outlined previously, the Scriptures record ten occasions when the people murmured against Moses.

**VERSE 23**

**“Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers”** — See also Num. 32:11. This condemnation and fate of the generation that came out of Egypt seems to have inspired the writing of the 90th Psalm by Moses. Consider the following lines:

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*"For all our days are passed away in Thy wrath;*

*We spend our years as a tale that is told.*

*The days of our years are threescore years and ten;*

*And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,*

*Yet is their strength labour and sorrow;*

*For it is soon cut off, and we fly away"* (vv. 9-10).

These words are true of the doomed generation that left Egypt, but do not necessarily apply to the normal run of people.

**"Neither shall any of them that provoked me see it"** — The word "provoked" also signifies *despised* as in v. 11. That generation despised the inheritance offered by Yahweh.

### VERSE 24

**"But My servant Caleb"** — See Num. 13:6; Deut. 1:36. Caleb alone is mentioned, yet Joshua, Eleazar and other of the priests and perhaps Levites also entered the land (cp. Josh. 14:1; 22:13). Why is Caleb only mentioned at this time? Because he represented the people whereas Joshua, Eleazar and so forth were all of the Moses or Priestly parties, and represented such. As belonging to the Levites they were not numbered with the ordinary people. Caleb was an exception. He was of the common people, and therefore is alone mentioned. His work of faith was rewarded with an inheritance in the land (Josh. 14:13-15). The record in Joshua revealed:

- Caleb treasured the promises in his heart. So completely did he do so that he was able to quote the date and place he received the promise some 45 years later (Josh. 14:7,10,12).

- Caleb expected to fight for his inheritance. His attitude showed that he recognised that life under Yahweh is a life of action, of endeavour (Matt. 11:12; Phil. 3:10; 1 Tim. 6:14).

- Caleb expected hardship and was not deterred by trial. He knew that the Anakims infested the country, but he believed that Yahweh had spared him for something greater than retirement, and recognised that he had been granted the strength to accomplish the work set before him (Josh. 14:11).

- Caleb revealed both dependence and confidence in Yahweh. He made no boast of his own ability or strength, but placed implicit trust in Yahweh (Josh.

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

14:12; cp. Rom. 8:31,37).

- Caleb radiated loyalty and faith without concern for promotion. With Joshua, he obviously inspired the younger generation to manifest courage and faith in Yahweh during the years of wandering, thus helping to prepare them to enter the land.

- Caleb had to ask for that which had been promised him. He asked, believing that he would receive, because he asked in faith (Heb. 11:1,6).

**"Because he had another spirit with him"** — He was not only bold and courageous, but also faithful.

**"And hath followed Me fully"** — See Num. 32:11-12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8,9,14. The Hebrew *vaimalle acharai* can signify *he filled after Me*. The expression denotes that whilst Yahweh showed the course that should be followed, and so led as a Shepherd (Psa. 80:1), Caleb filled himself with the desire to follow after, wherever Yahweh should lead. See Phil. 3:10-15; Col. 1:19-24.

**"Him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it"** — The bold, adventurous, faithful Caleb was the type of person to enter, subdue and occupy the land. The expression "his seed" includes Israelites of his disposition, and not merely his children. Such are men of faith in contrast to the spies who delivered their "evil report". They claimed that the land would "eat up the inhabitants thereof" (Num. 13:32). Their words proved true because of their lack of faith. Therefore they provided a factual assessment of the matter as viewed from the eyes of flesh. They overlooked that faith would ensure victory, because it was beyond their ability to discern the unseen. Such a faith reveals hope as a *substance* that can so motivate believers as to snatch victory out of defeat (see Heb. 11:1; 1 John 5:4). Faith gave Caleb courage, and enabled him to see what was hidden from the eyes of others (see 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:26-27).

### VERSE 25

**"(Now the Amalekites and Canaanites dwelt in the valley)"** — These words are in parenthesis to disclose to the reader that whilst the conference was proceeding in Israel, the enemy were making preparation to resist any occupation of the land. Actually, these tribes dwelt in the hill country ("the mountain") to the

north of Kadesh (see Num. 13:29; 14:43, 45), but their army had descended down to where the Israelites were encamped. The Hebrew of this verse can be rendered in the present tense: *are abiding*. The Canaanites had set up an ambush in the low country south of the Judean Hills, and awaited the opportunity to attack the Israelites (see vv. 41-43).

**"Tomorrow turn you and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea"**

— The nations of southern Canaan, having marshalled their forces, and awaiting the opportunity to attack Israel, the people are recommended to retire into the wilderness adjacent to Kadesh, and to move south towards the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea. This recommendation was made because Yahweh had withdrawn His aid, and, therefore, their enemies would have a decisive advantage over them. That generation was condemned to remain in the wilderness "many days" (Deut. 1:26). The desert would comprise a protection for them from the attacks of such as the Canaanites.

**Sentenced To Hopeless Wandering — vv. 26-38**

*The doom of that faithless generation is now spelled out in clear and unequivocal terms. The people are plainly told that Yahweh will no longer go with them, and that they will die in the wilderness. Lack of faith, courage and determination have their inevitable result. The declaration of Yahweh in this section should be compared with that contained in Ezekiel 20:5-26. Lack of faith on the part of those called out of the Gentiles destroys both the present and the future for them. They become "of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).*

**VERSE 26**

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying"** — The divine decree is now pronounced.

**VERSE 27**

**"How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me"** — Yahweh expresses Himself as being completely wearied by the continual murmuring of the people (Deut. 1:34). It was murmuring that de-

stroyed the hope of that generation; it is murmuring that can destroy hope today. Hence Paul exhorted: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:14-15).

**VERSE 28**

**"Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith Yahweh, as ye have spoken in Mine ears, so will I do to you"** — If the words in italics are eliminated, Yahweh proclaims simply, but more effectively: *I live!* The people had spoken and acted as though He did not live, or was not able to deliver them. Now, to demonstrate His living reality, He would do unto them as they requested!

**VERSE 29**

**"Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward"** — The wastage in the wilderness was replaced by a new generation of about the same number, as a comparison of the census taken at the beginning of the wanderings with that taken at the end reveals (cp. Num. 1 and 26).

**"Which have murmured against Me"** — This defines those who were to die. There were others apart from Joshua and Caleb who entered the land, Eleazar being among them. The tribe of Levi was not numbered among those who left Egypt. (See Num. 34:17; Josh. 14:1).

**VERSE 30**

**"Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun"** — Of the general Israelites (excluding the priests and levites) only Caleb and Joshua were promised an inheritance in the land. Yet Yahweh's promise to give the land to Israel, confirmed by an oath, would be vindicated, for it was a promise given to the nation (Exod. 6:8), and not necessarily to the individuals thereof. Therefore it would be fulfilled, as it was (Num. 32:11; Josh. 21:45).

The rejection of the first generation ended Moses' hopes for their regeneration. Their long slavery in Egypt had debased their minds; their confidence in

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

the Divine protection had given way before their sense of physical inferiority, and their complete deficiency of moral courage. "Back to Egypt" had been their cry at a time when the promised inheritance was within sight (vv. 3-4). The brave Joshua and Caleb in vain had reproved the miserable lack of faith at the time on the part of the other ten, and the people in general. Their own lives had been endangered by their rebuke of their fellows. And this revealed that the nation as a whole was not equal to the challenge. In bitter disappointment, Moses perceived that people accustomed to the luxuries of a relaxing climate, and inured to slavery from birth, are not the materials from which could be constructed a bold, conquering and independent nation, worthy of inheriting the Land promised. It comprises a warning to those called to obey God in conditions of affluence and ease: the saints, in every age, need hardening for the Kingdom. Thirty-eight years of wandering in the desert assisted in hardening and equipping the new generation to attain unto the inheritance before it (Deut. 8:1-9).

### VERSE 31

**"But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised"** — The adults of the generation that left Egypt doubted whether the strength of Yahweh would be sufficient to give them the land, but hypocritically claimed that they were motivated by concern for the helpless ones in their midst. Yahweh's reply was that they would perish, but the alleged helpless ones would obtain the land. See on v. 3. The *Septuagint* renders the statement "know the land" as "*possess the land*", that being the real force of "to know".

### VERSE 32

**"But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness"** — See on v. 29. It is ironical that throughout the 38 years of wandering through the wilderness, members of the doomed generation had to bear with them the coffin of a man who refused a grave in Egypt because of his faith in the visitation of Yahweh (Gen. 50:25-26; Josh. 24:32; Heb. 11:22). "Thou shalt carry up my bones from hence," he had, commanded. They now had to do this knowing that *their* bones would be buried in the sands of the

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

desert. Paul comments that "they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:5). The Greek word is *katastronnumi*; signifying to *strew, to scatter* as a farmer would seeds. His words imply that the wilderness was strewn with the corpses of those who had been called to life, but chose the way of death. There were numbered at least 600,000 male adults (excluding Levites) who came out of Egypt, which, with women, would represent a company of 1,200,000 people. They all perished within forty years, representing some 30,000 deaths a year, or some 600 per week! There would have to be delays for the purpose of burying as they moved from place to place. In consequence, their contribution to the landscape was the defiling presence of the tombs of the dead. Yet, with faith and courage, their progress throughout that same wilderness could have led to their inheritance in the land! The same alternative faces all who embrace the truth.

### VERSE 33

**"And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years"** — The literal significance of the Hebrew word rendered "wander" is to *pasture or feed* (as in the margin). Accordingly Yahweh promised to care for those of whom the older generation had expressed concern. He would see that they were fed in the wilderness though their fathers died therein. He would provide for all the needs of the rising generation.

**"And bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness"** — The children would suffer through the faithlessness of their parents, described as their "whoredoms". Ezekiel describes the call of Israel out of Egypt as an invitation to espousal by Yahweh to the nation which was accepted by the latter. However, Israel proved wanton (Ezek. 16:8; see also Isa. 54:5). Her whoredoms took the form of idolatry (see Lev. 17:7; Jer. 3:9; Ezek. 16:15-17), including the worship of self — the worst form of idolatry (Col. 3:5). The last of the old generation perished at the brook Zered (Deut. 2:13-14).

### VERSE 34

**"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years"** — The prophetic day for a year principle is carried

out in regard to the wilderness wanderings. Compare this with the future forty years of restoration (Mic. 7:15-17).

**"And ye shall know My breach of promise"** — Due to the rebelliousness of the people in breaking their covenant (Exod. 24:3), Yahweh was forced to change His purpose in regard to them. The Hebrew word *tenuw'ath* signifies *alienation*, from a root denoting to *refuse, forbid, neutralise*. A related word is rendered *disallow* (Num. 30:5,8,11). The R. V. renders "my breach of promise" as *My alienation*, and gives an alternative in the margin: *the revoking of My promise*.

#### VERSE 35

**"I Yahweh have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against Me"** — The statement *gathered together against Me* implies that there was an organised rebellion against Yahweh, in which the people met to make a united protest. Similar meetings for that purpose are recorded in Num. 16:11; 27:3 etc. Apparently, they "murmured in their tents all night", and next morning this flared into open rebellion and organised protest (Deut. 1:27-28).

**"In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die"** — The rebellious generation was condemned to wander without hope.

#### VERSE 36

**"And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land"** — The Hebrew word rendered "slander" is given as *evil report* in Gen. 37:2.

#### VERSE 37

**"Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before Yahweh"** — A special judgment was meted out to the ten faithless spies. They died by some stroke of divine visitation, for the word *plague* does not necessarily signify pestilence or illness. But even so the people did not learn the lesson their fate was designed to convey. Indeed, the sudden death of these men probably was the cause of the rest of the nation attempting to reverse their decision to refuse to invade the land (see v. 40). But it was too late for

such action. And in this there is a warning for later generations. See 1 Cor. 10:10; Heb. 3:10-11; Jude 5.

#### VERSE 38

**"But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still"** — In their survival faith was vindicated.

#### Further Rebellion; Further Punishment - vv. 39-45

*The shock of their doom to wander hopelessly in the wilderness, supplemented by the sudden and unexpected death of the ten faithless spies stirs the people to a belated and tragic attempt to reverse it. They defiantly declare that they will enter the land anyway. They not only decide to do so without consulting Yahweh, but ignore the advice and appeal of Moses. Under such conditions victory is impossible. Israel suffers a crushing defeat, leaving the people nothing to do but to endure their punishment: to wander in the wilderness until death claims them.*

#### VERSE 39

**"And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel; and the people mourned greatly"** — The people were apprised of their fate, and the death of the faithless spies demonstrated there was no escaping it. This caused them to mourn, but their mourning availed little, for it was too late; and, anyway, was not related to faithfulness. When people become abandoned to rebellion as had that generation of Israelites, Yahweh is obliged to keep His word and abandon them to the judgment he has pronounced. In such circumstances, all the weeping and wailing to prevent it will avail nought (Matt. 13:41-42; Luke 13:28).

#### VERSE 40

**"And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain"** — The evening was given over to digesting the doleful news delivered by Moses that they would perish in the wilderness, a message that was given added force by the sudden death of the ten unfaithful spies. Next morning, in desperation, the people decide they will attempt by force that which they had not the faith to do. With that in mind, the army advanced towards the mountainous country to the north of Kadesh in a

belated attack on the land.

**"Saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up into the place which Yahweh hath promised for we have sinned"** — The confession that they had sinned was not made from any real comprehension of the magnitude of their rebellion, but out of their disappointment at the turn of events, and the realisation that they had lost the promised land. If in true humility they had confessed to their sin, and humbly submitted to fulfil whatever Yahweh might have laid upon them for atonement thereof, they may have obtained forgiveness. But there was a defiance in their attitude. Their "repentance" manifested itself in a frantic effort to avoid the punishment by a fleshly exercise of force, and not by deep contrition through recognising the enormity of their previous conduct.

#### VERSE 41

**"And Moses said"** — Moses appealed to the people before they left, for he stayed in the camp. His words are recorded in Deut. 1:42.

**"Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of Yahweh? but it shall not prosper"** — The act of the people was an act of rebellion. They had forsaken God, and realised that the enemy was awaiting the opportunity to attack (cp. v. 25). In "transgressing the commandment" they added to their sin.

#### VERSE 42

**"Go not up, for Yahweh is not among you"** — Moses urged that in the absence of Yahweh's blessing the venture must fail. In contrast, note the action and prayers of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:3-18, 20) and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 32:7-8). Against great odds, the faith of those men brought victory.

**"That ye be not smitten before your enemies"** — The presence of Yahweh to help is always essential for success as far as His people are concerned, for theirs is a fight of faith (cp. Josh. 7:8, 12; Psa. 44:2-11).

#### VERSE 43

**"For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword"** — Defeat was certain under the conditions in which they proposed to battle with the enemy.

**"Because ye are turned away from**

**Yahweh, therefore Yahweh will not be with you"** — See this thought and exhortation emphasised in Josh. 1:5-9; Heb. 13:6; Jas. 4:8; 1 Pet. 3:10-18.

#### VERSE 44

**"But they presumed to go up unto the hill top"** — See Deut. 1:43. In spite of Moses' warning, the Israelites presumptuously ascended the hill country to the north of Kadesh to engage the enemy in battle. The word "presumed" is from the Hebrew *'aphal*, "to swell up, be elated, lifted up". Feeling confident in their ability to repulse the enemy under the leadership of their newly appointed captain, they decided to attack without the aid of Yahweh.

**"Nevertheless the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and Moses, departed not out of the camp"** — As Moses had warned them, Yahweh would not be among them (v. 42). The Ark of the Covenant, the token of His presence, remained with Moses in the camp. This statement shows that the Ark could be used on such occasions (see Num. 10:35) instead of remaining always in the midst of the tribes, or in the Most Holy (see Josh. 3:3-17; 4:5-18; 6:4-13; 1 Sam. 4:3). The fact that both the Ark and Moses remained in the camp was a clear token that Yahweh was not with the people in their declaration of war.

#### VERSE 45

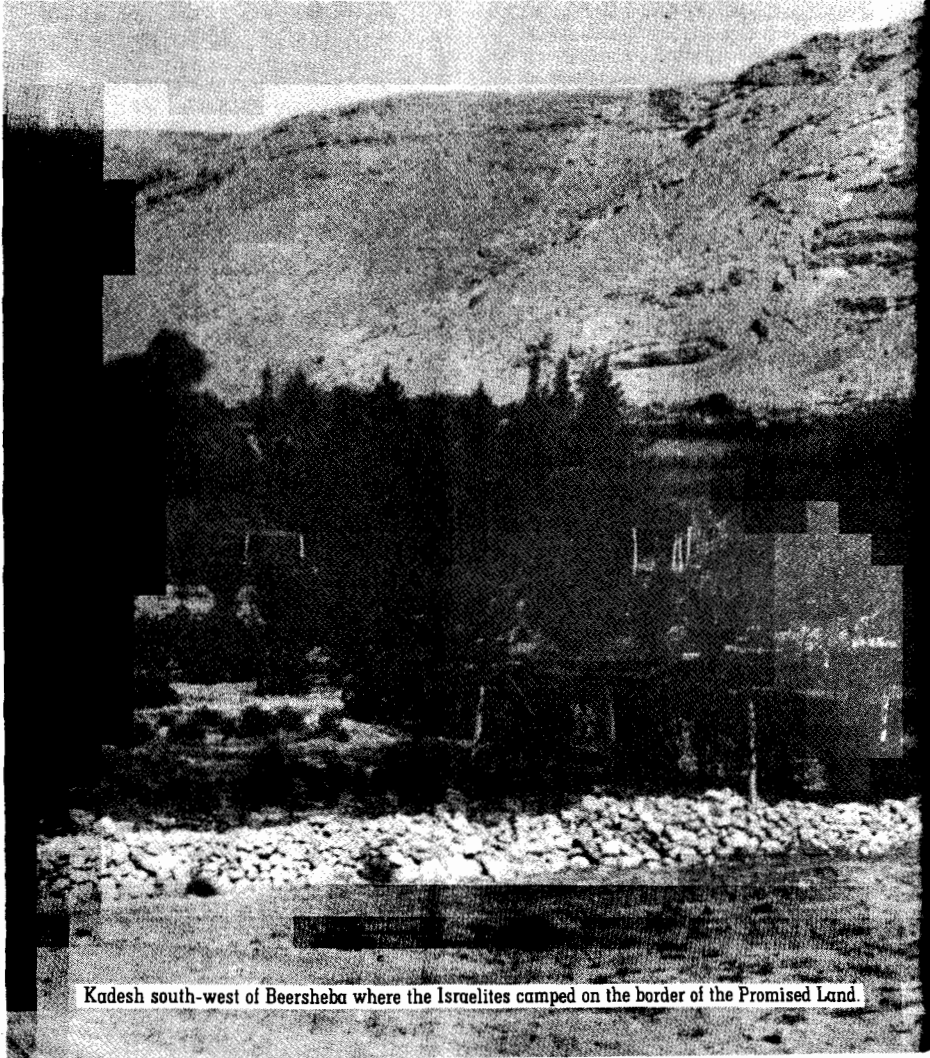
**"Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in the hill, and smote them"** — Moses declared that the Amorites chased them "as bees do". Nothing is said in the verse before us regarding the Amorites, but they would be designated under the general title of "Canaanites". The expression Moses used is very descriptive. When bees are provoked or disturbed the whole swarm combines to attack and pursue with great courage and fury whatever annoys them. The Amalekites and Canaanites did so on this occasion.

**"And discomfited them"** — The word is from the Hebrew *kathath* and signifies to crush by beating. It can be rendered *pounded them blow by blow*.

**"Even unto Hormah"** — Hormah signifies *devoted place or destruction*. It was also called Zephath (Jud. 1:17). It was the residence of a Canaanitish king in the south of Palestine (Josh. 12:14). The city

was taken by Joshua and assigned to Judah (Josh. 15:30) but finally fell to Simeon (Jud. 19:4; 1 Chron. 4:20). Hormah has not been positively identified, though, according to Unger, Tell es-seba', about three miles east of Beersheba is a likely location. However, *The Century Bible* quotes Grattenberg's *Atlas of the Bible* to identify it tentatively with Tell el-Mishash, ten miles east of Beersheba. The names of the various places are quite significant. The Israelites were chased from Kadesh (or the *Sanctuary*), known also as En-Mishpat, or *Well of Judgment* (Gen. 14:7) to the *Place of Destruction*

(Hormah), and were driven east to the border of Seir (Deut. 1:44). After this disastrous defeat, the scattered remnants of the army returned to Kadesh and pleaded with Yahweh for forgiveness, but the repeated failures of that generation of Israelites proved that it was unsuitable for His purpose, and He turned a deaf ear to their appeal (Deut. 1:45). Israel found itself in the position that the unwise virgins will find themselves at Christ's coming (Matt. 7:23; 25:11-12). Meanwhile, the people remained in Kadesh "many days" (Deut. 1:26; Num. 14:25).



Kadesh south-west of Beersheba where the Israelites camped on the border of the Promised Land.



## 4. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION (Chapter 15:1-41)

*With the rejection by Yahweh of the first generation, the nation entered into a period of wilderness wandering without hope that lasted for some thirty-eight years (Deut. 2:14). Little is recorded of the events of that period, but it appears that the people, rejected by Yahweh, and lacking faith, abandoned all hope and no longer practised the forms of acceptable worship. The Tabernacle ceremonials were not conducted, the rite of circumcision was not maintained, nor the Passover celebrated (Josh. 5:2-10). Stephen declares that "God gave them up . . ." (Acts 7:42; cp. Psa. 81:12). In return the people gave themselves to apostasy (Amos 5:25-26; Acts 7:42-43). However, whilst Yahweh gave that generation up, He did not repudiate the nation as a whole. The new, rising generation was educated and tested by teaching and trial during that same time (Deut. 8:2-3). It is appropriate, therefore, that the subsection now before us in Numbers should draw the attention of the second generation to the requirements of Yahweh when the people entered the land. The instruction regarding burnt-offerings is particularly appropriate following the failure of the spies, for it implies that the rising generation will enter the land, but must give itself to true dedication (Num. 15:1-16); it must also learn to give a place to Yahweh in the home (vv. 17-21); it must avoid sins of ignorance (vv. 22-29), and of presumption (vv. 30-35); and it must maintain a separateness from all other nations by observance of the commandments of Yahweh, demonstrating the purpose of their call by their outward appearance (vv. 36-41).*

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MISCELLANEOUS LAWS FOR  
THE NEXT GENERATION

*Ignoring the old generation doomed to perish in the wilderness, this chapter is directed to those who will enter the land (v. 1), and therefore introduces a note of encouragement. Whereas the old generation has been cut off, the new continues under Yahweh's guidance and favour. However there are important principles that must be kept in mind. The chapter outlines four aspects of worship that comprise all acts of worship. They are: 1. Religion must be sincere and enthusiastic ascending as a sweet savour unto Yahweh (vv. 1-16); 2. The home is to be the springboard of acceptable worship (vv. 17-21). 3. Israel must observe the moral responsibilities to which it is called (vv. 22-36). 4. There is to be an effective public witness (vv. 37-41). In essence, these four principles comprise all the requirements of the Law.*

**a. The Law of Offerings — vv. 1-16**

*Naturally, food and drink offerings require more human labour to produce and prepare than does an animal. Even after grain is sown, it must be threshed, ground and prepared; or, in regard to the vine, pruned, picked, crushed and matured. So as the animal represented the life of the offerer, the food and drink represented his labour and strength. True sacrifice will offer both unto Yahweh: both life and labour!*

**Individual Offerings To Be Resumed — vv. 1-6**

*Personal sacrifice is the foundation of true, effective worship. Yahweh has pardoned the nation (Num. 14:20), though He has condemned the old generation. To be worthy of the land, however, the new generation, when it enters therein, must observe the requirements of worship now laid down.*

**VERSE 1**

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, say-

ing” — This resumption of communication provided a basis of hope for the new generation.

**VERSE 2**

“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you” — It is significant that these words follow immediately after the failure and rejection of the old generation. The fact that they make reference to Israel entering the land, revealed that though Yahweh's purpose with the nation had been delayed by the faithlessness of the first generation, it had not been defeated.

**VERSE 3**

“And will make an offering by fire unto Yahweh” — This statement and instruction implies that the generation to perish would discontinue its offerings. Indeed, that generation rejected by Yahweh, turned back to idolatrous worship such as it was familiar with in Egypt (see Acts 7:43). As already noted, the rite of circumcision

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

was discontinued, and the celebration of the Passover was abandoned, as the people wandered the desert without hope. The failure of the nation at Kadesh, and its banishment into the wilderness were now used to enforce a well-merited lesson upon the new generation of the solemnity of vows and offerings when it entered the land. Among the instructions given in this chapter is a specific warning to avoid the sin committed by those who were to perish in the wilderness (vv. 30-31).

**“A burnt offering, or a sacrifice”** — The burnt or slain offering might be offered in any of the three ways here stipulated as well as ordinary sacrifices which do not come into consideration here. For details see notes on Lev. 1:1-17.

**“In performing a vow”** — The Hebrew word denotes the separation of an animal for that purpose. For specific details see notes on Lev. 7:16; 22:18,21.

**“Or in a freewill offering”** — A sacrifice offered voluntarily. See on Lev. 22:21,23; Deut. 12:6,17.

**“Or in your solemn feasts”** — These were compulsory offerings. See Lev. 23:8,12,36.

**“To make a sweet savour unto Yahweh”** — The Hebrew *niychoach* signifies a savour of rest as in Gen. 8:21. The repetition of these laws highlighted that such offerings must partake of this nature to be acceptable. When offered with genuineness of worship they became really pleasing unto Yahweh — a savour of rest (for modern application, see 2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18).

**“Of the herd, or of the flock”** — This defines the source of acceptable offerings. From the herds were drawn heifers, oxen, bullocks, calves (cp. vv. 8,11; Lev. 1:1-9). From the flocks were taken lambs, sheep, rams, goats and kids (vv. 5,6,11; Lev. 1:10-13). There were also supplementary offerings of poverty in the form of bird-life: pigeons and turtledoves (Lev. 1:14-17). From the ground there were the products of cultivated fields such as barley, wheat, the oil of olive trees, and the fruit of the vine (see vv. 4-10; Lev. 2).

All these offerings represented Israel in various ways, and this the people were expected to recognise. Accordingly, Habakkuk vowed that though there may be no increase from Israel as the field

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

or the flock, “Yet I will rejoice in Yahweh, and joy in the God of my salvation” (Heb. 3:17-18). He would render increase unto Yahweh in spite of any lack of increase from the nation. See also Rom. 15:16; Heb. 13:16.

### VERSE 4

**“Then shall he that offereth his offering unto Yahweh bring a meat offering”** — This is better rendered a *meal*-offering. For further instructions regarding the meal offering, see Lev. 2. The command to offer such an offering in every case as is now given had not been recorded previously, but from Lev. 23:13,18, it had been the practise so to do. The meal offering being of grain, the staff of life, represented the strength of the worshipper's activity given unto Yahweh (cp. John 6:50).

**“Of a tenth deal of flour”** — See note Lev. 5:11. This was an omer (Exod. 16:36), constituting the portion of manna assigned to each individual for his daily food (Exod. 16:16-20). This measure, therefore, was a reminder of the manna, and a token of the lesson represented by it (cp. Deut. 8:3).

**“Mingled with the fourth part of an hin of oil”** — Four is the number of Israel, whilst oil is the constant symbol of the Word of Truth. See notes Exod. 29:40; Lev. 14:10; 23:13.

### VERSE 5

**“And the fourth part of an hin of wine for a drink offering shalt thou prepare with the burnt offering or sacrifice, for one lamb”** — Oil and wine represent joy in the new life derived from the Word (Heb. 1:9). The offerer was expected to manifest these features to ensure his offering to be as “a sweet savour unto Yahweh”. See Phil. 2:17; 4:41 for application today. Two lambs were offered every day, one in the morning and one in the evening in addition to any other offerings that might apply.

### VERSE 6

**“Or for a ram, thou shalt prepare for a meat offering two tenth deals of flour mingled with the third part of a hin of oil”** — The quantity of meal, wine and oil increased with the size of the animal offered. And the various sizes of animals related to the status of the offerer. Compare Lev. 4:3 with vv. 22-23 and vv. 27-28.

## VERSE 7

"And for a drink offering thou shalt offer, the third part of a hin of wine, for a sweet savour unto Yahweh" — Wine is the token of a new life given unto Yahweh. The grapes must be ripened by the sun (cp. Mal. 4:2); trodden underfoot (or humbled before men) to extract the juice; and then allowed to ferment. Fermentation is the sign of a new life. In wine it develops a chemical that is both anti-septic and preservative. Hence, as a symbol of newness of life, it purifies from the old way, and helps to preserve unto life eternal. Wine represents the "shedding of blood" without which there "is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). However, the shedding of Christ's blood is not all-sufficient. It is representative, and must be imitated by the figurative crucifixion of the lusts of the flesh on the part of those who would be like him (Gal. 2:20; 5:24). Such action will be as "a sweet savour unto Yahweh", rendering a service acceptable unto Him.

## VERSE 8

"And when thou preparest a bullock for a burnt offering, or for a sacrifice in performing a vow, or peace offerings unto Yahweh" — The word "preparest" is *asah* in Hebrew, and denotes *to make* or *to offer*. Details concerning the bullock are given in Lev. 1:5; the vow, in Lev. 7:16; the peace offerings, in Lev. 7:11.

## VERSE 9

"Then shall he bring with a bullock" — Young renders "with" as *for*. The method of offering a bullock is outlined in Lev. 1:5.

"A meat offering of three tenth deals of flour" — A bullock as a sin offering required as much ancillary offerings as a ram and a lamb together. See note on v. 6.

"Mingled with half an hin of oil" — For the significance of the measure, see note on Exod. 29:40.

## VERSE 10

"And thou shalt bring for a drink offering half a hin of wine, for an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh" — See notes above.

## VERSE 11

"Thus shall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid" —

See details outlined in Num. 28.

## VERSE 12

"According to the number that ye shall prepare, so shall ye do to every one according to their number" — See details in Num. 28.

## VERSE 13

"All that are born of the country shall do these things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh" — There was one law for all whatever their status. And what was offered had to be as a "sweet savour unto Yahweh"; that is, it had to be offered in the correct spirit followed by the dedication of the individual. To offer otherwise was abominable to Yahweh. He did not want a substitutionary offering of an unthinking animal, but the giving of one's self. See Isa. 1:11-20. Otherwise, what had been "a sweet savour unto Yahweh" was as a stink in His nostrils (Prov. 3:32; Ecc. 10:1).

## VERSE 14

"And if a stranger sojourn among you" — The word "stranger" is *ger*, "guest", and by implication, a foreigner, rendered *alien* in Exod. 18:3. Once Israel entered the land, there was the possibility of proselytising; the conversions of Rahab and Ruth being cases in point.

"Or whosoever be among you in your generations" — The Hebrew word for "generations" signifies *circles of time* as in Gen. 17:7. Hence it relates to periods that are terminable in themselves. See the comment in *Eureka* on "for ever and ever" (Rev. 1:6). The Mosaic Age was made up of smaller epochs of time, such as months, Jubilees and so forth, as will the Millennial age of the future.

"And will offer an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh; as ye do, so he shall do" — There must be no variation of the form of worship to that laid down for Israelites. A proselyte became an Israelite.

## VERSE 15

"One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation" — The word "ordinance" is *chuuqah*, "appointment, statute". The R.V. renders it as *manner*. The word "congregation" is from the Hebrew *qahal* which is equivalent to the Greek *ecclesia*: a people called out by invitation.

Publications, Post Office, West Beach, South Australia 5024. In that regard, American and Canadian cheques are negotiable in Australia.

### Page Numbering

Our last number took us to Numbers 11:4, and this present issue continues from that point. Accordingly, the page number continues on from our last issue, even though a new volume has commenced. By saving the various parts, and arranging them to be bound in book form, subscribers can put in permanent volume form an exposition of these books of the Bible for future use. The exposition is given in depth, and we aim at simplicity of style. Many readers have been good enough to express their pleasure in the contents of *The Christadelphian Expositor*, and this leads us to make the suggestion above. We can arrange for binding if readers desire it.

### Contents

This issue continues the dramatic story of *Numbers*, describing the failure of the spies, and other sad but interesting records contained in this most interesting book. With every sad tragedy, however, there is also a lesson of hope. So it is in *Numbers*. At the time when the old generation is banished to hopeless wandering in the desert, the narrative leaves them to their wandering, and turns to the next generation, advising the people how they are to conduct themselves when they enter the land.

Many powerful lessons are presented in this section of the Word, as Paul notes in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10), and we are wise to take heed of them.

Because of heavy pressure of work, mistakes sometimes creep into the text, and we would appreciate readers pointing these out to us if they should come across any such.

Dear Reader,

We present you with Number Two of our Eighth Volume, and are now busily preparing Number three. The pressure of work is still heavy upon us, and we are also in the throes of producing *Eureka* Vol. 2. The typesetting for *Eureka* has been completed, and we are currently preparing the Index that will be included. Many have expressed their great pleasure in Volume 1, and we feel that they will find Volume 2 even more exciting as a book. It will be produced (God willing) in matching binding, but, in addition, we have sought to illustrate the contents with archaeological and historical details to assist to that end. A great amount of work has gone into its production, and we thank those who have assisted so willingly. It means that many, many hours have been spent in profitable endeavour, and, of course, that has limited our time to give to other matters.

### **This Issue**

We continue our exposition of the Book of Numbers, and seek to do so in depth. As the terms and phrases of Scripture are considered closely the Word unfolds in a most exciting and interesting fashion. One is able to better picture the events taking place, and by so doing to transport oneself, as it were, with Moses and the children of Israel in their strivings in the Wilderness. It is important to attempt to do this, for it means that the Word comes alive in our minds, creating the motivation to "refuse the evil and accept the good" that is available to us.

### **MAKING PRAYER POWERFUL**

This is a very handsome volume, bound in hard maroon covers with gold blocking on the front and spine. Its contents examine the teaching of the Bible

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

"And also for the stranger that sojourneth with you" — The Hebrew *ger* which originally denoted a foreigner, later became the regular expression for a proselyte, and is so rendered in the *Septuagint*.

"An ordinance for ever in your generations" — See note Lev. 3:17.

"As ye are, so shall the stranger be before Yahweh" — In the sight of Yahweh both were equal, for the stranger had voluntarily accepted that into which the Israelite had been born.

## VERSE 16

"One law and one manner shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you" — As Yahweh treats both on a common basis, so each have equal responsibility to obey His laws.

## b. The Law of Firstfruits — vv. 17-21

*Yahweh must be given first consideration in all the affairs of life. It is a principle laid down in Scripture, that by so honouring Him, He, in turn, will bless the offerer (Prov. 3:9-10). The following verses reveal that the Law of the First-born extends beyond the agricultural or industrial avenues of life, and includes as well the domestic spheres of true Israelites.*

## VERSE 17

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying" — This formula introduces a new sub-section.

## VERSE 18

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you" — This statement, proclaimed to the whole nation, would have been most distressing to those of the old generation who knew that they would not attain unto the land. Young gives it in the present tense: "I am bringing you in". Israel constituted the "Ecclesia in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38); but the process of "calling out" is not completed until the one called is "brought in", for that is the purpose of the call (see Deut. 6:23). Yahweh now proposes to do that with the new generation of Israelites. See comment on v. 2.

## VERSE 19

"Then it shall be that when ye eat of the bread of the land" — This statement

## THE CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

again expresses the assurance of hope for the new generation of Israelites. It proclaims that they will enter the land and eat of its fruit, in contrast to the fate of the old generation. The fruit of the land would replace the manna which sustained them in the wilderness (see Josh. 5:11-12).

"Ye shall offer up an heave offering unto Yahweh" — The term "heave offering" is from the Hebrew *terumah*, and denotes something "lifted up", and hence a gift. The heave offering probably was ceremonially raised up and down to indicate that it was a gift for Yahweh, and to imply fellowship with Him. See note Exod. 29:28. The next verse indicates that domestic activity is also involved in the offering. Paul's instruction in regard to such behaviour shows that Christ's disciples honour Yahweh not only when assembled in meeting for purpose of formal worship, but also within the domestic circle. By that means, the most menial tasks of everyday life are elevated into a service of worship (see Eph. 5:22-24,28; 6:1-2 etc.).

## VERSE 20

"Ye shall offer up a cake" — The word *challah* signifies a perforated cake, like the shewbread. This was made of meal from grain straight from the threshing floor. The cake was not burned on the altar, but was the perquisite of the priests.

"Of the first of your dough" — Jewish tradition requires that the first action on proceeding to prepare the meal for baking is to set aside a proportion of meal for this cake. This is fixed by *The Mishnah* as one 24th for the home, and one 48th for the public baker (see *The Century Bible*). The word "dough", however, is not *bateq* as in Exod. 12:34; Jer. 7:18, but *ariqsah*, the meaning of which is uncertain. Gesenius defines it as signifying coarse meal, relying on the Talmudic use of the Syriac *arsano* (hulled barley). *The Century Bible* gives kneading trough, or a batch of loaves from one kneading trough, that is, from the first batch of baking (see v. 21).

"For an heave offering" — A "heave offering" is a gift for Yahweh. The cake represented a combination of the work of the field with that of the home, so that all members of a household united to prepare the offering for Yahweh. It is significant that the offering partook of the normal activity of home life.

**"As ye do the heave offering of the threshing floor"** — The dedication of the firstfruits had already been ordered. See Exod. 22:29; 33:19; Lev. 2:14; 33:10-17. Now the offering is extended to include the domestic sphere, the heart of the home. This reminded Israelites that Yahweh must be worshipped, not only in the formal presentation of offerings at the Tabernacle, but in the very heart of the nation, within the home itself.

**"So shall ye heave it"** — The word is translated from the Hebrew *ruwm*, "to lift high". See note at Num. 18:8.

#### VERSE 21

**"Of the first of your dough ye shall give unto Yahweh an heave offering in your generations"** — The Hebrew word for "dough" is the same as in v. 20. Elsewhere it occurs only in Neh. 10:37; Ezek. 44:30. In the latter place it forms part of the Temple prophecy showing that this important law, involving the complete household, will form part of the worship of the Age to come. The purpose of this ordinance is there given: "That He may cause the blessing to rest in thine house". How important it is, therefore, to involve all members of a family in the household worship; how vital that the domestic scene should reflect the formal worship conducted at the Tabernacle, the Ecclesial meeting, or the Temple of the Age to come.

#### Ignorance To Be Atoned — vv. 22-29

*The third section of offerings relates to sins of ignorance. This is a matter of more personal concern. It follows in correct sequence: The national offerings having been considered, and the family next brought into consideration, it is appropriate that individual responsibility should now be considered. Ignorance itself is wrong; the individual should be alerted to the fact of sin when he is involved. Hence, sins of ignorance had likewise to be atoned.*

#### VERSE 22

**"And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which Yahweh hath spoken unto Moses"** — Young renders "if" as *when*. The former suggests the possibility of sin; the latter implies its inevitability (see Rom. 3:23).

#### VERSE 23

**"Even all that Yahweh hath command-**

**ed you by the hand of Moses, from the day that Yahweh commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations"** — This summary sets forth the ideal of retaining in mind all that the Law revealed.

#### VERSE 24

**"Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance"** — The RV renders: "If it be done unwittingly . . ." If any requirement of the Law be overlooked. Though reference has already been made to "sins of ignorance" (Lev. 4), they there relate to sins of commission. Here, however, the reference is to sins of omission, perhaps mistakes in regard to the kneading-trough etc. The forms of atoning sacrifice thus differ in the two accounts. For sins of commission (Lev. 4), the victims offered are graded according to the status of the offender implying a greater acknowledgment of sin; in sins of omission, the same animal is offered by all involved: a kid of the goats. The account in Lev. 4 sets forth provision for the poor; in that now before us there is no such concession. This taught that both poor and rich have equal responsibility to bear in mind the ceremonial principles of the Law and observe them. The word "ignorance" is from the Hebrew *shegagah*, "inadvertence". It is derived from a root signifying *to stray*, and hence relates to the natural tendency of the flesh to forget, or to stray from the way of righteousness. This is in contrast with the deliberate, presumptuous, or wilful despising or rejecting of God's law.

**"Without the knowledge of the congregation"** — The word "congregation" is *edah* or "witness". The reference is to a congregational sin of omission. Such is to be atoned for when it comes to the knowledge of those concerned (see Lev. 4:23).

**"That all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour unto Yahweh"** — The word "offer" is from the Hebrew *'asah*, "to prepare". The word "bullock" is from the Hebrew *par* which is derived from a root signifying *to break forth*, that is, in strength. This is in contrast to the word "bullock" in v. 11 which is from the Hebrew *showr* and denotes *a traveller*. The offering of a bullock of this designation denotes that the offerer's strength will be given to fulfilling the will of Yahweh.

**"With his meat offering and his drink offering"** — see notes vv. 8-10.



“According to the manner” — That is, according to the ordinance, or instructions, already defined.

“And one kid of the goats for a sin offering” — See Lev. 4:23 note.

## VERSE 25

“And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them: for it is ignorance” — Because it has been done in ignorance, that is, as a result of the natural tendency of the flesh to stray, a more ready acceptance of the atonement is implied. Compare this with Paul’s statement in 1 Tim. 1:13.

“And they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto Yahweh, and their sin offering before Yahweh, for their ignorance” — See the N.T. use of this as a basis for forgiveness on behalf of the people of Israel (Acts 3:17; 13:27), the Gentiles (Acts 17:30), and those who accept Christ (1 Tim. 1:13).

## VERSE 26

“And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth among them; seeing all the people were in ignorance” — This teaches that there is a responsibility resting upon both Israel and the Gentiles to obey when the facts of the Divine purpose are brought home to them.

## VERSE 27

“And if any soul sin through ignorance” — Having dealt with a national sin of ignorance, the Law now considers personal sins. For the significance of “ignorance” see note above. The RV renders it as *sin unwittingly*.

“Then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering” — In the forms of atonement recorded in Lev. 4,5, there are gradations of offerings made, and provision included for poorer people to obtain atonement by the offering of a bird, but no such concessions are made here, doubtless for the reasons expressed above. In Leviticus reference is to sins of commission; here they are those of omission, the non-obedience of the requirements of the Law. A she goat is offered, apparently for all irrespective as to whether the guilty party is priest, ruler, or commoner; whereas in Leviticus various offerings of varying values are

required. Why should there be gradations of animals offered in regard to a sin of commission so that a priest must offer a bullock, whereas a commoner must offer a kid of the goats (Lev. 4:3,27-28)? The answer is that ignorance in a priest is a greater offence than in a commoner, for by virtue of his office he should know what is required. On the other hand, a sin of omission levels all. A she goat was offered recalling the original sin committed by Eve. It implied that the going astray of flesh is part of the inheritance of birth, and typified that the offerer was prepared to bring himself into subjection to Yahweh as forming part of His national bride (Isa. 54:5; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:11-15).

## VERSE 28

“And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before Yahweh, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him” — In this verse, and the verse following, the word *sinneth* occurs three times, but in the Hebrew this is represented by three different words. The first occurrence is from the Hebrew *shegagath*, “to stray”; the second is the word *chata*, and is the normal word for sin, denoting a “missing of the mark”; the third (in v. 29) is *asah*, “to do or act”. The first emphasises the tendency of the flesh to stray; the second, of it to miss the mark, or to actively sin; the third warns against doing anything through straying. The word “ignorance” is the root *shagag*, and signifies “to stray”. Hence a sin of ignorance, is a sin that is the result of the natural tendency of the flesh to stray. It is a sin done unwittingly, as the RV renders the word, and not necessary in ignorance of the Law. For example, one might, through weakness of the flesh, give way to anger. He does not do it in ignorance of what is commanded in that regard, but involuntarily, because he has allowed the flesh to get the better of him. He must not excuse himself on the grounds that it is a “natural weakness”, but must seek atonement for it.

## VERSE 29

“Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance” — The word “sinneth” in this place merely signifies the doing of anything. The word “ignorance” is *shegagah* from the root *shagag*, and denotes “to stray”. The expression

denotes the natural tendency of flesh to stray, or fall, and therefore the reference is to a sinful involuntary act, in contradistinction to one which is a wilful despising of God's Law. The instruction that a common law should apply to all implies the need for it to be openly and publicly taught.

**"Both for him that is born, among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them"** — See comment on v. 15.

**The Presumptuous Sinner To Be Excluded**  
— vv. 30-31.

*In contrast to the sinner who unwittingly strays from the way of righteousness, a more stringent punishment is reserved for the presumptuous sinner.*

**VERSE 30**

**"But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously"** — The Margin renders this as *with a high hand*. The Hebrew word is *yad* which denotes an open hand symbolising power, means, direction, thus implying something done deliberately, openly, wilfully. In this context it relates to something done in flagrant rejection of Yahweh's express commands, and in total disregard of the reality of His presence, therefore ignoring and despising Him.

**"Whether he be born in the land or a stranger"** — This implies the complete domination of the land by Israel as the nation was promised.

**"Whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth Yahweh"** — The Hebrew verb signifies "to hack (with words)," and so to *revile*. See *Strong's Concordance*. The RV renders it *blasphemeth* as in Psa. 44:16; Ezek. 20:27.

**"And that soul shall be cut off from among his people"** — He shall be excommunicated.

**VERSE 31**

**"Because he hath despised the word of Yahweh and hath broken His commandment"** — The word *bazah* signifies to disesteem a matter. The same word is used of Esau "despising" his birthright (Gen. 25:34; cp. Heb. 12:16; 10:28; John 12:48). For an example of this see 2 Sam. 12:9; 2 Chron. 36:16; Prov. 13:13.

**"That soul shall be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him"** — No sacrifice of

atonement was provided for one guilty of such a crime. David found himself in that predicament at the time of his great sin. He confessed that there was no sacrifice adequate to cover his sin, and so he threw himself on the mercy of Yahweh (Psa. 51:16). He received mercy of Yahweh in his time of need, because he had extended mercy and consideration to Saul when he was in his power. At the time he had declared: "Behold, as thy (Saul's) life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of Yahweh, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation" (1 Sam. 26:24). David's prayer, made on the basis of his act of mercy to Saul, received its answer in his time of need.

**The Presumptuous Sabbath Breaker** — vv. 32-36

*The Sabbath rest typifies the true Israelite's rest from the works of sin (Heb. 4:3,9,10). The presumptuous act now recorded, in which a man is reported as deliberately breaking the sabbath, epitomises the whole cause of Israel's failure. It is tantamount to rejecting Yahweh's means of salvation.*

**VERSE 32**

**"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness"** — This incident evidently took place prior to this time but is here recorded so that the new generation might know how to treat such disobedience. It probably occurred between the institution of the sabbath and the giving of the Law (Exod. 16:23).

**"They found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day"** — Young renders this statement in the present tense: *he was gathering* . . . He was caught in the act. Cp. Exod. 35:3.

**VERSE 33**

**"And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation"** — The word "congregation" is *edah*, "witness". To justify this title it had to witness to the Truth, and to endorse the judgment of Yahweh against such disobedience.

**VERSE 34**

**"And they put him in ward"** — He was taken into custody. See Lev. 24:12.

**"Because it was not declared what should be done to him"** — The desecrator

of the Sabbath was to be punished with death (Exod. 31:14-15), but the manner in which this was to be carried out had not been established.

#### VERSE 35

**“And Yahweh said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp”** — Representatives of all the tribes were to join in the execution of this sinner, so acknowledging the enormity of the sin, and the endorsement of the whole nation of the punishment. Stoning was the appointed method because it granted immunity to the executioners from the defilement that would otherwise result from contact with a dead body. A selection of members representing all the congregation participated in the stoning, thereby giving nation-wide endorsement of the judgment administered, and providing a salutary warning to all. The presumptuous act of this rebellious individual typified the whole cause of Israel's failure. Observance of the Sabbath, as enjoined by Yahweh, represented a resting from the works of sin (Heb. 4:3,9,10), so that to deliberately flout it was tantamount to refusing to submit to Yahweh's law and His means of salvation. The execution was carried out “without the camp” so that it would not be defiled thereby.

#### VERSE 36

**“And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, as Yahweh commanded Moses”** — By this action, the whole nation endorsed the judgment of Yahweh against the sinner. The death penalty for deliberate sinners guilty of serious misdemeanour, particularly that of despising Yahweh's teaching will be re-imposed in the Age to come (Zech. 13:3).

#### Distinguishing Fringes To Be Worn — vv. 37-41

*True Israelites are to be distinguished from Gentiles by their dress as well as their religion. They are required to wear a tassel of blue to remind them of their heavenly origin and their responsibility to keep Yahweh's commandments. This constitutes their public witness.*

#### VERSE 37

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — This introduces a new sub-section.

#### VERSE 38

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations”** — The word “fringes” is from the Hebrew *tsiytsith*. Some render this as *tassel*, others give it as *fringe*. The *Septuagint* has *kraspedo*, “edges or hems”. The hem of the garment thus became an important article of dress. See Matt. 9:20; 14:36; 23:5. In Deut. 22:12, the word “fringes” is from *gapilim*, “to twist” and therefore denotes a tassel. In accordance with the instructions of this verse, it is suggested that the ancient



The Tallit Prayer Shawl. Fringes were attached to four sides of the shawl in imitation of the requirement of the Law. Originally the word meant “gown” or “cloak”. It was a rectangular mantle that looked like a blanket and was worn by men in ancient times. At the four corners of it tassels were attached in fulfilment of the Biblical commandment. Some believe it was similar to the blanket still worn by Bedouins for protection against the weather.

Hebrews divided their garments in the lower part of the front and back so that four corners, or "wings" appeared to which tassels were attached. Such a division of the garment (suggesting the four-fold encampment of Israel) is implied by the verse before us, for the word "fringes" is from the Hebrew *ranath*, which denotes an edge or corner. The *Septuagint* has "corners". This addition to the dress of Israelites instantly distinguished them from Gentiles, comprising a public witness. Their external appearance, as well as their way of life, proclaimed them to be separate from all others. It is significant that the instruction of Deut. 21:10-13 required that a Gentile captive change her dress to that of an Israelite if it were desired to incorporate her into an Israelitish household. One of the first things she had to do was to change her attire so as to conform to the Hebrew standard of dress. Hence the condemnation of Zephaniah upon "all such as are clothed with strange apparel" (Zeph. 1:8). The clothing of Israelites was a token of the holiness, the separateness, to which they were called. It was because of the symbolism attached to that article of dress that many took hold of the hem of the Lord's dress in order to be healed (Matt. 9:20; 14:36). For that reason, also, Gentiles in the age to come are represented as "taking hold of the skirt of him who is a Jew" (Zech. 8:23). Of course there was no virtue in merely wearing the hem, but only in revealing those characteristics it was designed to recall. Hypocritically, the Pharisees, in order to justify themselves before men, "made wide the borders of their garments" (Matt. 23:5). Today the Jews do not attach a ribband of blue to the skirts of their garments, though they do wear the tallith at certain times to demonstrate their orthodoxy. It is said that Jews discontinued wearing the fringed garments by the thirteenth century A.D. Hitler compelled the Jews to wear a distinguishing badge, but it was yellow in colour, not blue.

**"And that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue"** — Blue is the colour of God manifestation. The New Jerusalem, the symbol of the Lamb's bride, is described as having "the glory of God", being likened to a crystal-like jasper. Among the finest jaspers are those blue in colour, linking the thought of the glory of God with the colour of the

fringe worn by the Israelites and identifying the latter with the principle of God-manifestation (Rev. 21:11).

### VERSE 39

**"And it shall be unto you for a fringe"** — According to *Strong's Concordance*, the word signifies *to glitter*, or *glisten*. The word *tsiytsith*, "fringe" is from *Tsuwts*, "to twinkle, to glance", and so to draw attention to the wearer. The word is in the feminine gender which is appropriate to the circumstances, for it is the Bride, the Israel of God, who is to glisten and glitter with the reflection of divine glory (see Rom. 5:2). The masculine form of the word *tsiyts* is applied to the shining plate of gold on Aaron's head-band. *Strong* gives *tsiytsih* as "tassel". Apparently, the tassels drew the four corners of the Israelitish outer garment together (see Deut. 22:12). Thus the dress comprised a public witness to Yahweh (see Phil. 2:14-16). It was indicative of the calling of the Israelites.

**"That ye may look upon it"** — The fringe was designed to draw attention, even as the manifestation of Godliness by an individual is a witness to the world.

**"And remember all the commandments of Yahweh and do them"** — This is the distinguishing "dress" of an "Israelite indeed" (John 1:47). The purpose of Yahweh in calling His people out of Egypt was for them to reflect the divine glory (Deut. 4:5-7; 28:9-10). When the generation that left Egypt failed to do so, it was set aside in favour of the new generation. In like manner, when Israel rejected the Lord, the call went out to Gentiles to separate themselves unto Yahweh and to reflect His glory (Acts 15:14). Paul warns that the history of the past teaches that if those so called fail to carry out the purpose of their privileged status they too "will be cut off" (Rom. 11:22).

**"And that ye seek not after your own heart"** — To the Hebrew, the heart was the seat of intellectual emotion (Rom. 6:17; 10:9; 1 Cor. 2:9 etc). The word "seek" is from *uwr*, "to go about". The RV renders, *go not about*, suggesting the action of roaming around. It is significant that the same word is used in connection with the spies: "Search (*uwr*) out the land . . ." Unfortunately, they were led astray by the roaming of their eyes, and their own reasoning upon what they saw. The injunction of this verse shows the

need of one to concentrate his mind upon the things of God.

**"And your own eyes"** — It was the sight of their eyes that led the spies astray. See their emphasis upon the things they *saw* (Num. 13:28,32,33). It was the wrong use of the eyes that led astray Eve (Gen. 3:6-7) and Achan (Josh. 7:21). John specifically warns against being led astray by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16).

**"After which ye use to go a-whoring"** — To go "a-whoring" is to act unfaithfully, and this can be done in worship as well as in other ways (see Lev. 17:7). The warning of Scripture is that such will be destroyed (Psa. 73:27; 106:39). Christ warns that the undisciplined use of the eyes can lead to a disastrous end (Matt. 5:28-29). Young renders this verse in the present tense: *After which ye are going a whoring.*

#### VERSE 40

**"That ye may remember and do all My commandments"** — The concentration of the mind upon the things of God will not only guard against unfaithful thoughts and actions, but also assist in constantly recalling the will of Yahweh. It will act both negatively and positively.

**"And be holy unto your God"** — Holiness denotes a separation for a purpose. Holiness on our part in relation to Yahweh implies the repudiation of our own will if necessary so as to conform to His requirements (see Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Pet. 1:16). Separation from the defiling influences of the world on the part of saints is necessary in order to be able to claim Yahweh as their Father (see 2 Cor. 6:17-18). A person thus separated is purchased by Him as a slave-owner may purchase a slave, (1 Cor. 7:23) and therefore belongs to Him both body and soul (1 Cor. 6:20)

#### VERSE 41

**"I am Yahweh your God which**

**brought you out of Egypt to be your God"** — This statement defines the purpose of Yahweh in calling Israel out of Egypt. It was that He might "be their God". It was not merely to save them, but to make them worth saving. As Bro. Thomas remarked: "Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost! God manifestation not human salvation was the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of the multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthroned Himself on the earth, and in so doing to develop a divine family from among men, every one of whom shall be Spirit, because born of the Spirit, and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood."

The doctrine of God manifestation is taught in the verse before us, by Yahweh stating His purpose in calling Israel out of Egypt. It was that "He might be their God". This required that they glorify Him in word and deed (see Deut. 4:5-7; 28:58; Jer. 13:11; Isa. 43:7). However, because that generation failed to fulfil Yahweh's purpose, it was destroyed in the wilderness, so that of the approximately 2,000,000 who were baptised as adults into Moses (1 Cor. 10:1), only two entered the Land of Promise.

It is very relevant to bear in mind that the call of the Gospel today is on the same basis: to take out of the Gentiles "a people for His name" (Acts 15:14), a people separated for the purpose of God manifestation.

**"I am Yahweh your God"** — This repetition of the Memorial Name should have reminded Israel of the time, purpose and significance of Yahweh's call to them through Moses as proclaimed at the burning bush, by the revelation of the Name (see Exod. 3:13-15).



## **5. REVOLT AGAINST YAHWEH'S APPOINTMENTS (Chapters 16-19)**

*This is the final sub-section of the Second Part of Numbers. It describes the final provocation of the people, justifying to the full Yahweh's rejection of the generation that came out of Egypt. It records the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram against Moses and Aaron, and Yahweh's vindication of His properly appointed servants. Moses' status is endorsed by the judgment of Yahweh upon the leaders of the rebellion, and Aaron's by the miracle of the budding almond rod. For the benefit of the rising generation that is promised an inheritance in the land, the privileges of the priesthood are re-affirmed opening a way of approach to acceptable worship. Meanwhile, as the old generation is condemned to die in the wilderness so that death would become a common daily occurrence, the sacrifice of the red heifer against the taint of death is provided.*

### **CHAPTER SIXTEEN**

#### **THE SUPPRESSION OF KORAH'S REBELLION**

*The disappointment of the people at the failure of the nation to enter into the promised inheritance, the frustrating defeat the army suffered at Hormah, the widespread murmuring of discontent heard throughout the camp, and the general state of dissatisfaction becomes fruitful soil for reaction and revolt. A prominent Levite of the Kohathites, Korah by name, seizes the opportunity, and drawing upon the support of two princes of the tribe of Reuben: Dathan and Abiram, raises the standard of revolt. Josephus rates the ensuing sedition as the most serious of any time. In Bible history it is only exceeded by that raised against Christ. On this occasion, two distinct groups go rebels join forces in*

*revolt. Korah and his group rebel against the exclusive priesthood of Aaron and his sons, whilst Dathan and Abiram rebel against the leadership of Moses. The rebellion, therefore, is both religious and political in character. This accounts in part for the complexity of the chapter. The seriousness of the incident is emphasised by the frequency with which it is recalled. See Num. 26:9-11; 27:3; Deut. 11:6-8; Psalms 106:16-18; 2 Peter 2:4,10; Jude 6:11.*

**The Standard Of Revolt Raised Against Moses — vv. 1-3**

*Korah, with the support of Dathan and Abiram, raises the standard of revolt. He is a prominent Levite who aspires to the position occupied by Aaron; Dathan and Abiram are of the tribe of Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob. They, possibly jealous of the prominence given Judah over Reuben, aspire to political leadership.*

**VERSE 1**

**“Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi”** — This genealogy shows that Korah was a Levite of the same family as Moses and Aaron. His name signifies *ice, bald, smooth!* He proved to be a smooth talker! His father's name denotes *oil, anointed.* He was a Kohathite. Korah, therefore, was a prominent man of the family of the Kohathites: a first cousin to Moses and Aaron (Exod. 6:16-20; 1 Chron. 6:2-3). He evidently became jealous at the position of prominence held by Aaron as High Priest (see Psalms 106:16), considering himself as of equal rank.

**“And Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab”** — Dathan signifies *Their Law*, but did not prove obedient to it; Abiram disgraced the wonderful name he bore, for it is the same as Abram, *Lofty father.* Their father's name means *God of his father.* The names of these leaders in the rebellion honoured God, but their attitude did not. We can bear the name Christadelphian, but fail to live up to its significance. Their jealousy and rebellion resulted in them setting aside all that their names commemorated: the law, the example of Abram, and the God of their fathers.

**“And On, the son of Peleth”** — On means *ability, power, wealth, strength.*

Peleth denotes to *flee, swiftness, escape.* Again the names are appropriate. Apparently On acted upon the meaning of his father's name, and fled with swiftness from identification with the revolt. For we hear nothing further of him, implying his withdrawal therefrom.

**“Sons of Reuben”** — The tribe of Reuben was placed at the south of the encampment, adjacent to the Kohathites. Reubenites and Levites, therefore, were in sufficient proximity to each other to plan the seditious revolt. Dathan and Abiram were prominent men of the tribe (Num. 26:9). As Reuben was the first-born son of Jacob, these leaders were probably incensed that Judah was appointed to lead the nation, thereby replacing Reuben. Moreover, being stationed south, they were sufficiently close to the east to be constantly reminded of Judah's prominence, for its encampment was at that side of the Tabernacle. Meanwhile the rebels awaited some opportunity to assert themselves. The defeat and retreat from the Promised Land provided it. They claimed that Moses had failed, and there should be a change in the political leadership.

**“Took men”** — Hebraists claim that these words should follow the description of Korah, and so relate to him. He incited the rebellion, and drew a following after him; particularly the 250 Levitical princes of v. 2.

**VERSE 2**

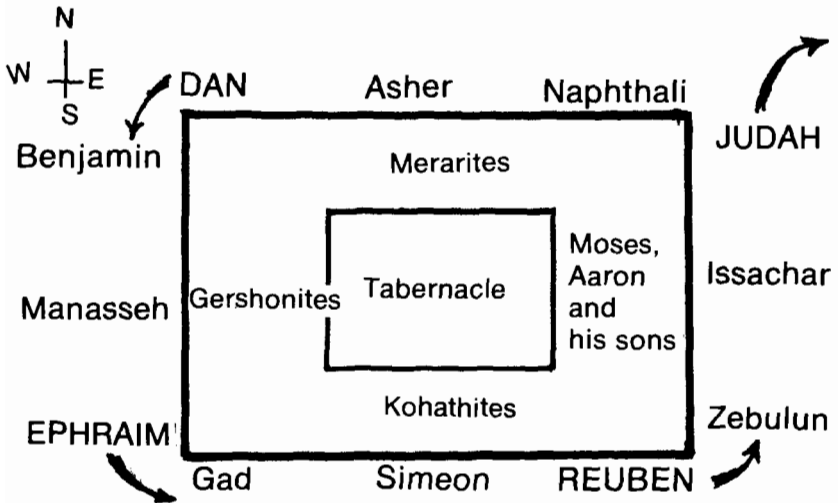
**“And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly”** — The suddenness and unexpectedness of the revolt is implied in this statement. There was first the careful and clandestine planning of it, then the secretive discus-

sions of allies, and finally, when all was ready, the unexpected demand. These 250 princes were Levites (vv. 6,17), and therefore represented the religious side of the uprising.

“Famous in the congregation” — The Hebrew *qariv* signifies “called out” or “appointed”, denoting that they were men elected to the positions they occupied, and therefore men of standing before their fellows. These “famous” princes can be identified with the “angels who left their first estate” or appointment (Jude 6). The Greek word rendered “angels” also signifies “messengers”, and has been so rendered. It denotes an appointed messenger, and is used of mortals as well as immortals (see Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24,27; 9:52; Jas. 2:25), including the elders of ecclesias (Rev. 2:1 etc.). The “famous” princes associated with Korah acted as described by Jude. Not satisfied with the position appointed

them in the congregation, they aspired to the priesthood, and so joined with Korah in opposing Aaron and Moses.

“Men of renown” — This is a very ominous designation in such a context, for it is identical with the description used of those before the Flood who sought positions of eminence in defiance of God (Gen. 6:4). The word “men” is *enoshim*, and according to *The Companion Bible*, it denotes men in their moral or physical weakness. The word “renown” is from the Hebrew *shem* or *name*. The princes referred to were men of name, of reputation. But they did not grace or appreciate the status they enjoyed. In the terms of Jude, “they left their estate”. The Greek word *arche* denotes “principality” or “authority”, and indicates the high positions these held in the eyes of the community as Levites. But they turned their backs upon their honoured status, and challenged Moses and Aaron seeking the priesthood.



On p. 29 we show the traditional arrangement of the Tribes surrounding the Tabernacle. In the above illustration this is varied slightly as the text seems to require. For example, Judah is named first (Num. 2:3-4), and then “next unto him” is listed Issachar (v.5; “then the tribe of Zebulun (v.7). The words “next” and “then” throughout the description of the setting of the tribes seem to require such an order as illustrated above. The arrows denote the suggested order of march. The close proximity of Reuben to the Kohathites is implied in the record of the insurrection of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.



## VERSE 3

**"And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron"** — The Psalmist provides the motive for their attack: "They envied Moses . . . and Aaron the saint of Yahweh" (Psa. 106:16,18). Both Moses and Aaron were challenged because the revolt was a politico-religious one in character: the Reubenites sought the civil administration, and the Levites, the priesthood (vv. 13-14). Korah, Dathan and Abiram judged the time ripe for their contemplated challenge. The mission under Moses and Aaron had failed, and now that Israel was condemned by God to march up and down amid naked rocks and barren sands without hope, it was opportune to agitate for a change. Moreover, Moses had refused to lead the people when they attacked the inhabitants (Num. 14:44), and the failure of that venture could have been attributed to lack of proper leadership on his part. Perhaps these matters had become the bone of contention, and the proclaimed reason for the challenge.

**"And said unto them"** — See Peter's comment (2 Pet. 2:4,10). The rebels despised the government and worship of Yahweh as vested in Moses and Aaron, and promised their followers liberty from the restrictions of such. Peter commented: "Whilst they promised them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (2 Pet. 2:19). And so it proved ultimately.

**"Ye take too much upon you seeing all the congregation is holy"** — The rebels claimed that Moses and Aaron assumed powers and privileges beyond what had been granted them of Yahweh, on the grounds that the whole congregation was holy, or separated unto Him. It was true that the nation was accounted a holy people unto Him (see Exod. 19:6), but it was also true that a people called to such a state were required to manifest it in action, which the leaders of the revolution did not.

**"Every one of them"** — In claiming this they proclaimed their faith in a democracy, a sort of communism, whereas Israel had been established as a Theocracy with Yahweh as its king.

**"And Yahweh is among them"** — Yahweh was present among the congregation in the Tabernacle (see Exod. 29:45; Num. 14:14). His presence in that fashion should have caused fear, not presump-

tion.

**"Wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of Yahweh"** — The rebels challenged the appointment of Moses and Aaron, claiming that it was of the flesh and not of God. Yet time and again Yahweh had presented the two brothers before the people as His appointed servants. The rebels, however, wanted to substitute mob rule for divine appointment; they aimed at a form of communism rather than the dictatorial theocracy upon which the Kingdom of God was based.

**The Challenge Of The Levites**

— vv. 4-11

*Moses is deeply distressed and greatly concerned at the rebellious attitude of the Levites. He invites them to present their case before Yahweh on the morrow, warning them of the consequences of their ungodly action. A dramatic incident then takes place. Moses and Aaron face the 250 rebel Levites in the view of all Israel in defence of their position. However, at this point, Moses' status is at its lowest ebb. There is a real danger that the revolt may sweep through the whole of Israel; therefore an appeal is made by him to Yahweh for His help in the crisis.*

## VERSE 4

**"And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face"** — The issue was so critical as to cause Moses to humbly seek the help of heaven. Six times (the number of flesh) he humbled himself in entreaty on behalf of the people: 1. On Sinai (Exod. 32; Deut. 9:18); 2. At Kadesh Barnea (Num. 14:5; Deut. 9:25); 3. The occasion recorded in the verse now before us. 4. In the face of Yahweh's wrath at the rebelliousness of the people (Num. 16:22); 5. Again, when they falsely accused Moses (Num. 16:45); 6. When the people rebelled at the lack of water (Num. 20:6).

## VERSE 5

**"And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company"** — Korah's company comprised the 250 Levites (vv. 7,17).

**"Even tomorrow Yahweh will shew who are His and who is holy"** — The word "morrow" is *boqer*, "morning" in the Hebrew. At that time, at the beginning of a new day, like the morning of judgment, Yahweh would make His selection known before all the people,

and vindicate those whom He had selected as being particularly His from out of the holy nation.

**“And will cause him to come near unto Him”** — All Israel were called unto God as a holy nation (Exod. 19:6); but from that holy nation, the Levites were separated as a holy tribe, and from out of that tribe, the house of Aaron was separated as priests; and from out of that house, the High Priest alone was granted the privilege of access to the Most Holy into the figurative presence of Yahweh. Accordingly, Aaron preeminently is styled “the saint” or *holy one* (Psa. 106:16). His function in the national worship was to “come near” unto Yahweh (Exod. 28:43; Lev. 10:3). In doing so, he represented the nation which “in him” was able to come near unto Yahweh. At present, “in Christ Jesus” the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, saints (holy ones) are able to approach Yahweh in similar fashion (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19-22). The condition for so doing is personal separation unto Him (Heb. 12:14). In the age to come, the immortal priests will likewise be able to “come near” unto Yahweh. See Ezek. 40:46; 44:15-16.

**“Even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him”** — Aaron is specifically called “the holy one” (Psa. 106:16), the “chosen” (Exod. 28:1; Psa. 105:26), and as such typed the great High Priest of the present and future (Psalm 65:4). Thus Levi, the chosen tribe had to give a tithe of the tithes they received from the people to the house of Aaron, the chosen family (Num. 18:26-28). The High Priest and associate priests were chosen to manifest special characteristics. They had to show compassion on the erring and ignorant, recognising that they were themselves compassed with infirmity (Heb. 5:1-2), and they had to assist worshippers in their approach to Yahweh. The High Priest represented Yahweh to the people, and the people to Yahweh, and therefore occupied a very onerous position. It was that honoured and God-appointed position these Levites aspired to grasp, and, so, in their very attitude revealed their inability to grace the office they coveted.

#### VERSE 6

**“This do; Take your censers, Korah, and all his company”** — Korah’s company comprised the 250 princes who were also Levites (v. 17).

#### VERSE 7

**“And put fire therein, and put incense in them before Yahweh tomorrow; it shall be that the man whom Yahweh doth choose, he shall be holy”** — This was a challenge indeed! It was the duty of the priests alone to offer incense (Exod. 30:7-8; 2 Chron. 26:18; Luke 1:9). Any others attempting to do so would place themselves in danger of death (Exod. 30:9; Lev. 10:1). And this became the fate of the 250 (see v. 35). The test that Moses imposed, therefore was one with the most serious consequences.

**“Ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi”** — Moses’ counter accusation was in similar terms to their charge against him. Cp. v.3.

#### VERSE 8

**“And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi”** — Korah’s party comprised the 250 Levites, and he is addressed by Moses as representative of the whole. Recognising the seriousness of their challenge and charge, Moses, in meekness, urges them to reconsider their action.

#### VERSE 9

**“Seemeth it but a small thing unto you that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of Yahweh, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?”** — The action of these Levites in seeking positions other than those granted them, in effect, on their part, showed contempt for the appointments of Yahweh. That is the point of Moses’ question. He enquired of them as to whether they considered the work of Yahweh given them to do to be below their dignity, or as contemptible, in their eyes. They despised the high calling to which they had been called, and aspired to higher things. In so doing, they were in danger of bringing the service of Yahweh into contempt before all the people. No labour of God should be treated lightly; the humblest duty in the Truth is of great moment. A person labouring in the Truth is on His Majesty’s Service, and the smallest duty should be considered a privilege to perform; and the greatest thought and care lavished upon it.

#### VERSE 10

**“And He hath brought thee near to**

**Him**" — From the plural *you* of v. 9, Moses' address passes into the second person, singular pronoun: *thee*. This indicates that he now addresses Korah personally as the moving spirit behind the revolt of the Levites.

**"And all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee"** — They were brought near to God in that they performed the work of the Tabernacle under the priests. However, they despised the holy calling to which they were called. Perhaps familiarity bred contempt. This is a possibility in any age.

**"And seek ye the priesthood also?"** — Young renders this as a statement, not a question: *And ye seek the priesthood also!* In the terms of Jude, they turned their backs upon the appointments given them and sought higher positions.

#### VERSE 11

**"For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against Yahweh"** — Korah's company comprised the 250 Levites, representing the religious section of the revolt. Moses reminded them of the seriousness of their action: they were opposing Yahweh, and not merely Moses and Aaron (see also Exod. 16:2,8). In Deut. 11:6, his words of warning are recalled.

**"And what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?"** — This was a further reminder that the action of the rebels was a case of insurrection against Yahweh more than against Aaron.

#### Dathan and Abiram Reject Moses' Appeal — vv. 12-15

*Moses orders Dathan and Abiram to appear before him, but they refuse to come. Instead, they publicly condemn him for leading the nation out of Egypt, and accuse him of attempting to set up an absolute monarchy. Foolishly they claim that he has not provided the rich lands in the wilderness, and, finally, that he attempts to blind the people to facts by smooth words. Their blatantly lying accusations arouse Moses to anger. He pleads with Yahweh to reject their offerings, and repudiates the claim that he has acted the part of a despot.*

#### VERSE 12

**"And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab"** — Nothing is said regarding On (v. 1), suggesting that

he had withdrawn from the revolt. Now, having remonstrated in vain with Korah and company who desired to grasp the religious ascendancy, Moses orders Dathan and Abiram to appear before him, hoping to turn them back to a sense of duty. They aspire to the civil authority.

**"Which said, We will not come up"** — Openly and insolently, Moses' summons was rejected; and this amounted to a repudiation of his right to command them.

#### VERSE 13

**"Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness?"** — Their base and lying charge claimed for Egypt the title that Yahweh had given to the Land of Promise (cp. Exod. 3:8). Whilst making their accusation, they kept silent regarding the bitter bondage, the harsh working conditions, and the threat of death to which they had been subjected in Egypt. Moreover they also falsely accused Moses as being responsible for their hopeless state in the wilderness, conveniently overlooking the fact that it was their own faithlessness that had resulted in their banishment.

**"Except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?"** — This additional charge accused Moses of desiring to establish a permanent and absolute dictatorship over the nation. "Except" signifies *in addition*, and "altogether" means *in every way* a prince. These rebels repudiated the leadership of Moses as did those earlier Israelites whose accusation and opposition was the cause of Moses fleeing from Egypt. See Exod. 2:14; Acts 7:27,35.

#### VERSE 14

**"Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey"** — They now accuse Moses as being responsible for the failure of the mission.

**"Or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards"** — They could have possessed these if with faith and courage they had been obedient to the Divine will.

**"Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?"** — This is a figurative expression implying the destruction of their sight in similar manner as we might say: Will you throw dust in their eyes by deceiving

hem? Moses' accusers claimed that he was trying to blind the people to the fact (as they alleged) that he did not keep his promises. The charge, of course, was false.

**"We will not come up"** — In view of Moses' position this was a seditious gesture, an act of complete rebellion.

#### VERSE 15

**"And Moses was very wroth"** — In view of the circumstances, Moses' anger was quite justified. There is such a thing as righteous anger. See Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:26.

**"And said unto Yahweh: Respect not Thou their offering"** — The word is *minchah*, normally used for bloodless offerings. Moses refused to mediate for those who rejected his status, and requested Yahweh to reject their offerings as He had previously refused the *minchah* offered by Cain (see Gen. 4:4-5). Evidently, the offering was to be presented by the rebellious Levites, without shedding of blood, apart from which "there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). In fact, those rebellious Reubenites were not conscious of sins committed! Accordingly, there was no basis for a right approach unto Yahweh.

**"I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them"** — Though Moses was the divinely appointed ruler of the people, he had not abused his status in any way. He had not oppressed them by imposing the smallest tax, or by accepting a gift. See Samuel's similar defence of his integrity (1 Sam. 10:3).

#### The Contest With Korah — vv. 16-19

*In the absence of Dathan and Abiram, Moses imposes a test on Korah and his company of Levites. They are invited to appear before Yahweh with incense in their censers that His will in regard to the priesthood may be indubitably manifested.*

#### VERSE 16

**"And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before Yahweh; thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow"** — The challenge that Moses had issued to those contesting his civil authority having been rejected, he invited Korah and his Levites to appear with Aaron at the Tabernacle, that Yahweh may make known His will in the matter of the priest-

hood, and so decide the issue (see Exod. 16:9; 1 Sam. 12:3,7; 2 Tim. 2:14).

#### VERSE 17

**"And take every man his censor, and put incense in them, and bring ye before Yahweh every man his censor, two hundred and fifty censers: thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censor"** — See v. 7. As a leading Levite, Korah should have clearly realised the folly and danger of entering into such a contest. But probably time had erased the impression made when Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, had died for a similar offence (Lev. 10:1-2). Possibly, Korah was one who had received the Spirit as recorded in Num. 11:17, and imagined himself the equal or superior of Aaron. If so, his action was the result of "the deceitfulness of sin". He had inspired the revolt by the Levites, and had sought and obtained the support of Dathan and Abiram and their associates. The spirit of revolt had quickly spread throughout the camp, attracting large numbers to its cause (ultimately at least 14,700 died — v. 49). It was too late to turn back now.

Where did the Levites obtain their censers or fire-pans? Evidently they had been manufactured by them especially to take over the work of the priests, for normally they would not need them (cp. Lev. 10:1; 16:12-13; Num. 16:37-39). The linking of Korah and Aaron together in the statement of Moses, implies that the former coveted the position of High Priest held by the latter.

#### VERSE 18

**"And they took every man his censor, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron"** — The rebels were supremely confident in their attitude, believing that they had the support of the whole congregation, and thinking their cause was just. They were established in that conclusion by the popularity they enjoyed, ignoring the fact that the appointments of Moses and Aaron were by Yahweh's command. They were actually defying Him rather than them. In this attitude, no doubt, they had been sustained by Korah.

#### VERSE 19

**"And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the**

**tabernacle of the congregation**" — The moment was dramatic and exciting. By now, news of the challenge had swept the camp, and a company of curious people had gathered to learn of the outcome. The assembling of the people would have added to Korah's confidence. The widespread support he received from the rank and file of Israel doubtless hardened his resolve. The revolt had now developed into ominous proportions as more and more gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron.

**"And the glory of Yahweh appeared unto all the congregation"** — The word rendered "glory" denotes *splendour*. This, probably, was caused by the cloud above the Tabernacle suddenly becoming exceedingly luminous so as to shine forth brightly like the flaming sword of Gen. 3:24. On seven occasions the glory of Yahweh appeared at times of crisis: 1. When the people murmured because of lack of food (Exod. 16:10); 2. At the dedication of the altar (Lev. 9:23); 3. At the rebellion of Kadesh (Num. 14:10); 4. At the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:19). 5. At the destruction of the 250 Levites (Num. 16:42); 6. When the people complained because of lack of water (Num. 20:6); 7. At the death of Moses (Deut. 31:15). On each occasion it was designed to induce a reverential awe and fear in the hearts of the people. On the occasion of Korah's revolt, the sudden reminder of Yahweh's presence must surely have raised doubts in the minds of some as to the wisdom of their action. Expectancy would have grown to a great pitch as the people had assembled together. And Yahweh's intervention in the manner described, testified to one and all, in that immense assembly, that the matter in debate was worthy of divine adjudication. But, for the moment, there may have been doubts as to whose claims Yahweh would support. The rebels were confident that right was with them, and they would have been in anticipation of divine endorsement of their stand. The congregation sympathised with them; but the decision was soon resolved beyond all doubt.

**Yahweh's Endorsement Of Moses And Aaron — vv. 20-22**

*The sudden shining forth of divine glory heralded the intention of Yahweh to intercede in the dispute.*

#### VERSE 20

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying"** — By addressing these two, Yahweh revealed that they were His appointed leaders, and that they had not been deposed in any way. This should have been evidence enough to any discriminating Israelite that the two brothers stood in a special relationship to Yahweh, and hence the rebellion was doomed to failure.

#### VERSE 21

**"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment"** — This statement revealed that not only the rebels, but all those who supported them were in dire danger of Yahweh's anger and judgment. However, Yahweh is never prepared to destroy the innocent with the guilty, and as He first placed Noah in the Ark before sending the rain, and delivered Lot before sending the fire, He now ordered Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the congregation against which His anger would shortly be manifested. This is ever His way. See Gen. 19:17,22; Jer. 51:6; Acts 2:40; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4. Before judgment will be poured out upon the present guilty world (Acts 17:31), the righteous will be withdrawn (Isa. 26:20-21). Yahweh's anger against the nation in the days of Moses was fully justified. Consider the constant provocations and threats (Exod. 32:10; 33:5; Num. 14:12,15), and the general admonition of Scripture (Psa. 73:19; Heb. 12:28-29). However, instead of separating themselves as invited, Moses and Aaron courageously stood in the breach and pleaded for mercy to be shown to the people. A moment before, Moses had been very wroth, but now, in the face of Yahweh's anger, he forgot his feelings, and expended his strength to save the nation (v. 22).

#### VERSE 22

**"And they fell upon their faces"** — In view of the urgency of the crisis Moses and Aaron bowed down in humble intercession before Yahweh.

**"And said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh"** — There are two different words for "God" in the Hebrew: *El* (power) and *Elohim* (mighty ones), and so the expression denotes *The Strength of the Mighty Ones*. This speaks of God as Creator, bringing all things into

being and life through his Elohim, or angels (in Psa. 8:5, *Elohim* is rendered as "angels") for His glory. As Creator, the "spirits of all flesh" are in His hands. He controls all life, and therefore "needeth not that any should testify to Him of what is in man" (John 2:25). Accordingly, the title is very relevant to the circumstances of Moses' appeal. Yahweh is "the Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9), as the following passages reveal: Num. 27:16; Job 12:10; Isa. 57:16; Zech. 12:1. The term "spirits" is used in two relationships in Scripture. First, as the power of God that holds all creation in place (Psa. 139:7-8). This spirit is all pervading and is loaned to creation for the term of natural life (Ecc. 12:7). If Yahweh withdrew His spirit, all flesh would perish (Job 27:3; 34:14). Second, for the sentient element in man by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires (Matt. 5:3; 26:41; Mk. 2:8; Luke 1:47 etc.), and which should be motivated by divine principles. Yahweh is the Source of life, both natural and spiritual, and death is a negation of His purpose in creation, for it only reigns because of sin. Hence Moses very properly, in the conditions facing him, appealed unto God by using this title.

"**Shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation?**" — The Hebrew has *ha'ish*, "the one man". This was Korah who had inspired the rebellion, and misled his followers. The verb *wyyik-kach*, "and he took" (v. 1) is in the singular number, and, in the Hebrew, stands at the head of the verse, implying that Korah inspired the whole revolt. All references to the revolt outside of Numbers, attribute the rebellion to Korah (e.g. Jude 11).

#### Divine Judgment — vv. 23-35

*It appears that Korah, Dathan and Abiram had set up a spacious tent on the southern side of the Tabernacle in the midst of the tents of their families, where, apparently they held court, met in council, and hung out their flag of defiance. Dathan and Abiram remain in this tabernacle, whilst Korah and his 250 Levites, leave for the eastern precincts of Yahweh's Tabernacle to face up to Moses, Aaron and his sons, and to claim the priestly leadership (vv. 18,24). Moses, making his way to the southern side of the Tabernacle, appeals to the people to separate themselves from the tent of rebellion, and*

*when this is done; Dathan, Abiram and their families and followers are left on their own standing at the tent door. Moses then proclaims that the judgment of Yahweh will be demonstrated by the unusual death that will encompass the rebels, proving that it is from God. An earthquake follows that swallows up the headquarters of the revolt; afterwards fire consumes Korah and his 250 Levites. This frightful judgment causes fear to sweep the congregation. A similar fate awaits all those who are found in the world's tents of wickedness when the future divine judgment is manifested (see Rev. 18:4).*

#### VERSE 23

"**And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying**" — This was in answer to Moses' intercession on behalf of the people. He, only, is addressed as being the more responsible person: Possibly Aaron remained confronting Korah.

#### VERSE 24

"**Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram**" — The word "tabernacle" is *mishkan*, "dwelling" in contrast to *ohel*, "tent". The word is found in vv. 9,24,27 in this chapter, whereas elsewhere (vv. 18,19,26,27,42,43,50) it is *ohel* or "tent". The *Mishkan* of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, therefore, is to be distinguished from the *Mishkan* (tabernacle) and *Ohel* (tent) at which Israel worshipped. The use of the singular number in the verse before us is significant. The three men did not live together in a single dwelling, but had their individual tents. Accordingly, the *Mishkan* of Korah, Dathan and Abiram was evidently a spacious tent set up on the southern side of the Tabernacle as the headquarters of the revolt, where the three men held court before their deluded dupes. When Moses approached this *Mishkan*, Korah was absent from it being at the head of his 250 Levites, even though his name was added to the title of the tabernacle. The followers of these three leaders of the revolt were warned by Moses to separate themselves from the headquarters of the revolution, or suffer the consequences.

#### VERSE 25

"**And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him**" — Though the *Mish-*

kan of the revolution is called "the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram", Korah with his 250 Levites had left the tabernacle set up by him in conjunction with his fellow-conspirators to prepare for the test suggested by Moses. He remained at the east of the Tabernacle proper, though his way thereinto was barred by Aaron and his sons. This left Dathan and Abiram on their own. Moses departed from the eastern precincts of the Tabernacle and made his way to its southern side where was stationed the tribe of Reuben, and where had been set up the *Mishkan* of Revolt.

## VERSE 26

**"And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men"** — Recognising the danger that would follow when divine judgment was poured out, Moses urged upon the congregation the eternal principle of the need to separate from the defiling presence of the rebels. Otherwise they would be involved in the destruction that would follow. The way to salvation was through separation — even as it is today.

**"And touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins"** — The lesson of creation, as well as the doctrine of the Atonement, teaches that contact with defilement brings defilement. By "one man sin entered the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12), and because the defilement was physical it passed on to all creation. This teaches the need of separation. The law of defilement contrasted with that of holiness, in that, whereas defilement is transmitted from one to the other, holiness is not. It is easier to defile than to make holy! See the question of Haggai, and the answer of the priests (Hab. 2:12-14). The law of defilement revealed what man is through sin, and taught the need to beware of the flesh in all of its lusts; the law of holiness is much more exclusive in its outworking.

## VERSE 27

**"So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side"** — The greater part of the general public gathered at the tabernacle of rebellion, heeded the counsel of Moses, but not all. Apparently some stayed with Dathan and Abiram (v. 32). Notice how carefully the narrative discriminates between "the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan

and Abiram" and their individual tents. The tabernacle of revolt comprised the headquarters of the rebellion; the tents were the personal living quarters of the men concerned.

**"And Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents"** — The record is very specific in excluding Korah, for he was not present with Dathan and Abiram at the time. He had made his way to the eastern entrance of the Tabernacle at the head of the 250 rebel Levites. The word "stood" is *natsab*, "to station" oneself in opposition. Whilst most of the people withdrew from the rebels' tents, Dathan and Abiram stationed themselves in a defiant manner in front of their tents as though daring Moses to do his worst. See Prov. 16:18; 18:12.

**"And their wives, and their sons, and their little children"** — The families of these men remained with them, and so identified themselves with their action. The family of Korah did not. Their father had left with the 250 princes in order to test the status of Aaron, and in his absence his children withdrew from the rebellion, and so were saved from the destruction that overtook the families of Dathan and Abiram (Num. 26:11). They were saved to become prominent in the family of Kohath and important to the whole nation. Heman the singer, and Samuel the prophet were descendants of Korah (1 Chron. 6:33-37). The descendants of Heman were organised by David as singers in the Temple (1 Chron. 15:17; 16:4-6, 37-42; 25:4-5). Some Psalms were dedicated "to the sons of Korah" (Psa. 42:44-49, 84, 85 etc.). Other descendants of Korah were appointed as gatekeepers of the Temple (1 Chron. 9:19; 26:19), and bakers for the Sanctuary, preparing the shewbread and sacrificial cakes (1 Chron. 9:31-32). Therefore, whilst the father was held in dishonour, the sons rose to fame. This fact illustrates the justness of Yahweh. It is a divine principle that God will not put to death the sons of unrighteous parents because of the sins of their parents (Ezek. 18:20). In the case of the "little children" of Dathan and Abiram, the foreknowledge of Yahweh revealed that they would have followed in the course of their rebellious parents, probably inheriting or imitating their proud defiance. Everything that Yahweh does is just or merciful, though His motives and purpose may not be always appreciated.

One day, a full revelation of His will shall be granted. It will then be realised that He has not "done without cause" or just purpose, all that He has done (Ezek. 14:23).

## VERSE 28

"And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that Yahweh hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind" — The Hebrew *ki lo millibbee* signifies "and that not from my own heart". Moses claimed that he had not led the people for reasons of personal ambition, desire to dominate others, or to lead the government, but at the direction of Yahweh.

## VERSE 29

"If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then Yahweh hath not sent me" — Moses places a proposition before all Israel. If the rebels are punished in some supernatural manner it will prove that his appointment is from Yahweh. On the other hand, if they die a natural death, or if they escape death, leaving Moses with the only alternative to appeal to the Law for vindication, the people may conclude that his appointment was not from Yahweh.

## VERSE 30

"But if Yahweh make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them" — In the Hebrew "make a new thing" is *bara bery'ah*, "create a creation"; in other words do something as a direct act of divine judgment.

"And they go down quick into the pit" — The word "pit" is *sheol*, elsewhere rendered "grave".

"Then ye shall understand that these men have provoked Yahweh" — See Num. 14:11. The verb is from the Hebrew *na'ats*, "to scorn, despise". The RV renders it *despised* Yahweh.

### Earthquake Swallows Up The Rebels — vv. 31-35

*As Moses ends his words, to the startled gaze of the onlookers, a tremendous earthquake cleaves the ground assunder, and in a moment of time, the tents together with Dathan, Abiram, and all that appertained to them are swallowed up. The earth then*

*closes over the rebels as the people shriek in horror and panic. No sooner has the tragedy ceased, than fire snakes out from the altar to consume the 250 Levites at the east of the Tabernacle.*

## VERSE 31

"And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave assunder that was under them" — This amazing miracle vindicated the words of Moses. It appears to be the incident referred to by Peter (2 Pet. 2:4) and Jude (v. 6) relating to "the angels that sinned". The term *angels* is used in the NT for those appointed to positions of responsibility as the "angel of the Ecclesia" (Rev. 2,3), the word is rendered messenger or messengers in Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24,27; 9:52, and in those places relates to persons appointed to positions of responsibility on behalf of others. That was the status of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. They had been granted positions of honour and responsibility, but "they sinned" (2 Pet. 2:4), in forsaking "the estates" or positions appointed them (see Jude 6), and aspiring to those of higher status. In doing so, they despised the positions given them of Yahweh. Accordingly, they were "cast down to hell" or turned into the pits that opened up by earthquake (the term *chains of darkness* is derived from the Greek *seiros* and denotes *pits of darkness* as rendered in the R.V.). In view of this experience, Peter and Jude warn of the consequences of revolt against the work given one to do by Yahweh, or of being envious or jealous of those granted high positions by Him.

## VERSE 32

"And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods" — The earthquake "swallowed up all the men that appertained unto Korah", but apparently not Korah himself, for he was in company of the 250 Levitical princes at the time. The "men" referred to would include Dathan, Abiram and all those who had not availed themselves of the invitation to escape the disaster by separating themselves from Dathan and Abiram and the revolution generally. Nowhere does it record that Korah was destroyed at this time, but only his companions in crime. Korah, himself, was destroyed by fire (v. 35). He



is not mentioned in the other accounts as being swallowed up by the earthquake (see Deut. 11:6; Psa. 106:17-18). One providential result of this was that the children of Korah were saved (Num. 26:11). As noted above, it appears from the narrative that Korah, Dathan and Abiram had set up a spacious tabernacle on the southern side of Yahweh's Tabernacle close to the tents of their families, where they apparently met in council, kept court, and hung out their flag of defiance of Moses. At this headquarters, Dathan and Abiram remained, whilst Korah and the 250 Levites left for the eastern precincts of the Tabernacle (vv. 18,24) to await the issue of their trial. First earthquake destroyed the headquarters of the revolt, and afterwards fire consumed the princes with the censers (v. 35). The only way the threatened congregation could escape the divine judgment was to separate from the guilty parties (v.21). Evidently the wife of Korah did so with her children who thus escaped the judgment poured out upon all those who remained.

#### VERSE 33

"They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them" — The word "pit" is *sheol*, or grave. Thus they were enclosed in "chains (lit. *pits*) of darkness" to die, though destined to rise again, for they were "reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. 2:4).

"And they perished from among the congregation" — The word *qahal* is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek, Ecclesia. The judgment on these guilty men foreshadowed that of the future. The condemned in that day will return to the grave.

#### VERSE 34

"And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also" — The rest of the Israelites there assembled heard the cry of the condemned as they were swallowed up of the earthquake, and viewed with horror their awful fate. So it will be in the age to come: "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" on the part of the condemned (Matt. 22:13).

#### VERSE 35

"And there came out a fire from Yah-

**weh, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense"** — See Ps. 106:18. Whereas the Reubenites were stationed south of the Tabernacle, the rebel Levites who were demanding priestly status, had made their way to its eastern entrance, and perhaps had presented themselves in the outer court. Here they faced the altar, and were opposed by Aaron and his sons. They repeated the sin of Nadab and Abihu, and suffered a similar fate (Lev. 10:1-2). A flame of fury flared out from the altar and consumed them all including their leader, Korah, illustrating that Yahweh is a consuming fire to His enemies (Deut. 4:24; 9:3; Heb. 12:29).

#### The Memorial Of The Altar — vv. 36-40

*The death of Korah and the 250 Levites vindicates the appointment and status of Aaron and his sons. All that remains of any value of the rebels is the copper of their censers. The holy fire had purged these, so that now they are accounted as holy. Accordingly, they must not be used for secular purposes, and Moses is instructed to beat them into sheets for a covering of the altar (v. 38). All who were drawn to consider the altar and the circumstances by which this covering is provided, are presented with a powerful exhortation of the exclusiveness of Yahweh's priesthood (v. 40).*

#### VERSE 36

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — Instructions for the disposal of the brazen, or copper censers now follows.

#### VERSE 37

"Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest" — Eleazar was the High Priest elect, and, as such, foreshadowed Christ, the High Priest to come. This is the first time recorded of any specific duties being assigned to him. Aaron, as High Priest, was forbidden to have contact with the dead (Lev. 21:10-15), and having himself offered incense, must not be defiled. But no such prohibition rested on Eleazar, nor did it on Christ, our High Priest. Though he came in the nature of sin's flesh, he rendered perfect obedience to the Father, and could help those in need of such.

"That he take up the censers out of the burning" — This implies that the fire was still actively consuming the bodies of the rebels.

**“And scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed”** — The censers, having been offered to Yahweh, were considered “hallowed” or separated unto Him. The Hebrew verb is *kadashoo*, “consecrated”, i.e. to the service of God. Though the censers had been improperly employed, they had been given unto Yahweh, and therefore could not be deemed (Lev. 27:28; Num. 31:22-23).

#### VERSE 38

**“The censers of these sinners against their own souls”** — To “sin against one’s soul” or life is a mortal sin, for which there is no forgiveness. See Prov. 20:2; Hab. 2:10; 1 John 5:16.

**“Let them make them broad plates, for a covering of the altar”** — Brass, or copper represents sin’s flesh. However, when purged by fire, it denotes sin’s flesh purified (Num. 31:22-23; Ezek. 22:18; Mal. 3:2). See the comment by Bro. Thomas in *Eureka* vol. 1, p. 177. The altar pointed forward to Christ, the Altar of Yahweh’s providing (Heb. 13:10), upon which is to be presented “living sacrifices acceptable unto God” (Rom. 12:1-2). The brazen plates purified by fire, therefore, foreshadowed that he would be purified from sin’s flesh. This was accomplished by Christ’s own offering (Heb. 13:20).

**“For they offered them before Yahweh, therefore they are hallowed”** — Anything offered unto Yahweh is separated unto Him, and must not be used for profane purposes.

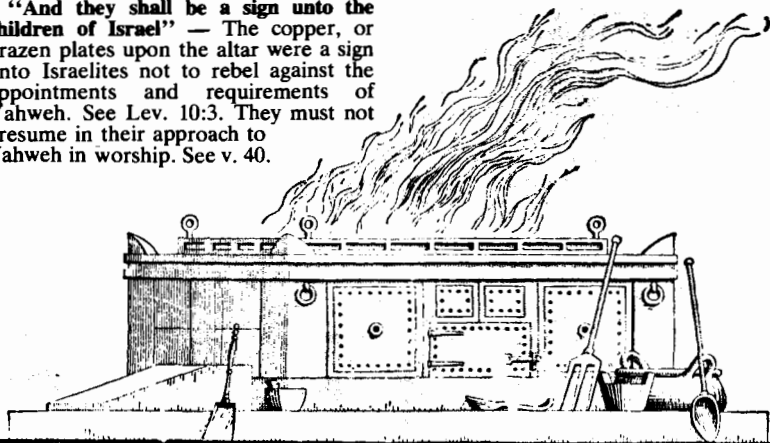
**“And they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel”** — The copper, or brazen plates upon the altar were a sign unto Israelites not to rebel against the appointments and requirements of Yahweh. See Lev. 10:3. They must not presume in their approach to Yahweh in worship. See v. 40.

#### VERSE 39

**“And Eleazer the priest took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar”** — Eleazar’s name signifies: *El hath helped*. As High Priest elect, he pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom Yahweh “made strong for Himself” (Psa. 80:17). The brass purified by fire symbolised flesh purified. So “Christ learned obedience by the things that he suffered” (Heb. 5:8).

#### VERSE 40

**“To be a memorial unto the children of Israel”** — There were many memorials incorporated into the instruction and worship given to Israel. Each one was significant, and when pondered upon had tremendous lessons to bring home to the nations. They included: The Memorial name of Yahweh (Exod. 3:15; Hos. 12:5); the Passover (Exod. 12:14); the deliverance from Egypt (Exod. 13:9); the warfare with Amalek (Exod. 17:14); the covenant with Yahweh (Exod. 34:27); the Ephod Stones (Exodus 28:12); the breastplate of Judgment (Exod. 28:29); the Redemption money (Exod. 30:16); the blowing of Trumpets (Lev. 23:24); the Frankincense (Lev. 24:7); the offering of Jealousy (Num. 5:15,18); the Silver Trumpets (Num. 10:10); the Victory over the Midianites (Num. 31:54); the Brazen Covering of the altar (Deut. 16:40); the crowns of the righteous in the future Temple (Zech. 6:14). To recognise the



significance of each of these, it is necessary to carefully ponder the background and details. They all point forward to Christ in various ways. A Memorial is designed to awaken the mind to the significance of the object drawn to the attention, and is not intended merely as a reminder of its existence. In the case of the brazen censers, Israelites were reminded of the exclusiveness and aloofness of God, and were never to presume in their approach to Him in worship.

**"That no stranger, which is not of the seed of Yahweh, come near to offer incense before Yahweh"** — The word "stranger" in this context can signify an Israelite not appointed to this work, that is, not of the family of Aaron. The Levites were of the tribe of the High Priest, but not of his family. The lesson teaches that the greatest care needs to be exercised in the performance of any act of worship, for it must conform to the will and instruction of Yahweh. The fate of Uzzah, in his unauthorised touching of the Ark, was in contravention of the express teaching of Yahweh. He suffered death, though, perhaps, he was motivated by the most laudable intentions (2 Sam. 6:7).

**"That he be not as Korah, and as his company: as Yahweh said to him by the hand of Moses"** — This statement forms part of the Memorial which the brazen cover of the altar was intended to bring home to the people. Several of the Psalms are dedicated to the sons of Korah who escaped the judgment of their father (Psa. 42, 44, 45, 46, etc.), and they emphasise the justness of Yahweh's punishment. When those songs were sung, or chanted before the altar, the Memorial of it was emphasised most powerfully. It is worthy of note that the statement of this verse establishes that Korah was destroyed by the fire that flared from the altar, and not from the earthquake that swallowed up his companions in crime.

#### **Further Murmuring And Revolt — vv. 41-45**

*The devastating earthquake which swallowed up the company of Dathan and Abiram, and the destructive fire of divine wrath which destroyed Korah and his 250 princes is not sufficient to quell the feelings of revolt that continue to smoulder throughout Israel. The significance of the Memorial of the brazen covering of the Altar is not appreciated as it should have been. With bold effrontery, Moses and*

*Aaron are approached by a delegation of Israelites and accused of killing the people of Yahweh. To protect His servants, the glory of God again appears threatening instant punishment. Recognising the danger, Moses and Aaron intercede, but not before 14,700 are destroyed by plague. The punishment is only stopped by Aaron offering incense. Because of the urgency of the crisis this offering is accepted in the absence of sacrifice.*

#### **VERSE 41**

**"But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of Yahweh"** — The people blamed Moses and Aaron for the calamity, perhaps charging them of falsely accusing Korah, Dathan and Abiram before Yahweh. The murmurers describe those who had been slain as "the people of Yahweh", looking upon them as the injured party. In the Hebrew the accusation occurs in the plural and is repeated as though in great stress of mind: "You, you have killed . . ." (*The Interlinear Hebrew Greek English Bible*). The duplication of the pronoun expresses the bitterness of the people. Perhaps they minimised the extent of the revolt, and thought that Moses and Aaron should have interceded with Yahweh as to spare even the guilty. They therefore claimed that they were responsible for the deaths that had taken place.

#### **VERSE 42**

**"And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation; and, behold the cloud covered it"** — Normally the cloud appeared above the Tabernacle, but on this occasion it rested upon it as to hide the full power of the theophany (cp. Num. 12:5, 10). It was this that attracted the attention of Moses and Aaron.

**"And the glory of Yahweh appeared"** — The divine glory probably shone through the cloud making it exceedingly luminous. This attracted the attention of all, creating a moment of dramatic tension. The murmuring of the congregation was a very serious offence, and the appearance of the glory testified to Yahweh's displeasure. In the people continuing to oppose Moses and Aaron after seeing two such outstanding mirac-

les, amounted to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit for which there is no forgiveness (Matt. 12:31). Notice that the glory appeared in this way no less than seven times: When they murmured for food (Exod. 16:10); at the dedication of the altar (Lev. 9:23); at the rebellion at Kadesh (Num. 14:10); at the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:19); at the insurrection of the 250 princes (Num. 16:42); at the murmuring at the lack of water (Num. 20:6); at the impending death of Moses (Deut. 31:15). The number seven is the covenant number in Biblical numerics. Israel had completely repudiated the covenant by their continuous murmuring

#### VERSE 43

**“And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation”** — Moses and Aaron moved towards the Tabernacle, and stood between the manifested anger of Yahweh and the turbulent mob. Their action was a courageous gesture of protection on behalf of the people.

#### VERSE 44

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — Ignoring the rebels, Yahweh addressed Moses and Aaron, thus endorsing the status they enjoyed.

#### VERSE 45

**“Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment”** — Israel had not yet learned the lesson of Yahweh's statement: “I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me. . .” (Lev. 10:3). Instead, the people crowded up to the holy precincts of the Tabernacle in rebellious mood, with hearts fired with fury, and voices angrily sounding complaints against Moses and Aaron. They manifested no reverential fear of Yahweh which is the firstfruits of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), and without sacrifice in hand such as Yahweh had commanded (Ex. 34:20). In bitter hostility they faced Moses and Aaron who stood between the Tabernacle and the congregation, holding at bay the threatened judgment. Yahweh urged them to retire, and leave the people to their fate.

**“That I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces”** — Instead of acting upon the suggestion of Yahweh, and leaving the rebels to their fate, Moses and Aaron made obeisance to

Yahweh in prayer, as on a previous occasion (Num. 16:4). But prayer was not sufficient to save this time. Yahweh had to be acknowledged and honoured in the correct manner. There was a proper procedure to be carried out.

#### The Efficacy Of Aaron's Intercession — vv. 46-50

*As a demonstration of the efficacy of Moses' leadership and Aaron's priestly ministrations, the two brothers stand in the breach and save many of the people.*

#### VERSE 46

**“And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them”** — Urgently Moses instructed Aaron what should be done in view of the crisis. Firstly, he was to take a censer, and taking of the fire from off the altar (fire, that previously, had consumed the rebel Levites!) he was to put on incense, and then hasten unto the congregation. The occasion was impressive and urgent. As the people observed the glory of Yahweh, recalled the death of the rebel Levites and princes of Reuben, and now saw the 84 years' old High Priest run with his utmost strength unto where the representatives stood, they must have been moved. There was no precedent for the action taken, and no instructions recorded directing Moses to do it. He evidently ordered it on his own initiative, perhaps recalling the manner in which incense was used on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12-13). Be that as it may, the offering was unique, initiated because of the urgency of the crisis. It was never repeated. It is significant that atonement was effected apart from “the blood of bulls and goats” (Heb. 9:12; 10:4), but at the risk of the lives of Moses and Aaron who stood in the breach at that time of need. As the form of atonement was unique to this occasion, it was never repeated. The incense offering which had brought down destruction when presented by unauthorised hands, now in the hand of the true priest became the medium of salvation for the people. Moses and Aaron by their acceptable ministration, their self-sacrificing devotion to the welfare of the people, foreshadowed in this action the perfect mediation and sacrifice made by Christ. Nowhere else, except in the case of the Lord's offering and the connection of believers with it, is the name or

idea of the atonement, or forgiveness of sins effected merely by incense or prayers in the absence of the shedding of blood of an animal. How completely the typical foreshadowing of this incident in the Law of Moses pointed forward to the forgiveness of sins through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**"For there is wrath gone out from Yahweh; the plague is begun"** — The word *negeph* rendered "plague", signifies an affliction of some kind without being specific as to what form it took. See note on v. 50. Yahweh's wrath had already flared out against the people, and many had died.

#### VERSE 47

**"And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation"** — The word "congregation" is *qahal*, the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek "ecclesia". It denotes a people "called out"; and here evidently describes those who had massed against Moses and Aaron at the call of revolt. In view of the urgency of the crisis, the 84 years old High Priest filled his censer as directed by Moses, and ran into the midst of the people. Aaron's attitude and action dramatised the crisis. There was no time to lose. Already death was striking down the people. There was an urgent need for whosoever would to "save themselves from that untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

**"And, behold, the plague had begun among the people"** — Many had already died. This punishment horrified the people, and made them more amenable to the intercession of Aaron, who, previously, they had spurned with bitter words.

**"And he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people"** — See notes on v. 46. There was no time for animal sacrifice, but the smoking censer of incense in Aaron's hand reminded the people of the great privilege of prayer, the sacrifice of the lips, and suggested that they should seek the mercy of the Father through its means.

#### VERSE 48

**"And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed"** — In this verse, the word for plague is *maggaphah*, and can denote pestilence. Apparently this had struck down the leaders of the revolt who, at the head of the body of the people, were nearest the Tabernacle facing Moses, Aaron and his sons. As those at the head of the mob collapsed

in death, Aaron hastened past their recumbent bodies to courageously take his stand between Yahweh and the living. In that attitude, with smoking censer in hand, he presented himself as a mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5), and the plague was stayed.

#### VERSE 49

**"Now they that had died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred"** — This tragedy illustrates the extent of the rebellion against Yahweh's appointments. The leaders of it had despised their own positions of privilege as well as Yahweh's appointment to authority of such as Moses and Aaron. The rebellion had been crushed but at what terrible, and unnecessary cost! The number who died is divisible by seven, which perhaps indicates that they had suffered through defying Yahweh's covenant.

**"Beside them that died about the matter of Korah"** — This was an additional 253 plus men, women, and children not specified.

#### VERSE 50

**"And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed"** — The authority of Yahweh vindicated, Aaron again took his place beside Moses in front of the Tabernacle.



## CHAPTER 17

ENDORSEMENT OF AARON'S STATUS  
AS HIGH PRIEST

*In an attempt to silence the murmurings of the children of Israel, to ease the strife between the tribe of Levi and the other tribes, and to confirm before the whole congregation that Aaron's spiritual leadership is endorsed by Yahweh, a test is devised. Twelve rods, representing tribal authority, are selected, one for each of the tribes, and Aaron's name is inscribed on that of Levi. These are laid up before Yahweh, and on further inspection, it is seen that Aaron's rod has budded, bloomed blossoms, and produced almonds. Aaron's status as High Priest thus confirmed, the rod is laid up in the Ark as a testimony. The congregation, already chastened by the judgments experienced, and now humbled by the miracle of the budding rod, endorse in the appointment.*

**The Murmurers Are Challenged — vv. 1-5**

*Yahweh, taking the initiative, commands that each tribe select a rod and identify itself with it by inscribing thereon the name of its chief. Aaron's name is placed on the rod of Levi, and they are all laid up before the Ark of the Covenant to await the Divine revelation to be displayed by miracle upon the rod selected by Yahweh.*

**VERSE 1**

*“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — Immediately on the termination of the plague described in the previous chapter, Yahweh took the initiative, and gave further instructions to Moses.*

**VERSE 2**

*“Speak unto the children of Israel, and take every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers” — The word “rod” is from the Hebrew *matteh*, “staff” or “sceptre”, the symbol of authority (see Ezek. 19:14; Mic. 6:9). The word is also translated “staff” and “tribe”. The rods were probably shaped out of almond*



wood, the Hebrew name of which signifies the *awaking tree*, denoting the required watchfulness or vigilance of the one bearing the badge of office. The almond tree is the first tree in Israel to blossom in Spring, becoming thereby a herald of the revival of life that takes place at that time, and which typifies the resurrection. The Hebrew word occurs in Psalm 110:2: "Yahweh shall send the *rod* of thy strength out of Zion."

"Of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod" — The chief of each tribe had his name inscribed on the rod of his tribe.

### VERSE 3

"And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi" — The direction to write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi was a distinct rejection of the pretensions of the rebellious Levites whilst the budding of the rod clearly argued Yahweh's endorsement of his status.

"For one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers" — The Levites were separated from the other tribes (Num. 1:47). Their political organisation being different, their rod had to be supplied them. Twelve rods were obtained from the twelve other tribes (v. 2), but Levi's rod was supplied to the tribe.

### VERSE 4

"And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony" — This was before the Ark in the Most Holy. It already contained the golden pot of manna, and the tables of the Law, identified as "the testimony" (Exod. 25:21).

"Where I will meet with you" — Evidently Moses was required to enter the Most Holy with these rods. See Exod. 25:22.

### VERSE 5

"And it shall come to pass that the man's rod, whom I shall choose shall blossom" — The man chosen to approach Yahweh was the High Priest. The statement epitomises his labours. See Num. 16:5; Psa. 65:4.

"And I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmured against you" — In murmuring against Moses and Aaron the people murmured against Yahweh Who had appointed them. See Zech.

12:10; Matt. 10:40; John 5:23.

### Aaron's Rod Produces Almonds — vv. 6-9

*The rods are laid before Yahweh in the Most Holy, and on the morrow, Aaron's has not only sprouted but has borne fruit.*

### VERSE 6

"And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods" — There were thirteen rods in all: the twelve belonging to the tribes, plus the rod of Levi. Levi was not counted among the other tribes.

### VERSE 7

"And Moses laid up the rods before Yahweh in the tabernacle of witness" — Moses was permitted in the Most Holy where normal Levites were not allowed (Num. 18:2). As the type of Christ (Deut. 18:15), Moses combined the offices of ruler and Melchizedek priest, (a priesthood not limited by fleshly descent as was the Aaronic — Psa. 110). He must have entered the Most Holy both before and after Aaron's rod had produced fruit. This was appropriate to the type, for whilst on earth, Christ's mind was constantly with the Father in heaven (John 1:18; 3:13), or in the Most Holy (Heb. 10:19); and after his resurrection, he bodily ascended there (Heb. 9:24). This answers to Moses' two entrances unto the Most Holy, for the budding of the rod denotes the resurrection.

The word "witness" is from the Hebrew *Eduwth*, the feminine form of *Ed*, rendered "testimony" in v. 4.

### VERSE 8

"And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds" — The term *behold!* is an ejaculation of astonishment, called forth by the miracle. Moses saw that buds, blossoms and almonds had sprouted from Aaron's rod. The word "yielded" is from *gamal*, and signifies to *ripen* or *mature*. It was not only astonishing that a branch could do this, but it was remarkable that the three stages of growth should appear together for that normally does not hap-

pen. It suggests the statement of Scripture: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word shall be established." In the natural course of things Aaron's rod, being severed from the parent stock, would be impotent. Therefore, as it revealed all the processes from sprouting to

bearing fruit, it foreshadowed in type the miracles of Christ's perfection of character and resurrection from the dead. One of his titles is *the Branch*. See Isa. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12; Rom. 4:28; 2 Cor. 5:19.

The word "almond" is from *shakeh*, sig-





nifying *awakening*, the symbol of vigilance and resurrection. For the budding of David's power, see Psa. 132:17-18; for its blossoming and bearing fruit, see Isa. 4:2; for the political resurrection of Israel, or flourishing of the "dry tree", see Ezek. 17:24; for fruit out of the dry vine, cp. Ezek. 19:12 with John 15:1-6.

## VERSE 9

"And Moses brought out all the rods from before Yahweh unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod" — Moses returned with the thirteen rods, and the twelve representatives of the other tribes (foreshadowing the Apostles of the Lord) witnessed the miracle of Aaron's rod symbolising the resurrection. In fulfilment of the type, the resurrection of the Lord was publicly attested by the Apostles, though many of the leaders rejected the evidence. See Matt. 28:15.

## Vindication Of Aaron's Appointment — vv. 10-13

*Aaron's rod is laid up in the Most Holy as a token of his appointment. With the realisation that they had rebelled against Yahweh in a manner worthy of death, the people mourn.*

## VERSE 10

"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony" — Aaron's rod is returned to the Most Holy as a vindication of his divinely appointed position (cp. v. 7). So also did the Lord Jesus (cp. John 6:62-63), there "to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

"To be kept for a token against the rebels" — The presence of the rod in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle testified that Aaron was able to enter therein at appropriate times to intercede for the people. It remained there "as a token against the rebels." The resurrection of the Lord to life eternal, testified in similar manner. It declared, proclaimed and revealed him as the Son of God with power. He was "openly designated as the Son of God" (see *Berkeley translation*) to the refutation of all rebels against his authority (Rom. 1:4).

Subsequently the rod was placed in the Ark (Heb. 9:4). By Solomon's time, however it had disappeared (1 Kings 8:9), tes-

tifying that the true High Priest had not then been manifested.

"And thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me, that they die not" — Forgiveness of sins is obtainable through the resurrected Christ, the mediator of all those who seek Yahweh in truth. So the presence of Aaron in the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement provided a means of forgiveness, for he typed Christ.

## VERSE 11

"And Moses did so: as Yahweh commanded him, so did he" — The token of Aaron's figurative resurrection was laid up in the Most Holy as a memorial, pre-figuring those of Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor. 11:24).

## VERSE 12

"And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish" — The Hebrew expression rendered "die" signifies *to breath out, to expire*, whilst "to perish" denotes to do so without hope. The statement, according to Young, is in the perfect tense: "*We have expired, we have perished!*" In other words, we are as good as dead! The reason for this despairing ejaculation is expressed in the next verse.

## VERSE 13

"Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of Yahweh shall die" — Here the word "die" is the normal word *muwth*. The people were terror-stricken by the fate of Korah and his fellow rebels. And as the token of Aaron's appointment as High Priest and Mediator had been laid up in the Most Holy, to which they had no direct access, it appeared to the congregation that there was no escape from death. The answer is given in the next chapter that reveals Yahweh as a God of grace and love in spite of the terrible judgments then experienced by those who had opposed Him. That chapter reveals that there was access to Yahweh through the mediatorship of the High Priest and his sons.

"Shall we be consumed with dying?" — The answer was in the affirmative unless Yahweh provided a means of forgiveness of sins. Those means were revealed in the instructions concerning the Priests and Levites that follow. They would "bear the iniquity of the sanctuary", and so open the way to reconciliation.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES OF THE PRIESTHOOD REAFFIRMED

*The duties and privileges of the Priests and Levites, so dramatically, though tragically illustrated by Yahweh's rejection of Korah and his company, are reiterated in preparation for entering the land. The Priests are to overlook the worship of the Sanctuary with the Levites attending on them as their ministers or helpers, and the Levites are to respect their subordinate position by avoiding any contact with the altar or the other sacred furnishings. They are to guard the holiness of the structure by preventing any personal contact with it on the part of the people. To defy these instructions is to risk the penalty of death.*

#### Offices Of Priests And Levites Defined — vv. 1-7

*Having re-confirmed the Priesthood in Aaron and his descendants, and defined the status of the Levites in relation thereto, the various duties and privileges of both are reiterated to the people.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And Yahweh said unto Aaron"** — Notice that Aaron is addressed on this occasion, and not Moses. Matters of the priesthood are his jurisdiction.

**"Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee"** — This statement involved both the Priests and the Levites. Their individual roles in the work and worship of the Sanctuary are severally defined in the following verses.

**"Shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary"** — The word "iniquity" is from the Hebrew *'avon*, signifying "to be bent, crooked, or wrung out of course". The Sanctuary was so described because it was identified with Israel, being constructed of materials supplied by the people. In type, it pointed forward to the multitudinous Christ (Heb. 8:2; 9:11,23). Every member of the multitudinous Christ, including the Lord himself in the days of his flesh, was of sin's flesh, and therefore of a nature prone

to sin. Accordingly, the Sanctuary is described as being associated with iniquity, and treated as requiring periodical cleansing. It was the duty of the High Priest to attend to that (Lev. 16:20), so foreshadowing the work of Christ in regard to the antitypical Sanctuary (Heb. 9:11). Of the Lord it is written: "He (Yahweh) made him (Christ) to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Though "made" is used twice in this statement, it represents two entirely different words in the Greek. The former relates to the construction of a thing, and denotes the nature of flesh; the latter is *ginomai*, "to cause to become". Christ "bore the iniquity of the Sanctuary" in coming in the nature common to all humanity, and yet never succumbing to its demands. His righteousness "even unto the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8), ensured his resurrection unto life eternal (Acts 2:24). Accordingly, he obtained for himself, and all in him, eternal redemption (Heb. 9:11-12). This was through "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (i.e. his own sacrifice — Heb. 13:20).

**"And thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood"** — Effective priestly mediation is only possible

## DIVINE GRACE IN JUDGMENT

### Numbers Chapters 16 to 21

The prevalence of death through Yahweh's rejection of the old generation, together with the punishment meted out to Korah and his company, made the people fearful of approaching the Tabernacle (Num. 16:12-13). Yahweh, therefore, gave the Levites assurance of renewed blessings, and provided laws to be observed in regard to its service designed to prevent a repetition of these tragedies, enabling them to bear the "iniquity of the Tabernacle". In its typical significance the Tabernacle represented the people, and its "iniquity" pointed to the sinfulness of flesh. These laws included the provision of the sacrifice of the red heifer. This enabled the people to be cleansed from the defilement of death which had now greatly increased, and so cleared the way for continued approach to the Tabernacle.

The budding of Aaron's rod (a symbol of resurrection) confirmed the priesthood in his line, as the resurrection of Christ endorsed Yahweh's selection of him. Three developments were now revealed to the people:

1. The manifestation of grace in the provision of the priesthood, and the application of its mediation to the needs of the people (Chapters 18,19).
2. The progress under grace which the people are now able to make in spite of sin (Chapters 20,21).
3. The prophecy of Balaam which, stemming from the present grace, swept boldly into the future, revealing the end of all Israel's enemies, and the rule of him who is the Star out of Jacob through whom the complete blessing will finally come.

sible where identification is established with those requiring its service. A priest must be able to show "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that err; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2). This was required of the Aaronic priests, and also of Christ. Because he came in our nature Christ "can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" having been "tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). He, therefore, is able to bear the iniquity of the priesthood. The word "bear" is from a Hebrew word that can signify both *to endure* and *to remove*. In Christ, the two became one. He knows experimentally the weakness of humanity, and yet is able to remove it by the forgiveness of sins.

A priest was required to be circumspect in approaching Yahweh (Lev. 22:9), and yet had to do so on behalf of a people who

sinned (Isa. 52:11). Because they represented a sinful people, the Aaronic priests were said to "bear the iniquity" of the priesthood. Therefore, they required ceremonial "cleansing". Christ, also, bears the iniquity of the priesthood in that he intercedes on the behalf of his people. He can do so effectively because he once bore their nature from which he was cleansed through his own offering.

#### VERSE 2

**"And the brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring them with thee, that they may be joined unto thee"** — There is a play on words in this statement, for Levi signifies *joining*, and the Levites were to be joined to the priests in the work of the Tabernacle.

**"And ministers unto thee"** — The word

*sharath* signifies to attend as a menial or a servant. By this appointment, the Levites were brought under the direction of the priests in the work of worship. Today, believers are subject to the teaching of Christ and the Apostles.

**"But thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness"** — As the Levites were subject to the Priests, the Priests were subject to the ordinances of the Tabernacle. Among other things, they were to keep guard over it so as to preserve it from violation. They were to do this before the Tabernacle, in the sight of all the people. See Num. 3:10; 18:3,5,7. In the Temple prophecy of the Age to Come, they are represented as being indicted for their failure to carry out these duties (Ezek. 44:7).

### VERSE 3

**"And they shall keep thy charge"** — The Levites were to be under the direction of the priests in their duties at the Tabernacle.

### The Priests And Their Dues — vv. 8-19

*Aaron is re-instructed in his duties, and in what is due to him and the Priests out of the offerings of the people. It is important that this be done, for the new generation of Israelites are about to enter the land, and much of the Law has been ignored during the thirty-eight years' wandering.*

### VERSE 8

**"And Yahweh spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of Mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel"** — The word "also" signifies that this gift was additional to the one already made: that of the Levites (v.6). It included the charge of Yahweh's "heave offerings", which required that the Priests carefully supervise such offerings. References to them are found in vv. 8,11,19,28,29. The Hebrew word is *terumah*, from *tuwm*, "to be high" or "lifted up". The heave offerings were offered up, or lifted out from the offerer's other possessions as belonging to Yahweh, and therefore described by Him as "Mine". They probably were ceremonially lifted up and down to indicate that the offerer on earth recognised that they belonged to Yahweh, and enjoyed fellowship with Him by acknowledging His rights. See notes, Exod. 29:28; Lev. 7:14,32,34; 10:14-15; Num. 6:20; 15:

19-21. Wave and heave offerings were portions of peace offerings, indicating a "oneness" or fellowship between Yahweh and the worshipper. They are described as being "of the hallowed things of the children of Israel", that is, portions of such offerings made by them (see Lev. 7:14,32; Num. 6:19-20), or those defined in v.9 of the present chapter. They, therefore, included the firstfruits and the firstlings of domestic animals.

**"Unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever"** — A person anointed of Yahweh, whether as priest, prophet, or king, was claimed by Him for His exclusive use in the particular service for which he was consecrated. The anointing of Aaron consecrated him as High Priest. As such his welfare in necessary material things was the care of Yahweh, and, accordingly, He ordered that portions of His offerings be allocated to His Priest. Those "in Christ" are also described as "anointed" (1 John 2:27), and their material welfare is also the special care of God (Matt. 6:32).

The Aaronic priesthood was established by an ordinance "for ever", that is, as "a perpetual ordinance", designed to last for the period intended. The Hebrew word is *olam*, and relates to an age. Its basic meaning is that which is concealed, and therefore, relates to a period, the length of which is not specified. Though translated "for ever" it does not of itself denote eternity. The Aaronic priesthood was designed to last for the duration of the Mosaic covenant, but not forever, and therefore the use of *olam* in this context is quite relevant. See Heb. 7:1-11.

### VERSE 9

**"This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire"** — The reference is to the offerings presented on the brazen altar. In Exod. 40:10, the altar is described as "most holy".

**"Every oblation of their's"** — The word for "oblation" is *korban*, a gift (see Mark 7:10-13). In this context, it relates to an approach offering. Anything given in order to secure an audience with Yahweh, or to approach near to Him, was so described.

**"Every meat offering of their's, and every sin offering of their's and every trespass offering of their's, which they shall render unto Me"** — The require-

ments of these forms of offerings are found in the following places: meal offerings — Lev. 2:2-3; 10:12-13; sin offerings — Lev. 4:22-24; 6:25-26; trespass offerings — Lev. 7:7; 14:13.

**“Shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons”** — The portions of the offerings defined in the references above were exclusively reserved for the Priests. Though the sin offerings of individual worshippers were not partaken of by them, they were by the Priests (see Lev. 6:26). In 1 Cor. 9:11-14, Paul makes the point that inasmuch as “they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar,” so the Lord hath ordained “that they which preach the gospel (i.e. the Apostles) should live of the gospel”. However, he claimed, “I have used none of these things” (v. 15). Lay Israelites depended upon the Priests to assist them in their worship, and it was only right that as they had been “partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things” (Rom. 15:27). Priests, under the Mosaic constitution, were dependent upon the offerings of the people for their livelihood, hence the faithfulness of the people was to their material advantage. How important, then, that “the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth”! (Mal. 2:7). Faithfulness in Ecclesias today will prove spiritually advantageous to members, and will enable them to enjoy the material blessings they receive from “the Giver of every good and perfect gift” (James 1:7).

#### VERSE 10

**“In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee”** — The Sanctuary as a whole, including its courts, was treated as “most holy”. This description is given to the brazen altar as well as to other parts (see Exod. 40:10). The priests, therefore, ate their portions in the court of the Tabernacle, or Temple as a witness to lay Israelites that they should feed upon the gift of God, even His word. It illustrated the point stressed in Psalm 119:103: “How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (cp. Ps. 19:10; 34:8; Prov. 24:13).

#### VERSE 11

**“And this is thine”** — Now follows a second list of gifts that could be eaten at home. See v. 13.

**“The heave offering of their gift”** — For

the heave offering, see notes on v. 8. “Their gift” relates to the freewill offerings of the people (Lev. 7:14,32; Num. 6:19-20), or those defined in v. 9 of this chapter. They included the first fruits, and firstlings of domestic animals.

**“With all the wave offerings of the children of Israel”** — Certain portions of certain offerings were “waved” before Yahweh to indicate the promised activity of the offerer in performing the divine will. The offering of course, was presented through the priest (Num. 6:20). The *Mishneh* says that this was done by the Priest placing his hands under those of the offerer upon which the offering was laid, and then moving them to and fro. In type it illustrated the need of true love in activity (the offering being expressive of the offerer’s love of Yahweh and the waving representing his activity) stimulated by the Priest. It pointed forward to a believer’s offering of love to God as influenced by the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever”** — These offerings, in contrast to those referred to in v. 8, related to portions that could be eaten outside of the Sanctuary in the homes of the priests, and by both sons and daughters of such, even before the former were inducted into their priestly office. However, the permission granted to the daughters of priests to partake thereof was subject to the limitations of Lev. 22:11-13. Once they married they passed beyond the jurisdiction of their parents.

**“Every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it”** — The members of a household had to be ceremonially “clean” to partake of the holy food. See Lev. 22:2,3,11-13. Many things, such as contact with a dead body could defile under the Law. In such a case, the defiled person had to “cleanse” himself through the means provided, before he could partake of such food. In Christ, a believer must make himself right with God, by recognising sin for what it is, and seeking forgiveness in the way appointed, in order to properly benefit from partaking of the food of God’s providing (cp. John 4:13-14; 6:35).

#### VERSE 12

**“All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto Yahweh, them have I given thee”** — Oil, wine and

wheat are frequently used symbolically in Scripture. They are associated with light, happiness and strength, qualities that stem from the Word of Yahweh. These were some of the products of the people that were tithed (see Deut. 26:1-4). The RV renders "wine" (*yayim*) as "vintage". The tithes were given unto Yahweh for the use of the priests. His representatives in Israel.

### VERSE 13

**"And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto Yahweh, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat of it"** — The "first-fruits" (*re'shiythim*, v. 12) are distinct from the "first ripe" (*bikkurim*) of this verse. The distinction seems to be between those fruits that went straight into the Temple store-chambers once it was built, and those for which there was first a reception ceremony in the Temple (Neh. 10:35-37).

In Exod. 22:29, the first of the ripe fruits are aligned with the firstborn of Israel, representative of "Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile" (John 1:47). That, certainly, was the manner in which the type was interpreted by the prophets (Jer. 24:2; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1). They were those of the nation who were selected for Yahweh. Hence the law had an exhortatory appeal for all Israelites, to offer themselves as "a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

### VERSE 14

**"Everything devoted in Israel shall be thine"** — Things devoted were dedicated unto Yahweh, and could not be used apart from His sanction. They were given to the priests only because they represented Yahweh to the nation.

### VERSE 15

**"Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto Yahweh, whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine"** — The RV renders "matrix" as the womb (see Exod. 13:2; 34:19-20; Num. 3:12). The Psalmist accounted children as "an heritage of Yahweh; and the fruit of the womb His reward" (Psalm 127:3). Accordingly, Micah severely indicted those who offered "the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul" (Mic. 6:7), as Ezekiel did those who sacrificed their children unto Molech (Ezek. 20:26), for, in doing so, they gave to a foreign god

what belonged to Yahweh. As indicative of His claim on the whole family, Yahweh required that the firstborn of man or beasts be given to the priests as His representatives in Israel (Exod. 13:21). This taught that as all belonged to Him, both possessions and family they should be used or trained in a manner that would honour Him. Children were expected to "honour their father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:2), because their parents were to the family what Yahweh and the nation were to its members (1 Cor. 11:7). On the other hand, it was the responsibility of fathers to "bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord", carefully avoiding such unwise provocation as would discourage them (v. 4).

**"Nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem"** — Under the Law, the firstborn of man or beasts were given to Yahweh, and by Him to the priests (Exod. 13:12). They were either sacrificed or redeemed. The firstborn of men, and those clean animals which could not be used for sacrifice, could be redeemed, or ransomed by the payment of money as specified (Lev. 27:25-27). In the case of the ass, the rule had been laid down that it either be redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb, or destroyed (Exod. 13:13). That is the alternative for Israelites, for the ass was constantly used in Scripture as a symbol for Israel after the flesh, whilst the lamb pointed forward to Christ. The law thus taught the need for Israelites to seek redemption in Christ, or suffer the consequences (see notes on Exod. 13:13). In other cases, the value of unclean beasts was left to the discrimination of the priests subjects to the right of the owner, if he saw fit, to destroy the animal rather than pay for it (Lev. 27:27). The firstborn males of a family could be redeemed by the payment of a certain sum, because the tribe of Levi had been separated unto Him instead of the firstborn (Num. 3:41). There were several lessons taught by this. Firstly, it taught that the family belonged to Yahweh, and the token of this was the firstborn actually given to him, and redeemed. This meant that no true Israelite could please himself in the upbringing of his children: he must conform to the requirements of God. Secondly, there was a prophetic foreshadowing of the purpose of God. The firstborn sons represented

the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16; James 1:18). The clean animals pointed to Israel as a nation. The unclean animals (as Peter was taught when the sheet was lowered depicting such and he learned that the Gospel was to be preached to Gentiles — Acts 10) represented Gentile nations. All such animals were redeemed by purchase pointing forward to redemption in Christ (1 Pet. 1:18). Both Israel and the Gentiles as mortal nations will find places in the Kingdom as mortals through national redemption in Christ. The word "redeem" in the verse before us, is not *ga'al* as elsewhere, but *padah*. According to *The Century Bible*, this word signifies "to obtain by payment what belonged to another". So in the case of a son, the father purchased what he acknowledged belonged to Yahweh; in the case of an animal, it was either offered in sacrifice or purchased; but on the grounds that it belonged to God.

We point out that the redemption of such was a prophetic foreshadowing of what will be revealed in the Kingdom. For further elaboration see our comments on the declaration of Gen. 1:26: "Let them have dominion" and upon the covenant that was made not only with Noah and his family, but with "every living creature of all flesh" found in the Ark (Gen. 9:15). This "dominion" and "covenant" was over or included the lower creation. In this the animals typed the nations wither Israel (clean) or the Gentiles (unclean). In relation to the rule of Christ, Daniel declared: "As concerning the rest of the beasts (some will be destroyed), they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time" (or a thousand years — Dan. 7:12). In vision, he saw those unclean "beasts" or nations in the Kingdom. His prophecy was foreshadowed by the Law of Redemption.

#### VERSE 16

"And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem according to thine estimation" — See Lev. 27:2-7.

"For the money of five shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary" — The shekel was of silver — Lev. 27:3, indicating grace in redemption.

#### VERSE 17

"But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy" —

Everything belongs to Yahweh, but He has a special claim upon Israel both natural and spiritual (see Amos 3:2), and these animals, being representative of Israel, were completely separated unto Him and could not be redeemed for profane use. The antitype is clear. True Israelites must give their lives in complete service to Yahweh (Rom. 12:1-2). They are "holy", or separated unto Him. They are "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1).

"Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire" — The word "sprinkle" is rendered by some as *to fling*. The blood was splashed against the corners of the altar so as to be prominently displayed. It there witnessed to what Yahweh required of those associated with the Christ-altar (Heb. 13:10): their very life (Lev. 17:11). The fat was burned on the altar. It is the richest part of the body, representing stored up strength, to be drawn upon as required. A worshipper's energy must be given to Yahweh in performance of His service. Hence both the life, and the hidden stored-up resources of the being are claimed by Him; and to give that, the "old man" of the flesh must be put to death! (Rom. 6:4-6).

"For a sweet savour unto Yahweh" — The divine fire upon the altar, representative of the power, or zeal stimulated by the Word, converted the fat into an ascending vapour, acceptable unto Yahweh. Cp. Eph. 5:2. It is likewise pleasing to the Father, when His children give their strength in willing service to His cause.

#### VERSE 18

"And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave beasts and as the right shoulder are thine" — As the portions of the peace-offerings were given unto Aaron and his sons as their due (Lev. 7:28-34), so the flesh of these firstlings became their prerequisites. The wave breast speaks of the thoughts of the heart, whilst the right shoulder represents the strength of support. These given to the priest taught Israelites that in spite of their privileged status as a nation, they were still dependent upon the mediatorial ministrations of the priest. The priest, as mediator, gave the worshipper both his thought and strength to the work in hand. As the High Priest bore the names of all the tribes on the breastplate over his heart, so the priest identified himself with the individual wor-

shipper by taking those portions of his offering.

#### VERSE 19

**"All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto Yahweh, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever"** — See notes on vv. 10-11.

**"It is a covenant of salt for ever before Yahweh unto thee and to thy seed with thee"** — A "covenant of salt" is one preserved throughout the time it is designed to keep it in force. As salt gives savour or flavour to food, so the attitude of mind adopted by true Israelites gives flavour to their offerings, and makes them acceptable to Yahweh. The law taught that all increase whether of field or fruit of the body should first be offered to Yahweh (Lev. 2:13). When this was done willingly it became "a covenant of salt". That, indeed, is the basis of acceptable sacrifice in any age and lends itself to more enjoyable and satisfying living (see Prov. 3:9). A life based upon the principle of self-sacrifice will be found more purposeful and richer than one without. The dissatisfaction and frustrations of modern civilisation are directly traceable to its rejection of the sacrificial way of righteousness to be found in Christ.

#### VERSE 20

**"And Yahweh spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them"** — It is significant that this statement was made to Aaron shortly after the nation was turned back from the Land, and the old generation was condemned to die in the wilderness. It was a reminder that in spite of those circumstances, the purpose of Yahweh with His people had not failed through their sin, but had only been delayed. It provided the faithful among them, together with the new generation, renewed hope. It enabled them to "see the promises afar off" (See Heb. 11:13), for it implied that the nation would enter the land. However, even there, the priests were to have no separate inheritance such as was allocated to each of the other tribes and the various families. And this bore witness to all Israel that the nation's inheritance was temporary, that, as yet, there was no "continuing city" and, therefore, they should seek "one to come". Meanwhile, they remained as "strangers and pilgrims in the land" (Heb.

11:13; 13:14).

**"I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel"** — The priests were given certain cities in the land, but not in one place like the other tribes (Josh. 14:4): hence they enacted the parable of "strangers and pilgrims" in the midst of Israel. See vv. 23-24; Deut. 10:9; 12:12; 14:27,29; 18:1-2; Josh. 13:14,33; 14:3; 18:7. That also is the state of "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). See Eph. 1:11,14,18; Col. 1:12; 3:24; Acts 20:32; 26:18.

#### VERSE 21

**"And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation"** — The word "tenth" in this place is *ma'aser*, "tithe", which, however, is derived from *'asar* "a tenth". Israel received a tenth part of an omer in the form of manna (Exod. 18:36), and was required to return a tenth portion of their increase as a token thereof. This was paid to the Levites, who, in turn, paid a tenth to the Priests. Therefore, it was to the material advantage of the Levites that the people of Israel remain faithful to the requirements of Yahweh, for otherwise they would not receive the tithe; particularly if the nation was afflicted with drought as a punishment for sin.

#### VERSE 22

**"Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die"** — The fate of Korah was a warning that Yahweh's instructions must be obeyed. Contact with the Tabernacle must be through the Priests, via the Levites. To emphasise that lesson, representatives of the tribes and families of Israel placed their hands on the Levites at their consecration, so endorsing them as being representative of the whole nation. See Num. 8:9-10.

#### VERSE 23

**"But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity"** — See note Ch. 18:1-2. For the special sacrifices and induction service of the Levites, see Num. 8:5-19.

**"It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children**



of Israel, they have no inheritance" — They were to be as "strangers and pilgrims" in the midst of Israel, so proclaiming that the full glory of the divine purpose as promised Abraham was not manifested in the nation as then constituted. This state of pilgrimage was a constant reminder to Israelites that they should labour for the future and not the present. The Levites were to rely upon Yahweh for their sustenance (cp. v. 20; Psa. 16:5-6); were expected to study and expound the Law (Lev. 10:11; Deut. 24:8); and act as its judges (Deut. 17:9). For this they were given 48 cities throughout Israel as centres of instruction (Num. 35:2-8), providing in their separation and activity an object lesson unto the rest of Israel.

## VERSE 24

"But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto Yahweh, I have given to the Levites to inherit" — The word tithe is tenth (see v. 21). This was set aside, or lifted out from the normal possessions of the Israelites, as belonging to Yahweh, and at His instructions, given to the Levites.

"Therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance" — See notes vv. 20, 21.

## Responsibilities Of The Levites — vv. 25-32

*Of the tithes received from the people, the Levites are to select a tithe for the Priests. This is to be the best of that given unto them, because, in effect it is given unto Yahweh. The rest they are to use as they see fit, subject to certain restrictions.*

## VERSE 25

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying" — The instructions that follow apply to the Levites, and hence Moses is addressed instead of Aaron, as was the case previously.

## VERSE 26

"Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for Yahweh even a tenth part of the tithe" — Despite the privileged status of the Levites they could only approach Yahweh

directly through the Priests. In acknowledgement of their subordinate position they were commanded to pay to them a tenth of that which they received. In Scripture, ten is frequently used figuratively as representing the whole of an undisclosed number. For example in 1 Sam. 29:5; Psa. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19, "ten thousand" is used figuratively and not literally for the number itself. The tithe, therefore, being a *tenth*, was a token amount representing the whole of increase.

## VERSE 27

"And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fullness of the winepress" — In the wilderness, the only increase would have been that of animals. A tithe was given to the Levites, anticipating the tithe of grain and fruit they would receive in addition in the Land of Plenty.

## VERSE 28

"Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto Yahweh of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof Yahweh's heave offering to Aaron the priest" — The tithe taken up from the Levites was presented to Aaron as Yahweh's representative. In paying tithes to the Levites, Israel paid tithes unto Yahweh; and in paying tithes to the Priests, the Levites did likewise. The principle is that expressed by Paul: "Let him that is taught in the word communicate (lit. to contribute to his support) unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6). See also Rom. 15:27.

## VERSE 29

"Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of Yahweh, of all the best thereof" — The expression "all your gifts" signifies all the offerings received from the people, and not merely their tithes. The best was to be selected, as only the best is good enough for Yahweh. See Mal. 1:7-8.

"Even the hallowed part thereof out of it" — The word is *qodesh*, signifying something set aside for Yahweh.

## VERSE 30

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it" — To "heave" is to *lift out*, as Yahweh's portion, part of the bulk of what has

been received. That selected was to be the best. See Deut. 6:5; Prov. 3:9-10; Mal. 1:8; Matt. 6:33; 10:37-39.

**"Then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the winepress"** — The other nine-tenths of the tithe belonged to the Levites, and was available to be eaten in any place by their families. It was their due for their service of labour in the Tabernacle (v. 21).

#### VERSE 31

**"And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation"** — Rotherhams renders this: "The allotted portion for your labourious work in the tent of meeting". A similar expression to "reward" is used to describe *payment, salary, or hire* (Gen. 15:1; 30:18,28,32). The "reward" given to the Levites for their labour, is equivalent to "the penny a day" paid the labourers in the Lord's parable (Matt. 20:2). That "penny" represents the needful, material provisions of everyday life (Matt. 6:32-33). Such are guaranteed those who labour for the Lord, which is the reason why the parable describes the various workers, as receiving the same pay though commencing at different times throughout the day. The "penny" does not represent eternal life as it is sometimes interpreted, because those who "murmured against the goodman of the house" (v. 11) received it as well as the others. Yahweh will see that His people receive all necessary needs to sustain life. The Psalmist declared that he had never seen "the righteous forsaken: nor his seed begging

bread" (Psa. 37:25). Let a person labour faithfully for the Lord, and his material needs (as distinct from his wants) are guaranteed. The Levites laboured hard, and were cared for by Yahweh. Through them, the lesson of His providence was taught to all Israel.

#### VERSE 32

**"And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it when ye have heaved from it the best of it"** — Having honoured Yahweh by separating to Him His portion, the Levites could use the rest for their personal enjoyment without sin. Otherwise, they would have been just as guilty as would the ordinary citizen who ate any of his harvest before he had given a tithe to the Levites. Paul presents the spiritual application of this law to Timothy: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. 4:4). We need to acknowledge Yahweh in all ways, including the practical support of the work of the Truth, and He will direct our paths, providing us with all needs. It is important to note that "the best" had to be heaved, or lifted out, for Yahweh.

**"Neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die"** — The greatest care had to be observed lest they "pollute", "profane", or "make common" the holy things, or offerings given them. They must not partake of them if ceremonially "unclean" (See Lev. 22:3-9 etc.). What spiritual lesson does this point for us? That material blessings come from God (James 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:17), and as the custodians of such we should exercise care to use them in a way honouring to Him (cp. 1 Tim. 6:17-19).



## TITHING IN ISRAEL

The word "tithe" is from a root signifying *a tenth*. Israel received a tenth part of an omer in the form of manna (Exod. 18:36), and appropriately returned a tenth in the form of tithes. Tithing, therefore, was a constant reminder of the goodness of Yahweh in preserving the nation in the wilderness, reiterating the lesson that "man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh doth man live" (Deut. 8:3).

### Three Tithes Required

According to Josephus, and strongly supported by Scripture, once the Israelites entered the land, three tithes were demanded of them. The first was the general tithe: a tenth of all products of the land given to the Levites for the support of the ministry (Num. 18:21-24). A second tithe was taken to furnish a feast for the owner and his guests at Jerusalem when a special ceremony took place (Deut. 14:22-27). A third tithe, the "poor tithe", was set aside every third year for charity (Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12). However, whereas Josephus makes mention of three tithes, others claim that on the third year when the "poor tithe" was taken up, in fact, only two were demanded, and the second tithe was shared between the poor and the Levites in a special ceremony.

### The Law Of Tithes

Some tithes could be redeemed by adding a fifth part thereto (Lev. 27:30-34). They were "lifted up" as heave offerings, being set aside for Yahweh, and presented to His representatives, the Levites, for their use (Num. 18:24). In turn, the Levites gave a tithe of their tithes to the Priests (Num. 18:25-32).

The offering of the tithe legitimised the people's eating of food generally; otherwise they were guilty of taking for their own fleshly use what belonged to Yahweh, for all they had was His (Num. 18:32).

It appears that tithing took place between the third and seventh months (2 Chron. 31:5-8), they being the harvest months. They synchronised with the Feast of Tabernacles when they were probably presented, and a feast took place (Lev. 23:39). They became an expression of thanksgiving to Yahweh for His goodness. The surplus, after the ceremonial feast, was stored in the Temple chambers (2 Chron. 31:11-12; Neh. 10:37-39; 12:44; 13:12). It was then distributed to the Levites as required (2 Chron. 31:19).

In the wilderness, the tithes were the exclusive perquisite of the Levites, and were limited to the increase of cattle as Num. 18:27-30 implies. In the arid desert, the manna constituted the bread of Israelites, and this each had to gather for himself. In the Land of Plenty, however, there would be abundance as Yahweh promised (Deut. 26:1-9), and hence a general sharing of abundance was demanded. As mentioned above, every third year a feast took place which the stranger and the needy were invited to share (Deut. 26:12), and a special ceremony took place (Deut. 14:23-24; 26:12-15).

Tithing, in New Testament times, was on a voluntary basis (Gal. 6:6; 2 Cor. 8:12; 9:6-15). In times of need, those who had plenty were expected to relieve those in want (cp 1 Cor. 9:7-18). But no compulsory amount was demanded as under the Law.

### **The Tithe As Representing The Holy Seed**

As the tithe was related to the manna, and Christ identified himself with the manna, so the tithe generally, is typically identifiable with the holy seed (see Isa. 6:13). Christ is the tithe of the true seed, for, in Scriptural numerics, ten is representative of the whole. He is Yahweh's portion, as the Ecclesia is His portion selected out of men. As such, both Christ and his brethren, are holy unto Yahweh. He sets them the standard of conduct, which they pass on to the world. The Ecclesia is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16), taken from among men and given unto Yahweh; His tithe of all nations (Acts 15:14; Rev. 5:9-10), designed to provide an example of Godly living, as Yahweh's representatives, or manifestation unto all mankind.

### **Summary**

To summarise: the tithes were used for the maintenance of Yahweh's ministers, and the relief of the poor and the stranger (Deut. 14:29). Israelites were expected to honour Yahweh with their substance (Prov. 3:9), acknowledging Him as the Author of their increase and store (Deut. 8:13-18; Hos. 2:8), and supporting His servants in their labour. Therefore, it is expected of Christ's followers, the Israel of God in this age, that they should be liberal towards those "who labour in the word" (Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:11; Matt. 10:40-41), as well as to the "poor and the stranger" (Luke 11:41; 12:33; Matt. 25:35-40). When Israel was liberal towards Yahweh the nation prospered; when the people were parsimonious, it suffered. In that regard, Yahweh called upon the nation to put Him to the test. If the people were liberal towards Him, He would be towards them (Mal. 3:8-12). That principle remains true today.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

## THE RITUAL OF THE RED HEIFER

*The reality of death, and its association with sin, having been dramatically brought home to the nation by the awful judgment that followed Korah's rebellion, and its increased incident being implied by the condemnation of the old generation to perish in the wilderness, some means must be devised for nullifying its taint. Death is treated as defiling because it is both a reminder of sin which caused it, and is a negation of Yahweh's purpose in Creation (Isa. 45:18). And now, due to the failure of the old generation that left Egypt, it is about to become extremely common. If 600,000 men over twenty are to die in the wilderness within 38 years, and an equal number of women likewise, each year will average over 30,000 deaths, or some 85 per day! Therefore, in mercy, Yahweh provides a sacrifice efficacious in cleansing those defiled by contact with it. This is in the ritual of the Red Heifer; an offering that is to be unique among the sacrifices of the Law in that it not only can be shared by all, but remains efficacious to cleanse long after the actual slaying of the animal. The sacrifice is to be reduced to ashes, to be kept in a "clean place", and drawn upon as needed. In a remarkable manner this points forward to the "one sacrifice" for ever as offered by the Lord.*

**The Ritual Explained — vv. 1-10**

*Contact with a dead body being accounted defiling, provision is made for cleansing therefrom. A red heifer without blemish is taken without the camp and slain before Eleazar, the High Priest elect. Its flesh, together with other ingredients specified, is consumed by fire, and after a ceremony of washing, the "ashes" are gathered and stored up for use at any time. Unlike other sacrifices under the Law, the efficacy of this one continues long after the death of the body, dramatically foreshadowing the Lord's offering.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying"** — The important instruction about to be given involved both the people and priesthood of Israel.

**VERSE 2**

**"This is the ordinance of the law which Yahweh hath commanded, saying"** — The word "ordinance" is rendered *statute* in the R.V. It denotes an appointment for the observance and benefit of the people. Some additional provision had been made

necessary by the sudden increase of death. Thousands had died through the plague that recently had inflicted the nation (Num. 17:49), and many more deaths were anticipated as the old generation commenced to die off. Hence the provision of the sacrifice at this time, pointed forward to that of the Lord's in a very remarkable manner.

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish”** — It is significant that the children of Israel as a whole are requested to provide the heifer. It represented one sacrifice for the whole nation, as Christ is the one offering for all of his people. The animal was to be completely red, and without blemish. The Hebrew *parah adumah* signifies a young red cow, not a calf or a full-grown cow, but one of greater maturity than a young heifer. Whereas “red” represents sin's flesh, “without blemish” suggests without personal transgression. The type is fulfilled in Christ. He came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:1-3), and yet was a blameless bearer of it, and so was “red” but “without blemish”. In Heb. 9:13, Paul relates this offering to that of Christ's. But why a heifer? It denotes purity, being a virgin animal. It was, of course, through the virgin Mary that Christ came into the world, and he, himself, was a “virgin” in the sense of Rev. 14:4 — where the term includes both males and females. The use of the feminine gender is also a reminder of the introduction of sin into the world (cp. Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:12-15).

The young cow had to be “without spot”. The word is rendered “perfect” in Gen. 6:9; 17:1, and denotes completeness and maturity. It relates to Christ as to nobody else. The likeness is strengthened by the negative *no blemish*, which signifies that the one typified would not only be complete, or mature (as the word rendered “without spot” can signify), but would be without personal transgression.

Consider the difficult search involved in obtaining such an animal as that. It would require close inspection of every animal submitted. Every hair had to be red. The Jews claim that if it had but two black hairs it would be rejected. Moreover, it had to be complete, entire, and without blemish in any particular. In addition, because of the prevalence of death, there was an urgency about finding such an animal. Does not this foreshadow the search for a satisfactory redeemer throughout the ages?

Many great men have appeared during the course of history, and have been able to lead their fellows along a certain course to a certain standard, but they have all fallen short of perfection. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David have been outstanding among their fellows. But great as they have been, a careful examination of their qualifications reveals some spot or blemish. The search continued until the Lord appeared, and though the most careful scrutiny failed to reveal any “spot or blemish” (Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19), the stubborn jealousy of flesh rejected him and insisted upon faults that it could not prove! Hence it denied itself the redemption that otherwise would have been possible for such!

**“And upon which never came yoke”** — See also Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam. 6:7. The heifer must not be one that had been broken in, or trained by man, but one that matched the unhewn stones of the altar (Exod. 20:25-26). It had to be free of human guidance. The antitype is revealed in Christ. He had the mind and character of God. He never needed a human yoke. He voluntarily submitted to his Father's will (Matt. 26:39; John 10:17-18; Phil. 2:6-8; Heb. 10:9).

### VERSE 3

**“And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest”** — Eleazar was the High Priest elect, and therefore foreshadowed the “High Priest to come” even the Lord Jesus Christ (see Heb. 8:11-15). His name signifies *El hath helped*, so that by name, also, he typed the “son of man whom Yahweh made strong for Himself” (Ps. 80:17). Eleazar was selected for the work of preparing the heifer instead of Aaron, because such labour rendered the one performing it ceremonially “unclean” (v. 7). How wonderfully typical of the purpose of God in Christ, and how detailed was the fulfilment of it! The Aaronic priesthood could not effect the eternal redemption of sinners, for such redemption required one coming under the curse of the law (Gal. 3:13), and yet rising from the dead freed from its power. This was foreshadowed by Eleazar being treated as “unclean” whilst providing a sacrifice that would remove the taint of uncleanness from those who had made contact with death.

It is highly significant that whilst the Jewish rabbis have commented very appropriately upon many aspects of the Law, they have confessed ignorance of the

significance of this one. Rabbi J. H. Hertz, one-time chief rabbi of the British Empire, wrote:

"This ordinance is the most mysterious rite in Scripture, the strange features of which are duly enumerated by the Rabbis.... "In brief, the attitude of Judaism as to the meaning of this law is not merely a confession of ignorance, but the realisation that we shall never know why such defilement should be removed in the specified manner."

No wonder then, when the antitypical red heifer appeared in the midst of the nation, the leaders did not know who or what he was (see John 7:12-18; 8:25).

A person could be accounted "unclean" without having given away to sin. This is important to recognise when reading that touching a dead person, for example, made one temporarily "unclean". It was not a sin to touch one who had died, but simply rendered the person "unclean" for a season, and made it necessary to go through a process of cleansing. In the light of modern medical knowledge of transmissible diseases, this was a good rule! But the important aspect of the law was that the "uncleaness" was ceremonial or religious. An unclean person, or thing, had to be "cleansed" before being completely dedicated in every sense to Yahweh. Christ required "cleansing" from the nature he bore to be fully equipped for his mediatorial work in heaven. By a process of "cleansing" he rose from the dead to eternal life and "became" for us a High Priest "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (i.e. higher than the Tabernacle institutions — Heb. 7:25-27).

"That he may bring her forth without the camp" — The Hebrew suggests that not Eleazar, but another Israelite led the heifer "outside the camp". Young renders *he* as "one" showing a distinction between Eleazar and this anonymous person. The animal would be brought to the priest for inspection, and then taken "without the camp" to be slain. How completely this foreshadows Christ! It is significant, that whereas the remains of the bullock for the sin offering were disposed by fire "without the camp", the heifer was led outside to be slain, the only sacrifice under the law to be so treated. It is obvious, therefore, that in Hebrews 13:11-12, Paul aligns Christ's offering with both the bullock and the heifer. In v.11, he refers to the blood of the bullock being "brought into the sanc-

tuary by the High Priest for sin," whose remains are "burned without the camp," but in v.12, he refers to Jesus suffering "without the gate". That, obviously, is a reference to the heifer of the chapter before us.

The heifer typifying Christ, who was the antitype of the one who led her forth to her death? Obviously, the Lord's accusers, the leaders of the nation in the day of his execution. In the heifer being led "without the camp", Israelites were taught that divine grace to cleanse them from the uncleanness of mortality is found outside the scope of the Law. The Law condemned; its sacrifices were not efficacious to bring again from the dead. Only the Redeemer promised in Gen. 3:15, and faith in the seed promised to Abraham could accomplish that. Accordingly, those who wish to participate in the saving grace of the Lord, must "go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (i.e. his cross). They must see him as a representative sacrifice, and endeavour to mortify the deeds of the flesh, in imitation of the way he submitted to the sacrifice at Golgotha (see Heb. 13:13; Gal. 5:24).

"And one shall slay her before his face" — The red heifer was slain by a non-priest. In the fulfilment of the type, it was done by the Romans at the instigation of the Jewish leaders; and it was killed in the presence of the High Priest elect, because the Lord was both sacrifice and Priest elect, about to take over from the Aaronic priesthood. See Heb. 7:12.

#### VERSE 4

"And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times" — This foreshadowed the "blood of sprinkling" applied by the Apostles to the offering of the Lord Jesus (Heb. 9:13; 1 Pet. 1:2). Eleazar must have conveyed the blood from outside the camp to the Tabernacle in its centre, thus prominently displaying the means of cleansing for all Israel to see. It was sprinkled seven times pointing forward to the perfect atonement (Heb. 10:12). Of the Lord, it is recorded: "By his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place..." (Heb. 9:12).

#### VERSE 5

"And one shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall be burn" —

The carcass of the heifer was treated similarly to that of the remains of the bullock for a sin offering (Lev. 4:12). The word *saraph*, rendered "burn" signifies to completely consume. In the day of his flesh the Lord was consumed by the spirit of Yahweh (John 2:17), and the process was

completed by his death, resurrection, and change into a spirit being (1 Cor. 15:44-46; 2 Cor. 3:18mg.).

#### VERSE 6

**"And the priest shall take cedar wood"**  
— Cedar is noted for its sweet smelling



*The dwarf-sized hyssop shrub makes but few demands on nature for its existence. It sends its roots deep down into chalky soil, spreads itself over rocky ground and boulders, clambers up stone walls and hanging cliffs as well as crevices bare to the glaring rays of the sun. As a small, humble plant, it is in contrast to the huge trees which tower above it.*



savour and its permanence. So is the sacrifice of the Lord.

**“And hyssop”** — Hyssop is a small bushy plant growing about 18 inches. Its leaves have an aromatic smell and a pungent flavour, and were used for medicinal purposes. It was used sacrificially in the Passover celebrations (Exod. 12:22), and for cleansing lepers (Lev. 14:4,6), as well as in conjunction with the red heifer. See also Ps. 51:7; Jhn. 19:29; Heb. 9:19. As a low and insignificant plant, it suggests humility, and being noted for its tenacity in clinging to the most unlikely places for growth (see 1 Kings 4:33), it symbolises faith in action. Sacrificially, therefore, it blends the ideas of humility and a virile faith. According to Solomon, the cedar was the most majestic, and the hyssop the most humble, in the scale of trees and shrubs. This suggests that the cleansing efficacy of the red heifer was open to all, both high and low.

**“And scarlet”** — The Hebrew is *To-la'ath shani*, an expression literally signifying *worm scarlet*, denoting the small insect from which is made the scarlet dye. Reference to it is found in Exod. 25:4 where it types the sacrifice of sin's flesh (Isa. 1:18). The death of the insect was necessary to produce the dye.

**“And cast it in the midst of the burning of the heifer”** — The addition of these to the carcass of the heifer assisted in providing the ash by which the cleansing was effected. More than mere death was required of Christ; he had to die in such a manner as ensured his resurrection to life eternal (John 10:17; Acts 2:24). The addition of these items to the burning of the red heifer typed this.

#### VERSE 8

**“And he that burneth her”** — See note, v. 5.

**“Shall wash his clothes in water”** — The word *kabas* signifies *to trample*. This was a method of washing, though the usual word is *rachats*, *to overflow*, or to wash in running water. Here the word implies that the clothes had become spotted or defiled, and therefore needed to be trampled underfoot in humility. *Kabas* is sometimes used for cleansing by violently putting down, or trampling underfoot. Water used sacrificially denotes cleansing through the Word. Such a washing suggests that the requirements of the word must be vigorously applied.

**“And bathe his flesh in water”** — The

verb is *rachats*, *to lave* or *overflow with water*. Whereas the clothing was to be cleansed by a more violent method, the body was to be washed by pouring water over it, suggesting the action of the living water of the Word, a cleansing “with the laver of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26).

**“And shall be unclean until the even”** — This, again, points forward to Christ. He was cleansed of the nature of mortality at the evening of the Mosaic age (Heb. 9:26).

#### VERSE 9

**“And a man that is clean”** — This describes a third man in the process, and doubtless a priest.

**“Shall gather up the ashes of the heifer”** — The ashes were carefully kept for the use of others who might be defiled by contact with death. The work of this man appears to anticipate the preaching of the Apostles. The efficacy of the Lord's offering was kept alive by their preaching, enabling others to use the means of redemption established by his offering. They were “clean” or justified men (John 15:3), and “through their word” others have been brought nigh to Christ (John 17:20). The word for “ashes” is not *deshen*, or fat, as elsewhere, but *epher*, *to bestrew*, and denotes a light ash. The mixing of the cedar wood, etc, with the burning carcass of the animal, would produce this form of ash. Reference to it is found in Heb. 9:13.

**“And lay them up without the camp in a clean place”** — The storing of this ash outside the camp taught that cleansing from the defilement of mortality has to be sought beyond the scope of the law, even through the grace revealed in Christ. “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). Since then, the means of cleansing has been laid up in the Ecclesia, which is the antitypical “clean place” without the camp. Similar instructions were given in regard to the bullock for a sin offering (Lev. 4:12), though its efficacy was limited to the time of the offering.

**“And it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel”** — This one sacrifice was efficacious for as long as it continued, dramatically pointing to the “one sacrifice” by which the defilement of death can be cured (Heb. 10:12).

**“For a water of separation”** — The Hebrew word signifies *impurity*, not *separation*. The ash of the offering was mixed with water to be applied to things or persons defiled because of their impurity by

contact with death. See note v. 17.

**“It is a purification for sin”** — The phrase “purification for sin” is one word in Hebrew *chatta'th*, and signifies a *sin offering*, as rendered in the RV. The word is derived from the Hebrew word for sin which signifies to *miss the mark*, and denotes the tendency of the flesh to stray. It was a sin offering for the removal of the defilement of mortality which is related to sin through the “law of sin and death”. It is not to be confused with the sin offering described in Lev. 4. The offering of the heifer was a burnt-sin-offering. See v. 17. A believer, recognising the impurity of the flesh, proclaimed his intention of cleansing himself of such by “perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1). It is significant, that in the age to come, the relationship of Israel to the death of the Lord will be brought home to the nation, and the need of atonement will be made evident. The prophet declares: “In that day there shall be a fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1). The words describe things that differ though closely related. Sin comes from the uncleanness of flesh (see Mark 7:18-23), being the outcome of its lusts, teaching the need to “crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof” (Gal. 5:24).

#### VERSE 10

**“And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even”** — The rite of the red heifer taught that to cleanse others from the defilement of mortality, one himself had to come under its influence. Accordingly Christ came “in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). He was “made sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:19). He redeemed from the curse of the law “being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). This was a mystery that the Apostles found hard to understand, and which was quite beyond the ability of Judaistic Jews to do so. But it was a truth dramatically revealed by the rite of the red heifer. This sacrifice purified the impure, whilst at the same time rendering impure the pure. To this day, the rabbis find it hard to understand its purpose. One Jewish commentator declared: “In brief, the attitude of Judaism as to the meaning of this law is not merely a confession of ignorance, but the realisation that we shall never know why such defilement should

be removed in this specified manner.”

In view of that concept of the sacrifice, it is understandable why the Jews of Christ's day failed to comprehend his mission.

**“And it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute or ever”** — What an important addition. This sacrifice not only remained efficacious long after the death of the victim, but was designed for both Jews and Gentiles who joined themselves unto Israel! See its application in Rom. 3:29-30; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11. In Christ there is “neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one.”

#### General Procedures For Cleansing — vv. 11-13

*Having introduced the rite of the Red Heifer, the general procedures for cleansing are now laid down. The one who touches a dead body is accounted unclean for seven days, and he, in turn, is defiling to any touching him. It has been observed that this is a good health rule, at least in the case of those who die from contagious diseases. The important principle, however, is that it emphasises the original cause of death, sin; and reveals how easily one may become defiled by such.*

#### VERSE 11

**“He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days”** — The Hebrew, as indicated by the margin, reads *any soul of man*. See Lev. 21:1; Deut. 5:2; 9:6-10; 19:16; Hag. 2:13 for the Law's teaching on defilement by contact with those who defile. An important truth taught by this law is that man is more defiling than a beast, for it decreed that if one touched the carcass of a beast, he was to be accounted unclean until evening (Lev. 11:24), whereas contact with death in the case of man made him unclean for seven days. All creation was affected by the sin of man (Gen. 3:14,17,19; Rom. 5:12), and living, unregenerated man is accounted as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1), and therefore unclean morally and physically. Contact with Christ is necessary to cleanse “the conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14), hence the law before us. But why was a defiled Hebrew accounted unclean for seven days? Because the era of sin and death is for seven millenniums. Not until the end of the thousand years reign of Christ will the earth be completely cleansed from the pollutions of sin, for “even in

the land of uprightness" sin will continue (Isa. 26 :10). Though restrained at the coming of Christ, it will not be completely eradicated until the "end of the thousand years" of Rev. 20:7.

### VERSE 12

**"He shall purify himself with it"** — The Hebrew *yithchatta* is from a root signifying *to sin*, and can be literally rendered, *he shall sin himself*. This does not mean that he shall add to sin, but that he shall recognize it in himself and take steps to remove it. The Hebrew idiom is similar to the English expression *to skin an animal*. This does not mean to supply it with a skin, but to take away.

**"On the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean"** — Any defiled had to submit to a double cleansing. This pointed forward to the two-fold cleansing in Christ. Three is the number of resurrection, for on the third day life first appeared on the earth (Gen. 1:11-13). The cleansing on the third day, therefore, anticipated a form of resurrection: a spiritual resurrection unto newness of life in Christ (Hos. 3:2; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 15:3-4). At that stage, past sins are forgiven and the candidate for eternal life is mentally and morally "cleansed through the word" (John 15:3). The seventh day points forward to the final physical cleansing at the return of Christ in the seventh millennium. Seven is the number of the covenant, or completeness, and in this context types the completed process unto a change of nature (1 Cor. 15:48, 51-52). The Gospel of redemption was anticipated in the requirements of the Law.

**"But if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean"** — This figuratively teaches that baptism unto a newness of life in Christ is absolutely essential to salvation.

### VERSE 13

**"Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself defileth the tabernacle of Yahweh"** — In the beginning, man sinned and the physical defilement of mortality followed. The Law reminded man of this by decreeing that contact with death would defile, and bar him from fellowship with God. If any desired fellowship, and the personal salvation that can follow from it, he had to follow the process set down by Yahweh. The life in Christ is identical with this. The

believer is reminded that the flesh is physically unclean and must be kept in subjection. He has fellowship with God and with Christ if he "walks in the light" (1 John 1:7). The "blood of Jesus Christ" cleanseth from sin (v.7).

The Law went further. It taught that a defiled person presuming to join in worship with others without being cleansed therefrom "defileth the Tabernacle". Therefore, the imputed "uncleanness" was not merely a personal matter, but a communal menace as well. If not purged, it involved the whole congregation, for whoever made contact with the one defiled automatically became defiled himself, so that acceptable worship at the Tabernacle would be affected by his presence. The Law, therefore, emphasised the responsibility of all to keep the Truth pure.

**"And the soul shall be cut off from Israel"** — A Hebrew who refused to avail himself of the means of cleansing which was freely available, was to be excommunicated from worship. Moreover, in rejecting the provision made available by Yahweh, he risked the direct visitation of God. See note at Lev. 15:31.

The "uncleanness", of course, was imputed, not actual, but it cut off a man from contact with the Tabernacle, in which case, unless corrected, he could "die in his uncleanness" (Lev. 15:31). This teaches that we must not only avoid moral defilement, but be conscious of what causes it. In Rev. 21:27, the Lord warned: "There shall in no wise enter into it (i.e. the New Jerusalem, or Lamb's bride — vv. 9-10) anything that defileth." The Law demonstrated that man's natural state is one of hopelessness.

**"Because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him"** — The word "sprinkled" is *zeraq*, and in contrast to the word used in v.19, signifies *to throw*, as rendered by the RSV. The water was thrown on him rather than sprinkled. As a nation, Israel was baptised into Moses (1 Cor. 10:1-2), but as death was a daily possibility, and the living were defiled by contact therewith, constant application of water was necessary. So it is in Christ. The Word is likened to the "laver of washing" application of which helps to cleanse from pollutions of the flesh by motivating the believer to rise above them. Like the "water of separation" or "impurity", i.e. water designed to purify

from defilement, it will assist to remove all blemishes (Eph. 5:26-27). On the other hand, neglect of this water of purification will result in ultimate rejection at the Judgment Seat as "unclean" (see Heb. 2:2-3; 10:29; Rev. 21:8; 22:11, 15).

#### Specific Rules For Uncleanness — vv. 14-22

*These verses list causes of uncleanness, and the remedial actions that must be taken. The rules laid down show that it is Yahweh Who sets the requirements for approach to Him; it is He alone Who can make man acceptable to Him. Man cannot approach God on his own human terms and conditions. In his natural state, he is unfit for such approach, and the mercy of Yahweh is necessary to open the way thereunto.*

#### VERSE 14

**"This is the law"** — This statement introduces specific cases of uncleanness.

**"When a man dieth in a tent; all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days"** — In the confined space of such a dwelling, all were accounted unclean. This was in comparison with a dead body in a field. In that case, only those who touched it were so affected (vv. 18-19).

#### VERSE 15

**"And every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it is unclean"** — The Hebrew expression relating to the covering implies a hinged top. A properly covered vessel was not deemed contaminated. Such a "vessel" would be a "vessel of honour" (2 Tim. 2:21).

#### VERSE 16

**"And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days"** — See Num. 31:19 for the law relating to those who slew an enemy in battle. Note the requirements in regard to burying the remains of those slain of Gog's army (Ezek. 39:11-16). The relevance of sin to death will be preserved in that age as well, until, at the end of the millennium, sin and death will exist no more (Rev. 20:14-15).

#### VERSE 17

**"And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer"** —

The principles of sacrifice were impressed upon those who would be cleansed. It is particularly significant that the heifer constituted a burnt offering for sin, a form of sacrifice not found elsewhere in the Law in relation to sin. It taught the principle that only by the dedication of self will sin be conquered.

**"Of purification for sin"** — As noted above, the Hebrew *chatta'th* signifies *sin offering*. In all the concept of "uncleanness" after touching the dead, there is impressed the close relationship between sin and death. The individual's death is not the result of his sin, but being subject to death is part of the penalty of the original sin (Gen. 3:19,22). So, throughout Scripture, sin is shown as related to death, as cause to effect.

**"And running water"** — The margin has *living water*. This symbolised the spirit-word (see Song 4:15; John 4:16-17; 7:38; Rev. 7:12). Christ declared that the words he spake constituted "spirit and life" (John 6:63). They became not merely a cleansing agent (John 15:3), but the motivation of a new way of life capable of conquering fleshly desires (Gal. 5:16-17).

#### VERSE 18

**"And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water"** — See note v. 8. The hyssop was also used in the Passover ceremony to splash the blood upon the doorposts and lintels of the homes.

**"And sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave"** — The word *nazah* signifies *to sprinkle* as in v. 4, but not as in v. 13 (see note). Such a sprinkling was recognised as a means of ceremonial cleansing. See Ps. 51:7; Ezek. 36:25-27. Living water figuratively denotes the influence of the spirit-word (John 15:3; 17:17), whilst the hyssop suggests humility and faith in action. A person "clean" has to help the "unclean" to be cleansed. Christ accomplished that through his own offering which was extended to others by the preaching of the word the cleansed apostles.

#### VERSE 19

**"And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day"** — The "clean" person foreshadowed the Lord, whose resurrection from the grave to life eternal cleansed

him of the physical impurity of mortality, and qualified him to save others. The use of *three* and *seven* in conjunction figuratively foreshadows resurrection in fulfillment of the oath or covenant. It was not merely the death of Jesus that established the means of salvation, but his resurrection to life (Rom. 4:25; 6:4-5). Paul taught: "If we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10).

**"And on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even"** — A very special washing, in contrast to the previous sprinkling, took place on the seventh day, foreshadowing the complete "cleansing" that will take place at Christ's return by the bestowal of nature that will be granted the approved. Even in this ceremonial of the Law, it should be noted that the cleansing was not only ceremonial but also physical, for the body was bathed in water, and any impurities removed. It is claimed that the ordinance of the Law was a good health rule in view of contagious diseases, and the antiseptic value of such thorough washing is today recognised and applied in hospitals throughout the world. But there was much more than that in the rite. The uncleanness associated with death taught the close relationship between sin and death. It is worth re-iterating that whilst an individual's death was not the result of his personal sin, all are required to remember that being subject to death was part of the penalty of sin in the beginning (Gen. 3:19). Because he was of the human race, the Lord inherited that physical condition, though, he was strengthened in mind by His Father giving him the ability to overcome it. (Ps. 80:17). In the case of actual sinners, the words of Isaiah are to the point: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before thine eyes; cease to do evil" (Isa. 1:16). Isaiah's words illustrate the significance of the washing. Baptism is an external action illustrating an inward change. Any defiled were required to bathe themselves. The word used signifies *to lave* the body in running water, a symbol of the spirit-word. Notice the three distinct usages of water in the process:

- (1) The water of separation (purification) had to be splashed on the defiled person (v. 13);
- (2) Living water (symbol of the spirit-

word) had to be sprinkled upon him—vv. 17-18;

(3) A final thorough bathing had to take place, terminating the ceremony.

The first can be likened to baptism, as the water of purification. The second sprinkling on the third and seventh days, symbolised the action of the spirit-word resulting in a figurative and literal resurrection: first, from out of the waters of baptism, and second, from the grave (for in the case of the latter, judgment will be based on the word — John 12:48). The final washing, so complete, and which terminated the process of cleansing, typified the complete change to spirit nature which will result in "mortality being swallowed up of life" (1 Cor. 15:50-54; 2 Cor. 5:4). This bathing took place at "even". In Hebrew reckoning, the evening was the beginning of a new day. Accordingly, the antitype awaits the new day of Christ's coming (Mal. 4:1-2).

#### VERSE 20

**"But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean"** — To be "cut off" from the congregation is to be excommunicated from its worship.

#### VERSE 21

**"And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkles the water of separation shall wash his clothes; and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even"** — As noted above, the expression *separation* is incorrect. A literal rendition would give: *water of impurity*. It comprised the ashes mixed with water (v. 17). Human nature, though given as a sacrifice, and granted the Holy Spirit, is still treated as unclean. This must be recognised in the conquest of sin and death. John makes the point: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 Jn. 1:8). Notice that he does not say, "we have not sinned", but "if we say we have *no sin*". He is referring to the nature of flesh, its sinful tendencies. Any who claim that the flesh is clean has not the truth. Such errorists deceive themselves. John then states, that recognising the sinful tendency of flesh, "if we confess our sins (actual transgressions), he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from

all unrighteousness" (v. 9). In order to accomplish this, Christ came in our nature (Heb. 2:14). Hence, in providing for the cleansing of others, he was physically, though not morally, unclean. This was foreshadowed in the ordinance of the Red Heifer, including the verse now before us.

The requirements of this verse are described as "a perpetual statute", that is, one that must remain so long as the Law is in force (see Heb. 7:19; 9:10, 13, 14; 10:4). However, as we have seen, its principles are carried over into the requirements of grace in Christ Jesus. The most interesting and significant factor of the rite of purification was that the clean person became unclean by assisting the polluted party to a state of cleanliness! This was true of Christ. Paul taught: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us; for it is written cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). By coming in human nature, Christ made contact with death, which is defiling. The rite of the Red Heifer made it clear that he could not cleanse his followers without doing so. The curse of the Law that rested on the Lord related to the sinfulness of human nature, teaching that flesh itself is defiling. His offering taught that the lusts of the flesh have to be figuratively put to death in order to please God (Gal. 5:24). Whilst Christ was literally put to death by unholy hands, it was in accordance with "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23). On the part of the Jews and Romans, it was a most unrighteous murder; on the part of Yahweh and His Law, it was a sacrifice designed to demonstrate that flesh will lead to sin unless it is crucified, mortified, or put to death (Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5). Crucifixion as practiced by Romans, or hanging from a tree as practiced by

Israelites (Deut. 21:23), were forms of execution of criminals. Christ's death, therefore, witnessed to the criminal instincts that are found in human nature in its threefold lusts of flesh, eyes and pride of life. John taught that they were "not of the Father" (1 Jn. 2:16) for they were inflamed by the temptation of the serpent. Christ never gave way to those lusts because he developed the mental potentiality inherited from his Father to overcome them. His triumph over sin and death, therefore, resulted from the co-operation of the Father and Son. It was a work of love on behalf of doomed humanity.

The clothes of the defiled person had to be washed thoroughly. This law anticipates the teaching of the Apocalypse: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). There is a need to keep those "garments" clean (Rev. 16:15), and the antitypical ashes of the Red Heifer are always available to that end.

#### VERSE 22

**"And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean"** — See this principle of the Law, which is basic to the understanding of the atonement, discussed and explained by the prophet Haggai (ch. 2:13). It teaches that whilst holiness is difficult, it is easy to defile; hence the need for separation from that which pollutes, and avoidance of that which is evil.

**"And the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even"** — From this it can be appreciated that there would be great and continuous need for the mediatorial work of the Red Heifer. Those ceremonially "unclean" were taught to look to the coming of a new day.



in regard to prayer under nine sections: (1) The Symbol of Prayer; (2) Prayer in Worship; (3) The Essentials of Prayer; (4) For What Should We Pray? (5) Advice on Prayer; (6) A Scriptural Analysis of Prayer; (7) Prayer in Time of Crisis; (8) Pleadings and Praises in Prayer; (9) Meditations upon God and Prayer.

The book is clearly printed, and the style is relaxed and informative. Prayer can be a mere formal exercise of little real value; or a powerful urge that will bring us humbly into the presence of the great Increate.

Supplies are available from Ecclesial Libraries, or the following sources:

*Logos Publications*, 9 West Beach Road, West Beach, South Australia 5024, or Logos Agents in Australia.

E. S. Cherry, 33 Bellwood Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31-1QB, U.K.

B. Law, 1 Centre House, Crompton St., Pinetown, Natal, South Africa.

P. MacLachlan, R.D. 2, Algernon Road, Hastings, N.Z.

A.G. Bull, 1022-7th Ave., New Westminster, B.C. Canada V3M-2J5.

T. Graham, 9728 Nevada Ave., Chatsworth, Cal. 91311, USA.

Detroit Ecclesial Library, 14676 Berwick, Livonia, Mich. 48154, USA.

Price: Aust. — \$4.50; U.K. £2.70; Canada & N.Z. \$5.60; USA \$5.20. Please add *local postage*.

### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

By special request we have republished Brother Thomas' exposition of *The Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth*, and *Its Latter-day Restoration*. With this printing we have also included *Clerical Theology Unscriptural*. All these expositions are extremely helpful to the better understanding of the Word. Brother Thomas' exposition of the Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth is most valuable, providing a basis for the proper exposition of several epistles of Paul and Peter, and putting into true context reference to the "last days" so often used by the Apostles. For example, James made no mistake in claiming that the return of the Lord then drew nigh, and Brother Thomas' exposition shows why that is so. The exposition *Clerical Theology Unscriptural* treats with the term "ecclesia", the Holy Spirit, Birth of Water and of Spirit, and so forth. In the form of a dialogue it is a most interesting and helpful treatise. Price \$1.75 Aust.

## Christadelphian Expositor

H. P. Mansfield, Editor

Published by Logos Publications,

9 West Beach Rd., West Beach, South Australia, 5024.

(Telephone: Adelaide 08-356 2278)

Registered for posting as a Periodical — Category "A"

### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Australia — \$6; Overseas — \$7; U.K. — £3; Sth. Africa — R7.

### MAIL ORDERS TO:

Make Money Orders, Cheques, etc., out to "Logos Publications," and send direct to —

*Logos Publications, 9 West Beach Road, West Beach, South Australia, 5024.*

OR to our Representatives:

*In U.K.: E. S. Cherry, 33 Bellwood Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31-1QB, U.K.*

*In Sth. Africa: B. Law, 1 Centre House, Crompton Street, Pinetown, Natal, South Africa.*

*In New Zealand: P. MacLachlan, Algernon Road, R.D. 2, Hastings, N.Z.*

### American Edition:

Registered Periodical published by Logos Publications, 9728 Nevada Ave., Chatsworth, Ca. 91311. Application to mail at 2nd class postage rates is pending at Chatsworth, Ca. 91311. A Quarterly Publication.

*The Christadelphian Expositor*

A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures



# Editorial

What a remarkable book is that which we are studying! I am impressed with that fact, as we enter into a consideration of the amazing prophecy of Balaam, the false prophet hired by Balak to curse the people of God. But Yahweh turned the curse into a blessing, as He will for us if we keep constant to His truth and its requirements.

A remarkable feature of this incident is that Moses recorded it just prior to his death; and as it happened at that time, Yahweh must have revealed to Moses what was taking place in the counsels of Moab and Midian as they brought the prophet from Babylonia; and on the heights of Pisgah as Balaam proclaimed his prophecies.

For although Balaam spoke to Balak, his words were also revealed to Moses. That being the case, what a thrilling prophecy that great man of God heard! How his heart must have overflowed with love for his God as he was given these prognostications of the latter days! Though he was not permitted to lead the people over Jordan into the Land of Promise, at least he was given assurances of their latter-day might, and his participation therein as a resurrected and glorified saint (see Num. 23:22-23; 24:8-9, 17-18; and particularly, 23:10).



**NUMBERS:**

**BEHOLD THE GOODNESS  
AND THE SEVERITY  
OF GOD**

***Section Three***

***VINDICATION  
IN THE  
WILDERNESS***

***Ch. 20:1-36:13***

*The second section of the Book of Numbers records the failure of the first generation (see Introduction, p. 102). Now, at chapter 20, commencing the third section of the book, the last year of the wandering is recorded, and the new generation is making its way towards the Land of Promise. In that new generation, the promise of Yahweh to the patriarchs will be vindicated. The Twentieth Chapter, therefore, is in the nature of an introduction to the last section of the book. Then follows the various trials designed to discipline and educate those who are to inherit the land. Finally, details of inheritance are set down.*

*Much is changed in this section. Miriam dies, Aaron also dies and is replaced by Eleazar. Moses is soon to go, and Joshua is appointed the new leader. The new journeying, to the plains of Moab, involve about four or five months. The Israelites leave Mount Hor about one month after Aaron's death (ch. 20:29), and in the eleventh month of that same year, when the tribes are encamped on the plains of Moab, Moses commences to deliver his great charge to the nation, recorded in Deuteronomy (ch. 1:3,5). There is an initial reverse at Arad, an important lesson in faith impressed by the brazen serpent, and then increasing excitement as the people move north from Ezion-geber towards the fertile highlands of Moab, and the borders of the Land of Promise.*

*Balaam is employed to curse them, but in vain: his curse is converted into a blessing. But as though as to remind the people of their personal responsibility, some fail at Baal-peor, and suffer the punishment due to their sin. A new numbering is made at this stage which reveals remarkable contrasts to the original one; and a re-statement of the responsibilities of worship is given. A declaration of war against Midian is pronounced (ch. 31); the request of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and portion of Manasseh to take up their inheritance on the eastern side of Jordan is granted; a recapitulation of the wanderings is listed; an outline of the borders of the land is set down; Cities of Refuge are appointed; and finally instructions regarding the rights of inheritances are clarified.*

*On this note, and with the tribes poised ready to enter the land, the Book of Numbers closes.*

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE FORTIETH YEAR: FROM KADESH TO HOR

*A pall of silence shrouds most of the thirty-eight years of wandering; then, in the chapter before us, the final year unfolds. Significantly, there is grouped together the death of Miriam, the indiscretion of Moses, and the death of Aaron. Miriam (the prophetess - Exod. 15:20), Aaron (the priest) and Moses (the Lawgiver) stand pre-eminently for the Old Covenant. The death of Miriam and of Aaron on the very eve of entering the land, and the failure of Moses at the same time, teaches that neither the Law, the Prophets, nor the Priesthood can lead the nation into the Promised Rest, and it is left to Joshua, the Jesus of that age, to do so. Among other incidents, the smiting of the rock at Meribah is rich in its type-teaching. Pointing forward to Christ, it teaches that the Rock, having once been smitten, has no need of a repetition. Merely speak to it, and the hidden waters of truth will gush forth. Christ taught: "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).*

#### **The Death of Miriam — v. 1**

*It is the first month of the fortieth year. The whole congregation is again gathered at Kadesh, and there Miriam dies and is buried. Miriam was a young girl when Moses was born, and so was perhaps over 130 years of age at her death.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation"** — The expression, "the whole congregation" seems to indicate the re-assembly of the tribes after the dispersion of nearly 38 years (cp. v.22). The wanderings are listed in Ch. 33, but it would appear that for a considerable period whilst the Tabernacle remained at Kadesh, the tribes wandered at will around the area until the regathering at this point of time.

**"Unto the desert of Zin"** — See note Num. 13:21.

**"In the first month"** — This was the

fortieth year since leaving Egypt (See Num. 33:36-38; Deut. 1:3); but 38 years since leaving Sinai (Deut. 2:14).

**"And the people abode in Kadesh"** — Kadesh signifies *Sanctuary*. See note Num. 13:26. The children of Israel, therefore, were brought back to the original place where the wanderings commenced. See Num. 33:18-37 for the intermediate wanderings.

**"And Miriam died there"** — Miriam's name signifies *Rebellion*, and her death in this fortieth year marks the end of the period of rebellion on the part of the people. She was older than Moses. Though her age is not recorded, she was perhaps 10 or 12 years older than Moses, and therefore, at this time, she was about 130 years of age. Her death must have deeply affected the nation. In spite of her indiscretions (and all are guilty of those), she was an outstanding woman in Israel. She cared for Moses as a child; she led the

women in praising Yahweh at the crossing of the Red Sea; she was noted as a prophetess in Israel. Josephus claims that she became the wife of Hur (Exod. 24:14). This would make her the grandmother of Bezaleel, the artisan in charge of the construction of the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:2). But the Bible is silent regarding this, and as far as it is concerned, she could have remained unmarried.

Though the meaning of her name is generally given as *Rebellion*, some derive it from *mar*, "a drop", and *yam*, "the sea". As such she could represent those who were saved from the sea, whom she led in singing and dancing; and so typed those taken out of the sea of nations (Isa. 57:20). -Miriam is the Hebrew form of Mary in the New Testament.

"**And was buried there**" — Josephus claims that there was a long mourning of thirty days for Miriam. Though buried at Kadesh, the site is unknown. In that regard, her burial-place is similar to that of her brother, Moses.

#### Moses Provoked At The Waters of Strife— vv. 2-13

*Gathered again at Kadesh, the people found water lacking. With fickle indifference to Yahweh's goodness in the past, they gather themselves in rebellious mood against Moses and Aaron. Completely losing patience with their lack of faith, provoked beyond measure by their continued rebelliousness during their forty years of wandering, Moses acts and speaks inadvisedly. Instead of only speaking to the rock as commanded, he smites it with his rod; instead of giving the praise exclusively to Yahweh, he includes himself and Aaron in his statement to the people. In consequence, he is denied entrance to the land. References to this unfortunate incident are frequent throughout the Word. See Num. 27:14; Deut. 1:37; 3:23-26; 32:51; 33:8; Psa. 78:15; 81:7; 95:8; 105:41; 106:32-33; 114:8; Neh. 9:15; Isa. 48:21; Hos. 13:5; 1 Cor. 10:11. The punishment proclaimed against Moses, teaches that Yahweh is not only faithful in blessing those who obey His word, but is also faithful to His warnings when they are not heeded. In interceding for the people, Moses fellowships the sufferings of Christ (cp. Num. 20:6 with Psa. 109:1-4), whilst in his lapse he represents those under the Law, who need grace to attain unto the promise.*

#### VERSE 2

"**And there was no water for the congregation**" — The large concourse of people suddenly making demands on the oasis at Kadesh was probably the cause of its waters failing. Yahweh could have replaced them, but decided to test His people yet again. "I proved thee at the waters of Meribah," He declared through the Psalmist (Psa. 81:7).

"**And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron**" — The new generation probably realised that it was nearing the end of the wilderness wanderings, and this would create general excitement among the people. What a let-down when the water failed! It appeared to threaten the success of the whole venture, so that in angry mood they now moved against their leaders.

#### VERSE 3

"**And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before Yahweh**" — The people angrily blamed Moses for the lack of water. There is no word for "God" in the Hebrew, so that their statement should read: "Oh that we had died . . ." This was a cowardly, faithless statement; one that called in question the goodness of God. Under pressure of trial, flesh will often respond in such a way: "Oh that I were dead!" It is the senseless, and unreasoning cry of despair, faithlessness and lack of patience. It implies that the one making it has no Helper capable of bringing good out of evil.

The use of the term *brethren* in this statement implies that members of the old generation initiated the complaint, even though it may have been echoed by others. The reference is to the judgment that fell upon Korah and his company.

#### VERSE 4

"**And why have ye brought up the congregation of Yahweh into this wilderness?**" — What is the purpose of bringing us again to this desolate spot? Apparently, the Tabernacle was stationed at Kadesh, whilst the tribes wandered at will through the surrounding wilderness. However, at this point of time they had all gathered again to this central place to commence their journey to the land. When the water failed, the malcontents, and particularly those of the old generation, demanded to know the reason for this.



THE WILDERNESS OF ZIN — Portraying some of the territory in which Israel spent most of their thirty-eight years of wandering.

**“That we and our cattle should die there”** — Such a statement implied that the entire nation was about to be abandoned by Yahweh. The charge was totally unreasonable. After all, the people had been sustained in the wilderness in a remarkable manner for forty years (see Neh. 9:21). Instead of questioning God’s purpose, and complaining against His servants, Moses and Aaron, they should have quietly and prayerfully sought the cause of the lack of water, with the knowledge that He Who had sustained them for so long, undoubtedly would continue to do so until His purpose was fulfilled. However, the failures of Israel are recorded for the benefit of believers in subsequent times (1 Cor. 10:11-13).

**VERSE 5**

**“And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt”** — What an untruth! Moses did not *make* them leave Egypt; they did so at the invitation of Yahweh, and by their own freewill. They were only too willing to do so then!

**“To bring us in unto this evil place”** — They spake as though the purpose of Yahweh was fulfilled in bringing them to Kadesh, but that was not so. They were invited to leave Egypt that they might enter into “the land which Yahweh sware unto the fathers” (Deut. 6:21-23). This involved a journey through the wilderness, which is a harsh and bitter place, as Scripture clearly states, and the facts reveal (Deut. 8:15; Jer. 2:6). But that was merely the way to a glorious inheritance, and if the people had kept their spiritual vision centred on the promised inheritance, they would have developed the incentive to conquer. But they did not. Instead they ranted on Moses as though he had failed in his purpose; whereas the cause of failure was due to them.

**“It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink”** — They had been promised a land producing such fruits (cp. Num. 13:23), which, of course, the wilderness did not. Nevertheless, their criticism of Moses was unreasonable. He had not claimed that the wilderness was the Land of Promise, nor taught that the way to the inheritance would be pleasant. But the people had made the way harder by their complaints, and their lack of faith. Their limited vision illustrated the words of Paul: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable”

(1 Cor. 15:19). They were prepared to sacrifice the future for the present.

**VERSE 6**

**“And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the congregation”** — The word “assembly” is *qahal*, and signifies those *called out*. The term probably denotes a group called out to represent the tribes as a whole. Recognising the seriousness of the rebellion, and fearful of its consequences, Moses and Aaron moved to the front of the Tabernacle in order to intercede on behalf of the nation.

**“And they fell upon their faces”** — See note, Num. 14:5; 16:4. Moses’ action illustrated the principle expressed in Psa. 109:4.

**“And the glory of Yahweh appeared unto them”** — See note, Num. 14:10.

**The Mercy of Yahweh — vv. 7-9**

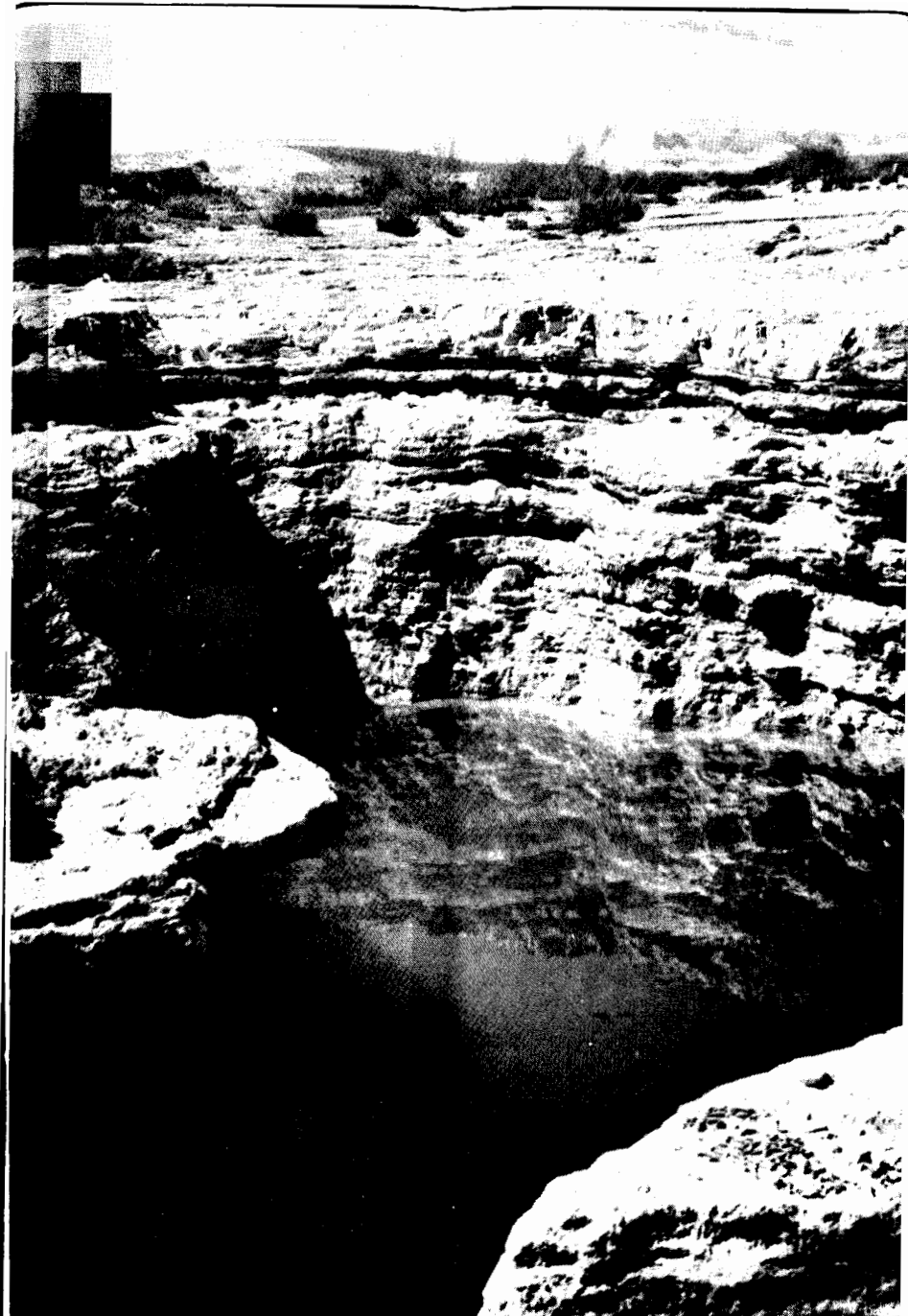
*In spite of the unreasonable criticism and faithless attitude of the people, the mercy of Yahweh responds to the pleading of His servant Moses.*

**VERSE 7**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — There was instant response to Moses’ prayer.

**VERSE 8**

**“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes”** — The narrative does not specify Moses’ serpent rod (Exod. 17:5), but “the rod”. This was Aaron’s rod that budded, and which symbolised the resurrection (Num. 17:10). It was appropriate to smite the first rock with the serpent rod, for the latter represented sinful human nature and “with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5). But it was incongruous to smite with a rod that represented the mercy of Yahweh in selection and resurrection, and in doing so Moses typed the stubborn, rebellious refusal of the Jewish nation to accept the fact of Christ’s resurrection (Matt. 28:12-15). The rock, itself, represented Christ (1 Cor. 10:4). Having been already smitten by the serpent rod, all that was now required for response was to speak to it (see introductory note to this chapter). In further elaboration of the type, it should be noted that the word for “rock” in this place, is not *tzur* as



In the arid wilderness of the Negev, natural reservoirs as here depicted retain water even in the summer months; and upon them Israel largely relied.

in Exod. 17:5, but *sela*.

According to Gesenius (Oxford) it is derived from a root signifying to *cleave, split, cleft*, hence a jagged cliff or crag often isolated. The word is rendered "*clift of the rock*" in Exod. 33:22, and *rock* in Song 2:14. It denotes, therefore an isolated, or split off, rock or crag, whereas *tzur* signifies a mass of rock. This is quite important. The rock, or *tzur*, which Moses smote as recorded in Exod. 17:5, represented the Lord as part of humanity. It was appropriate to smite it, for it represented flesh to be crucified. But the second rock which Moses was told to address, not to smite, typed one broken off, or isolated from humanity, as a crag is isolated from a mountain. The resurrection of Christ provided the antitype. Moses' failure foreshadowed Jewry's failure to perceive the real identity of the risen Christ (Rom. 1:1-3). Instead, the nation launched a policy of persecution against the disciples of the Lord. In so doing, they smote Christ (Acts 9:5), and in that way repeated the error of Moses. Later, Paul warned believing Hebrews of the possibility of "crucifying Christ afresh" (Heb. 6:6). In type, that is what Moses did in smiting the rock instead of speaking to it.

In 1 Cor. 10:4, Paul taught that "they drank of that spiritual Rock that *followed* them: and that Rock was Christ". But the margin renders *went with them*, or accompanied them. The O.T. gives no hint of the Rock originally smitten by Moses accompanying the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings. But the Jews do have an ancient legend claiming that the rock followed them, rolling along the pathway of the Israelites to be smitten by Moses the second time. Paul seems to be alluding to this legend, and teaching that, in a sense, a rock did accompany Israel, but "that rock was Christ". The "Rock was Christ" in the sense that he manifested Yahweh, one of whose titles is *The Rock* (Deut. 34:4,32). Moses' use of this title in relation to God reveals that he understood the symbolism of the Rock as representing Yahweh. In smiting it, therefore, he smote Yahweh in manifestation. The Jews did likewise when they crucified Christ. Moses' mistake, therefore, (and it is with great reluctance that we write of the "mistakes" of such great men as he), was somewhat more serious than a mere, injudicious ejaculation. In smiting the Rock, he smote Yahweh, typing the action of the Jews of Christ's day. For "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father" (John



Ain Qedeis is identified with Kadesh-barnea. It was here that the "wilderness generation" rebelled against Moses, and later he smote the rock instead of speaking to it.



5:23). In seeking forgiveness of their action in the age to come, Jewry will be compelled to "Look upon Me (Yahweh) Whom they pierced, and mourn for him (Yahweh's manifestation in His son, the Rock) whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 12:10).

"And he said unto them, Hear now ye rebels" — Unfortunately, Moses, unwittingly, also found himself among the rebels that day. See Psa. 106:32-33.

"Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" — Consumed with burning anger at the manner in which the new generation was following the old when the Land was just before them, Moses "spake unadvisedly with his lips" illustrating the warning of James (Ch. 3:1-6). He failed to give Yahweh the full glory, and in using the plural pronoun *we* identified himself and Aaron as being responsible for the miracle. He accused the people of being rebellious whilst he and Aaron were also guilty of a like failing (v. 12; Num. 27:14). Thus it was that Levi "transgressed at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh" (Deut. 32:51), for they were the leaders of the tribe (Deut. 33:8).

#### VERSE 11

"And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice" — By "his rod" is meant the rod of Levi (Num. 17:3), Moses' tribe. He smote the rock *twice*, thereby showing the heat of his anger.

"And the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" — Yahweh remained true to His promise, though flesh failed. He "brought forth water, out of the rock of flint" (Deut. 8:15). In this verse, the word for "congregation" is *'edah*, the feminine form of *witness*, and relates to the community as a whole. This is in contrast to the word "congregation" in v. 10, from *qahal*, the equivalent to "ecclesia", relating to a selected group, representatives of the tribes.

Yahweh's goodness was revealed in providing water in spite of the rebellious attitude of the leaders and people of Israel. It is also manifested in that the smitten Christ-rock provides life-giving water for whosoever asks for it (John 4:10; 7:35-39). The water came from the rock in such abundance as to provide for the beasts as well as the people. It is significant that the former term is used sym-

bolically for those over whom the Israel of God will exercise dominion in the age to come (Gen. 1:26). The divine covenant made with Noah (typical of Christ) included "every beast of the earth" with him in the ark (Gen. 9:10). The type pointed forward to that epoch of peace in the millennium when the glorified saints will rule over the mortal nations at peace. Ample "water" in the life-giving message of God will be provided for all.

#### Moses Is Forbidden Entrance To The Land — vv. 12-13

*Moses not only smites the Rock instead of speaking to it, but in the use of the plural personal pronoun "we" takes to himself a glory which belongs to Yahweh alone. So he is told he will not lead the people into the Promised Inheritance. The work will be completed by Joshua (Jesus). The fate of Moses types the need of grace, for Law alone cannot provide redemption.*

#### VERSE 12

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron" — These two great men are singled out before all Israel; as the failure of the Law to redeem is apparent to all who consider it.

"Because ye believed me not" — The word "believed" is from the Hebrew *'aman*, to *trust* or *shew faith*, and therefore implies much more than mere academic understanding. Lack of faith is the source of most evils. Accordingly, Moses' action is described as "rebellion" in Num. 27:14. See the use of the word "believe" in 2 Chron. 20:20; Matt. 17:20. The word in the original implies such knowledge as will manifest itself in action. Moses' unfortunate mistake had a six-fold failure:

1. He angrily addressed the people.
2. He neglected to speak to the rock.
3. He took from the glory of Yahweh by use of the pronoun "we".
4. He smote the rock twice in anger.
5. He failed to act in faith.
6. He failed to sanctify Yahweh in the eyes of the people.

This all stemmed from Moses' anger. Whilst there is such a thing as a righteous anger, as manifested by God and Christ, Paul warns against the effect of fleshly anger: "Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath" (Eph. 4:26). Moses, deeply regretted his mistake, and referred to it many times. See Deut. 1:37; 3:27; 4:21,22; 31:2. Obviously the punishment meted out to him was one

of the most disappointing things of his life. 120 years had been spent in preparation for this moment, only to fail at the very borders of the land. It illustrates the limitations of the Mosaic Covenant which he typified. It also illustrates that success in this life is based upon obedience.

**“To sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel”** — To “sanctify” is to set apart an object for special, unique attention or regard. Yahweh requires His people to view Him in that light as a basis for acceptable worship: “I will be sanctified in those who approach unto Me” (Lev. 10:3). Moses failed to do this in this instance (Num. 27:14), and so was prohibited entering the land (Deut. 1:37). The punishment seems harsh, but was a salutary warning to all, of the responsibilities entailed on those called to worship.

**“Therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them”** — The word “congregation” is *qahal*, signifying *called out ones* and therefore relates to those who would be separated to enter the land. The old generation would not do so, for it was condemned to die in the wilderness. Meanwhile, Moses’ disappointment in not being permitted to lead the people into their inheritance was great. He pleaded in prayer against the decision, but in vain (see Deut. 3:23-26; 32:49-50; 34:4).

Moses’ punishment is not so great as is sometimes supposed. He died full of strength (Deut. 34:7). He was spared the gradual decline of his powers, the subordinate position he would have had to take, the pain of seeing the uncompleted mission in the Land itself. His death taught a powerful lesson, showing Israel that the temporary possession of the Land was not the reward that Yahweh has in store for His faithful people (Heb. 11:26). Moses saw the Land afar off (Deut. 34:1-4; Heb. 11:13). He was denied entrance for *Israel’s sake* (Deut. 1:37); to educate the people in the need to strictly adhere to Yahweh’s requests at all times. He will yet inherit it, with life eternal, to enjoy a prominent position in the Temple of the Age to Come (Psalm 99:5-6; Rev. 15:3). Yahweh’s final summary of His servant Moses is: “Moses, verily, was faithful in all His house as a servant” (Heb. 3:5).

#### VERSE 13

**“This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with Yahweh”** — Meribah signifies *Strife*, so there is play

upon words in this statement, the two words being derived from a common root. See also Num. 27:14. The same site is called Meribah Kadesh in Deut. 32:51; and the Waters of Meribah (or Strife) in Deut. 33:8; Psa. 106:32. See also Psa. 95:8.

**“And He was sanctified in them”** — His unique glory was made manifest in the tremendous miracle performed, which revealed God to be completely separate and apart from flesh.

#### Edom Refuses Passage To Israel — vv. 14-21

*The borders of Edom reaching almost to Kadesh, Moses sends messengers to the King of Edom with a conciliatory message, seeking permission to travel through his lands. The king refuses. Even though Israel offers to compensate for any damage done, permission is still withheld, the king sending men out to fight against Israel.*

#### VERSE 14

**“And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom”** — Edom throughout Scripture is used as a type of fleshly, Gentile power. The development of the people as a nation was rapid, for Edom had an organized form of rule, with acknowledged “dukes” at a time when Israel wandered as a disorganized tribal group (Gen. 36:19-30). The account states: “These are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel” (v. 31). Although Edom’s power developed much more quickly than that of Israel, the promise to Rebekah was, “the elder (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob)” (Gen. 25:23). However that time had not yet come. Meanwhile this renewal of contact with their brother-nation was the first national incident in a history of war and antagonism between the two peoples. For a detailed prophecy concerning Edom, its destiny and type, see Obadiah.

**“Thus saith thy brother Israel”** — In so addressing Edom, Moses invoked the brotherly covenant. See reference to this relationship in Deut. 2:2-4; 23:7; Mal. 1:2. Yahweh acknowledges such a thing as a “brotherly covenant” (Amos 1:9), in which blood relationships should be recognised and taken into account. Instead, Edom despised this (Amos 1:11; Obad. 10,12), and was appointed to destruction (Obad. 16). There are no Edomites today.

The last reference of history to the Edomites or Idumeans is to their part in the siege of Jerusalem. They proved a disruptive influence within the city and were destroyed with it, after which they disappeared from history. But typically Edom remains, as manifested in the political powers of Gentilism. However, that also, is destined to be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. Meanwhile, Moses appealed to the King of Edom to grant passage to the Israelites on the basis of the common relationship between Esau and Jacob.

**"Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us"**— See Jephthah's reference to this appeal, and Edom's reaction to it (Jud. 11:16-17). Moses' preamble is followed by a seven-fold historical outline of Israel's history to that point of time.

#### VERSE 15

**"How our fathers went down into Egypt"**— This is the first development, tracing the history of Israel following the last contact between Esau and Jacob. See Gen. 46:6; Acts 7:19.

**"And we have dwelt in Egypt a long time"**— The second stage in their national development. See Exod. 12:40, and notes.

**"And the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers"**— The Third stage. See Exod. 1:11; Deut. 26:6.

#### VERSE 16

**"And when we cried unto Yahweh, He heard our voice"**— The Fourth stage. The name Yahweh was made known to Israel at the time of deliverance. See Exod. 2:23; 3:7, 14-15.

**"And sent an angel"**— The Fifth act of grace. This was the angel of the bush, whose overshadowing care was experienced by Israel as the people left Egypt and wandered through the wilderness. See Exod. 3:2; 14:19; 23:20; 33:2.

**"And hath brought us forth out of Egypt"**— The Sixth stage: the separation of the people unto Himself. Young renders this in the present, continuous tense: *and is bringing us out*. The use of the present participle showed that the Israelites recognised that the process of deliverance was not then completed, nor could be until they reached the Promised Land of Rest. "he brought them out that He might bring them in" (Deut. 6:23).

**"And, behold, we are in Kadesh"**— The Seventh stage. Seven suggests completeness, being the number of the covenant. Kadesh signifies *Sanctuary*. This repetition of history illustrated the Divine overshadowing and purpose in Israel, and was relevant to Moses' request to Edom. It implied that if the King rejected the request, he repulsed the God of Israel. That consideration, however meant nothing to the fleshly-minded Edomite.

**"A city in the uttermost of thy border"**— From this it is obvious that the territory of Edom stretched from the eastern area of the Arabah almost to the confines of Kadesh, a much larger area than that held subsequently. The presence of some two million restless people hovering on the borders of Edom for so long was a cause of concern and fear to Edom, and led to the king refusing to give Israel access through their territory.

#### VERSE 17

**"Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country"**— The seven-fold outline of Israel's history is followed by a seven-fold guarantee that Edom would not suffer by compliance therewith, of which this is the first part. See also Num. 21:22.

**"We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards"**— In this second proviso, Moses promised that the greatest care would be taken to see that there would be no destruction of grazing or cultivated lands.

**"Neither will we drink of the water of the wells"**— The third proviso.

**"We will go by the king's high way"**— The King's high way is generally identified with the great trade route that stretched from Damascus to Elat, and then north towards Jerusalem. See notes on Gen. 14. This cut through the territory of Edom east and west of the Arabah. Moses promised to avoid the fields and farming territory of Edom, and use only those means providing for normal traffic.

**"We will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders"**— The fifth promise of the pact guaranteed they would keep to the roads and preserve the fields; moving through the land as quickly as possible.

#### VERSE 18

**"And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee"**

with the sword" — Edom's response was typical of the warlike fleshly characteristics of the race that descended from the "profane" Esau (Heb. 12:16). Rebekah was instructed that her two sons represented "two manner of people" (Gen. 25:23): one spiritual and the other fleshly; and so it proved, though, so frequently, Israel imitated the fleshly characteristics of Edom! For that reason, Israel was instructed "not to meddle with Edom" (Deut. 2:5), to keep separate, as it is likewise necessary for the Israel of God to do today.

Regarding the national characteristics of the Edomites, Josephus describes them as being "a turbulent and unruly race, always hovering on the verge of revolution, always rejoicing in changes, roused to arms by the slightest notion of flattery, rushing to battle as if to a feast." Edom's reply to Moses' request was in accordance with their character.

#### VERSE 19

"And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the highway" — The Israelite deputation refused to be antagonised by the harsh reply, and continued to plead their nation's cause.

"And if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it" — This was the sixth point in Israel's reply. See also Deut. 2:6,28.

"I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet" — The seventh and final point was the assurance that they would proceed through the land as quickly as possible, not turning aside for any diversion.

#### VERSE 20

"And he said, Thou shalt not go through" — A definite, unequivocal refusal was the reply of Edom, indicative of the hostility of the nation towards Israel from the beginning. Edom represents the flesh in political manifestation. This has always been in opposition to Israel, and is so to this very day. Accordingly, the judgments of Yahweh came upon the nation of Edom in the past, and will yet fall upon political Edom in the future: and that because of its hostility towards Israel (Ezek. 35:5-11).

"And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand" — Evidently the children of Israel had moved towards the border of Edom as though as to pass through in anticipation of a fa-

vourable reply to their reasonable request, without awaiting the return of their ambassadors. Edom, on the other hand, had marshalled its forces, and now awaited Israel with a display of hostility. Later, when Israel retreated south, and then ascended along the eastern border of Edom, the Edomites, though still remaining hostile, did sell food and drink to the people (Deut. 2:28-29). See the recapitulation of this incident in Jud. 11:17,20.

#### VERSE 21

"Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border" — This hostile attitude was the first national incident in a history of antagonism and war that continued between the two nations for many centuries. It is typical of the flesh to refuse to help men of the spirit.

"Wherefore Israel turned away from him" — See Num. 21:4; Deut. 2:8; Jud. 11:18. This is the best action for men of God to take when faced with the bitter hostility and unreasonable antagonism of the flesh, whether manifested politically or otherwise (see Matt. 5:25-26). As a result of the hostility of Edom, the Israelites went south-east to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, then east and finally north around the eastern border of Edom to the Arnon River. Their journey was much longer than it would have been if the Edomites had given them passage.

#### Death of Aaron In The Land of Adam — vv. 22-29

*At Mount Hor on the edge of Edom (the land of Adam), Moses and Aaron are told that Aaron must die. This is in punishment of the incident at Meribah (vv. 24,12). The aged priest is led up into the Mountain, and there with great dignity is laid to rest. At the same time, his son Eleazar is installed as High Priest by putting on his father's robes of office. The people then mourn the death of this great man for thirty days. The change of priests was in preparation for entering the Land: foreshadowing Christ's priesthood (see Heb. 7:12).*

#### VERSE 22

"And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor" — The site of Mount Hor is not known with complete certainty. The traditional site, near Petra, could not be the place, for it is in the

midst of Edom. It is necessary to turn to Scripture for an approximate location. Mt. Hor was on the border of Edom (Num. 20:21; 33:37), close to Kadesh (Num. 20:22), in fact, the next stopping place (Num. 33:37). The record shows that the Israelites quitted it for Zalmonah (Num. 33:41) on the road to the Red Sea (Num. 21:4), and, according to Deut. 10:6, also named Mosera. According to Trumbull in *Kadesh-barnea*, as quoted by Unger: "There is a mountain that fully meets the requirements of the Bible . . . That mountain is Jebel Madurah (about 15 m. N.E. of Kadesh). It is near the western extremity of Wady Feqreh, a little to the southwest of the passes es-Sufah and el-Yemen. Its formation, its location, its name, go to identify it with the place of Aaron's burial, and there is even a smack of local tradition in its favour. In its location, Jebel Madurah stands at a triangular site, where the boundaries of Edom, of Canaan, and the wilderness of Zin meet. It is at the extreme NW boundary of Edom, yet it is not within that boundary line. It is on the very verge of the Land of Promise, yet it is not within the outer limits of that land."

Kadesh-barnea (*Sanctuary of the wandering son*) is also called En-Mishpat or *Well of Judgment* (Gen. 14:7), and Meribah, or *Strife* (Num. 20:13). Judgment on the spies, as well as on Korah and Miriam took place here (Num. 20:1). It is identified with Ain Kadeis, some 70 miles south of Hebron. "With the region about 6 miles (9.5kms) north also well watered, Israel acquired the most livable part of the Sinai Peninsula. Its original name would seem to have been Rithmah (Num. 33:19), but it evidently was renamed Kadesh, or *Sanctuary*, when the Tabernacle was set up there. A long halt was recorded at Kadesh (Deut. 1:46). It would appear that the Israelites scattered about in the valleys of the desert, leading a nomad life, having all this time Kadesh as the northernmost limit of their wandering, and the centre of their occupancy. Thus passed thirty-seven years, during which Israel did not advance one single step towards the occupancy of the Promised Land.

#### VERSE 23

"And Yahweh spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying" — "Hor" signifies *Mountain*. Its location is here given as on

the border of Edom, which then extended nearly to Kadesh, much further west than is normally indicated.

#### VERSE 24

"Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah" — "Word" is given as *mouth* in the margin. Moses did not rebel against Yahweh's Word as we often use the term today, but he did not carry out exactly what he was told to do. Evidently Aaron acquiesced in his attitude. See also Num. 27:14; 33:38; Deut. 10:6; 32:50.

#### VERSE 25

"Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up into mount Hor" — This action was taken in the sight of all the people camped at the foot of the mount. Aaron in all the splendour of his regalia ascended the mount, accompanied by Eleazar in his white linen priestly garment. The people were to see the latter return in his father's garments "for glory and for beauty". So also with Christ in an antitypical sense. He was seen in the righteousness of his character 1900 years ago; he will return in glory and beauty having replaced the Aaronic priesthood.

#### VERSE 26

"And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son" — Aaron's garments comprised the insignia of his office; therefore, in stripping him of them, he was divested of his authority, which was then transferred to Eleazar his son (cp. 1 Kings 19:19). Eleazar signifies *Whom El shall Help*, and in this action typically represented the Lord Jesus Christ whom Yahweh helped (Psa. 80:17), and who, in his capacity as High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, replaced the Aaronic priesthood (Heb. 7:11, 23-24).

"And Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there" — He died in the wilderness, on the border of Edom, or Land of Adam. His death was a public occasion, and his preparation for it in ascending the mount was witnessed by all of Israel. In that way he typed the transfer of the priesthood to Christ.

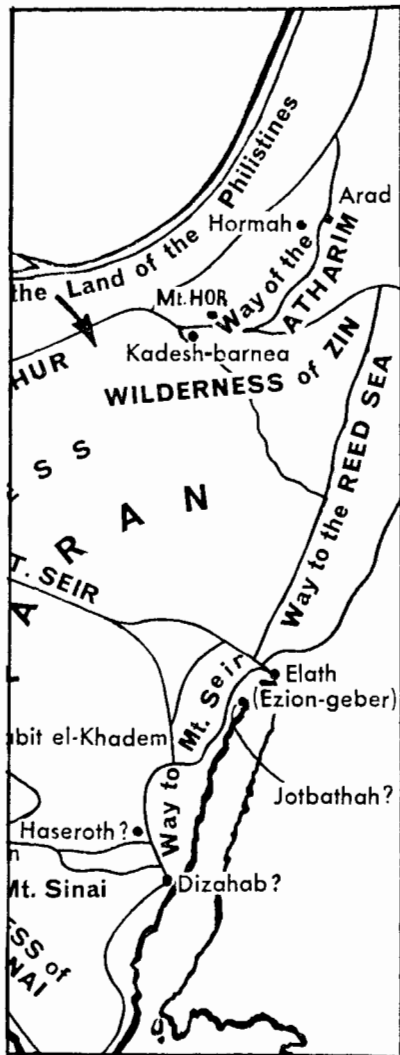
#### VERSE 27

"And Moses did as Yahweh com-

**manded; and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation** — In fulfilment of the type, the transference of the priestly authority of Christ was proclaimed publicly for all to heed (Acts 26:26).

#### VERSE 28

**“And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his**



**son**” — This was in fulfilment of the command made at the investiture of Aaron (see Exod. 29:29-30).

**“And Aaron died there in the top of the mount”** — Publicly witnessed by all Israel.

**“And Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount”** — In Num. 33:38 the date is given as being the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year. The record of Aaron’s burial is given in Deut. 10:6. Eleazar returned as High Priest.

#### VERSE 29

**“And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel”** — Aaron was a great man in spite of his weaknesses and his failures. He performed a valuable service for Moses and for Israel. As appointed High Priest he was a type of Christ. Both were chosen of God; both had to be clean, seeing they bore the vessels of Yahweh. Aaron submitted to the cleansing of the Law, Christ was sinless, submitting to the will of his Father. Both were clothed: Aaron with garments “for glory and for beauty”, Christ in his beautiful character which glorified Yahweh. Both were crowned. Aaron with his mitre, or holy crown of righteousness; Christ with his many diadems, witnessing to his victory over sin, and his coming conquests of the nations (Rev. 19:12). Both were consecrated, or set apart. Aaron was sprinkled with blood, and had his hands filled with an offering for Yahweh (Lev. 8:24-27). Christ was sanctified forever (John 17:16-19), and became the sanctifier of his followers (Heb. 2:11).

In his ministry at the Tabernacle, in his offering on the Day of Atonement, in the sacrifices he supervised, Aaron foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ. But as Aaron died in the sight of all Israel on mount Hor, so, ultimately, the Mosaic priesthood as a whole came to an end, to be superseded by that of Christ:

*The true Messiah now appears,  
The types are all withdrawn;  
So fly the shadows and the stars  
Before the rising dawn.*

The people of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days, as they did also for Moses a short time later (Deut. 10:6). But in contrast Christ abides as High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 9:24-28).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### 2. TO MOAB VIA EZION-GEBER

*The second part of the third section of the Book of Numbers records incidents of tragedy and triumph in the progress of the nation from Arad until finally it encamps on the plains of Moab (Ch. 22:1). Resistance of local nations forces the Israelites to take a southerly route to Ezion-Geber on the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, then moving to the east of the Arabah, ascend the north until, finally, they encamp on the plains of Moab on the eastern side of the Jordan. This brings them gradually into fertile, pleasant country, and as they do so their excitement grows with the conviction that their ultimate triumph is at hand. This is a chapter of victory.*

#### Repulsed At Arad: Vengeance Promised — vv. 1-3

*Refused entrance by the King of Edom, Israel is now attacked by the King of Arad; and a few of their number are taken captive. However, Moses exacts revenge as a token of ultimate destruction when Israel enters the land.*

#### VERSE 1

**“And when king Arad the Canaanite”** — According to Unger’s *Dictionary*, this should read *the King of Arad* (see RSV) for Arad was a town, not a man. The word “Arad” means *Fugitive* or *Wild Ass*. The wild ass is noted for its intractable ways: and the King of Arad lived up to the meaning of his name.

**“Which dwelt in the south”** — Arad was situated on a hill towards the southern extremity of the land of promise, a little over 20 kms from Hebron. In ancient times it was a powerfully fortified town, easily defended, and commanding an excellent view over the surrounding countryside. “South” is *Negev*.

**“Heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies”** — The king heard that Israel was approaching, but did not see evidence of this, for Israel was encamped at mount Hor, some distance from Arad. The Hebrew word rendered “spies” is *Atharim*,

and signifies *steps* or *places*. It is not the usual name for spies, and should be rendered as a proper noun: He heard that Israel was coming by “the way of the Atharim”. It may have been reported to the King that Israel was ascending towards Arad, or it may have been a mere rumour.

**“Then he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners”** — The gathering together of such a large company of Israelites to Kadesh, the demands of Moses on the King of Edom, and the martial order that Israel must have assumed, would have filled the inhabitants of the Negev with fear. The King of Arad, in his powerfully fortified city, did not wait for an attack to take place, but took the initiative himself. Advancing against the Israelites, he took some of the people captive. This, at least, taught the latter that they must not place confidence in themselves. There was, and remains a need for vigilance on the part of the people of God.

#### VERSE 2

**“And Israel vowed a vow unto Yahweh”** — The nation gathered before Yahweh for this purpose. Prayer for help was made, and the vow nationally proclaimed.

**“If Thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities”** — The words “utterly des-

trophy" are from the Hebrew *charam* "to devote." Items so dedicated were either given exclusively to God's use, or were destroyed (see Lev. 27:28-29 and notes). This view was fulfilled when the Israelites entered the land (see Josh. 12:14).

### VERSE 3

**"And Yahweh hearkened unto the voice of Israel"** — This indicates a new response on the part of Yahweh, an auspicious token, marking the way of victory for Israel. Contrast it with the previous moment of defeat, when the Israelitish army attempted to force its way into the land in disobedience to Yahweh's instructions. See Num. 14:40-44. On that occasion they had been chased in defeat as far as Arad (Deut. 1:44), teaching the lesson expressed in Psa. 44:3.

**"And delivered up the Canaanites"** — An army was despatched by Moses, and a temporary victory won, awaiting the complete overthrow of the fortress-city after the tribes had entered the land.

**"And they utterly destroyed them and their cities"** — This could not have been the case then, for the record shows that Joshua did this (Josh. 12:14). But the word rendered "utterly destroyed" is from *charam*, and can signify "to devote to utter destruction," and that is how the Septuagint renders the expression: *they anathematised them*, they vowed to destroy them as a divine judgment upon the cities.

**"And he called the name of the place Hormah"** — As the margin notes, the name signifies *utter destruction*, from the root *charam*, to devote to destruction. Moses renamed the place Hormah at this time as a reminder to Israel of what they must do in vindication of their vow when they entered the land. Meanwhile, the initial victory, the vow, and the renaming of the place were all tokens proclaiming that the Israelites were on the way to victory and conquest.

### The Fiery Serpents And Brazen Serpent — vv. 4-9

*Though a promise of victory has been given, an event now occurs that teaches what is necessary to make it an absolute certainty. The people become wearied by the difficulties of the way and raise their voices in complaints. They are attacked by a plague of serpents whose venom brings death. This forces them to seek Moses'*

*help, and he pleads their cause with Yahweh. A brazen serpent is placed on a pole, and the people are taught to look at it in faith as a means of salvation. Moved by the urgency of their situation, they do so and are healed. This significant event is used frequently in the Gospels to symbolise and epitomise the ministry of the Lord unto salvation. Therefore, it has important lessons for all generations.*

### VERSE 4

**"And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea to compass the land of Edom"** — The direct route to Moab through the valleys of Edom being closed to them (Num. 20:20-21), the Israelites were compelled to turn south. This took them again through the utterly desolate expanse of the wilderness of Zin, to what is today called Ramon-Mispe (the Rimmon-perez of Num. 33:19), and the wild, harsh, steep depression known as Ramon-Makhtesh, or Ramon Crater; a huge declivity that seems to have been scooped out of the earth by some vast geological catastrophe. This extends for some miles, and merges into the lonely aridness of the wilderness of Paran. Then, beyond that, they would have descended into the desolation of the lower portion of the Arabah, the great rift that extends north and south throughout the land. They had traversed some of the most difficult country possible. The harsh, unyielding desert of those parts is sufficient to daunt the most courageous; and imposed a great test upon the people. The area normally offers extremely little food or water until Yoktava is reached (Jobathah — Num. 33:34). There they would have found ample sweet water, and a much easier route to Ezion-geber. This is a little north of Eilat at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, an arm of the Red Sea (See Deut. 2:1; Jud. 11:17-18). They now had a glimpse of the ocean and of impressive land scenery, and may well have expected that the worst of their journeyings were over. Yet they had to undergo a final trial.

Overshadowing Aqaba are the harsh, barren, red mountains of Edom. The word Aqaba signifies *obstruction*, and these, certainly, illustrate the significance of its name. They must have appeared very formidable to the children of Israel as they slowly wended their way north through an ominous pass, which is the only opening through the barrier of mountains. The steep cliffs on either side close



in like the "valley of the shadow of death" as the pass cuts its way through the rugged, steep mountains that overshadow it, rising almost perpendicularly from the narrow wadi below. It is one of the most dismal and forbidding passes in the whole mountainous area, and it could well be the site of the drama that is now narrated.

"**And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way**" — The margin gives the word as *grieved*. The Hebrew word signifies *shortened*, indicating that the people became impatient and short-tempered. Their feelings are understandable, but none-the-less wrong. To be turned back from the Land was disappointing enough, but finally, after reaching Ezion-geber, to be led into this evil and ominous pass known today as the Wadi el Yutm tested them beyond measure. They became impatient. This gloomy defile, squeezed to narrow proportions by the harsh, granite mountains, of Edom has been described by one traveller in the following terms: "Gradually the wadi grew smaller as the hills encroached upon us until we were surrounded by queer, eroded mountains, rumped and fissured ... I had never seen such an extraordinary landscape before."

The people were discouraged, yet the terrain before them opened out to better things leading to the inheritance of the Land. Their impatience emphasises the virtues of patience (see Psa. 40:1, Luke 21:19; Rom. 2:7; 5:2-5; James 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 2:20; 3:10-12). Patience is developed through faith, for faith enables the believer to see beyond the difficulties of the moment, to the glories of the future.

#### VERSE 5

"**And the people spake against God, and against Moses**" — Whilst we can appreciate the strain under which the people laboured, it was the constant complaining against God or Moses that so often threatened the success of the enterprise. See Exod. 14:11; 15:24; 16:2,3,7,8; 17:2-3; Num. 11:1-6; 14:1-4; 16:13-14,41; 17:12; Psa. 78:19; James 3:5-6. The tongue has power for good or evil, but is mostly used in the cause of evil. Complaining, discouraging words depress others, causing a negative influence to penetrate an ecclesia or a nation, spelling failure for any enterprise. There is need for positive words and action in every endeavour in the cause of God and Christ. In the case of the Israelites, the voice of carping criticism was

heard too often, and was echoed by those who listened, until now they spake "against God and against Moses."

"**Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread**" — The Hebrew word *qeloqel*, "insubstantial", expressed extreme contempt for the manna. It indicated that it was not satisfying, was unnutritive, and what some would call "cheat-stomach"! The people before had expressed their dissatisfaction of the monotonous diet of manna (Num. 11:6-9), and now did so more vehemently. They began murmuring against God and against Moses their Mediator (Gal. 3:19), speaking contemptuously of the manna which represented the Word of God. They lacked the faith within to resist the pressures and problems from without, and so gave themselves over to complaining. This did not help matters. The way of Truth is difficult to the flesh at the best of times, and its problems are only accentuated when people give way to murmuring and complaining. The tendency then is to become completely discouraged, to hold the bread of life in contempt, to view it as insubstantial, inadequate to the needs of present existence, and to drift back to the world from whence they have been called.

#### VERSE 6

"**And Yahweh sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died**" — In complaining and murmuring, the people had given way to the lusts of the flesh, the symbol of which is the serpent (Psa. 58:4; 140:3; Matt. 23:33). For flesh is what it is (mortal and sin-prone) as a result of sin induced by the serpent in Eden. It was appropriate, therefore, that the people be punished by snake-bite for it reminded them of the source of sin. The fiery bite of these dreaded creatures induces an inflammation that ends in death. The Hebrew *ha-seraphim nachashim* is from a root signifying "burning", and probably relates to the high fever induced by the bite of the venomous snakes. G. S. Cansdale in *Animals of Bible Lands*, has this important comment to make concerning these creatures:

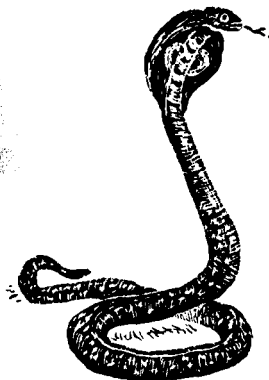
"The species most likely to have been the fiery serpent is . . . of the genus *Echis*, which has two species, *carinatus* and *coloratus*. In this area it grows to around 24 in.

long (60cm); for its length it is thinner than the other vipers and its head is smaller. Known as the Carpet or Saw-scaled Viper it is found from W. Africa right across the continent to SW Asia and through the central Asia. In some parts of this vast range it is very common; for instance in NW India, over an area not stated, the fantastic total of about 200,000 was killed annually for bounty for six years, and several thousand have also been taken in Kenya in a short period. No other snake is known to exist in such numbers. Three other points are valid. The venom of *Echis* is more potent, weight for weight, than in any other viper; it is notorious for being aggressive and easily provoked and is described as 'bad-tempered', whereas most of the large vipers are placid; and it seems to tolerate hotter conditions than most, so it would be more active by day. The late Karl P. Schmidt, of the Chicago Museum, who died of snake-bite, regarded the Carpet viper as one of the most dangerous of all venomous snakes.

"... The viper venom breaks down the capillaries and ruptures the blood corpuscles, finally causing death by massive internal haemorrhage. My experience with this most unpleasant snake in W. Africa was that the patient often died after several days and that treatment was difficult. Prognosis depended on the site and severity of the bite, and other factors, including the health of the victim. This medical fact is relevant to the incident for it must have taken Moses some time — certainly many hours — to cast a serpent in bronze and publish news through the host, which amounted to many tens of thousands at even the lowest estimate. This provides one of the clearest Biblical pictures of man's salvation and there is one further practical point; the injection of this venom does not always cause intense pain but the internal destruction goes on steadily. The victim may even feel better for a while, but after a severe bite left untreated, the process continues until death. The timing shows Divine over-ruling, and the results of looking in faith at the brazen serpent were wholly miraculous, but the setting needs no metaphysical explanation."

How appropriate this is to the circumstances and significance of the incident. *First*, the prolific number of serpents is exactly according to the description of Moses, and is typical of the prevalence of sin with its threefold lusts: lust of the

flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. *Second*, the victim at first feels better for the bite. How like sin! Relaxation from the strict limitations of a life in Christ often makes one feel better for a time, but it can create a habit which is deadly. *Third*, the fatal fever that develops after a period of time: a delay in death that points to the mortality of sin-bitten flesh, but that gave time for Moses to make the brazen serpent and call on those with faith to be saved to look upon it in hope!



#### VERSE 7

"**Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned**" — The tragedy brought home to many Israelites the enormity of their action, the hopelessness of their condition, and their need of a mediator and saviour to help. The realisation of present mortality and hopelessness can do the same for believers in any age. A feature in favour of that generation of Israelites was that many of the people did seek Yahweh (See Psa. 78:34). They did so through Moses their mediator acknowledging their faults. The conviction of sin revealed to them the need for forgiveness.

"**For we have spoken against Yahweh, and against thee**" — The enormity of their conduct was recognised by them; a necessary basis for forgiveness and restoration to harmony with God. There is need to "confess our sins" and to recognise our status before the Almighty.

"**Pray unto Yahweh, that He take away the serpents from us**" — Their appeal illustrates the words of James 5:16: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be heal-

ed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). As the Israelites were driven to Moses because of the urgency of their condition, so a convicted sinner will turn to Christ. It is necessary to bring home the fact of sin to those seeking the Truth so as to bring home to them the urgency of their state.

**"And Moses prayed for the people"** — Moses constantly did this, as Christ does today. See Psa. 106:23. He acted as their mediator (Gal. 3:19).

## VERSE 8

**"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent"** — In appearance this brazen serpent looked like those on the ground, but it lacked their poisonous venom. In the Hebrew, the word "serpent" does not appear in this verse, only the word *saraph*. *Saraph* signifies to *consume by burning*. The verb is frequently used for complete and utter burning (Exod. 12:10; 29:14; Lev. 4:19,21; 8:32 etc.), particularly in sacrifice when the flesh was consumed by fire. Hence the serpent on the pole represented flesh purified, having gone through the fire, whereas the serpents on the ground represented the flesh in active sin. Yahweh provided a *saraph* of copper to heal the deadly infection caused by the venom of the fiery serpents. The Scriptures say of the Lord: "With his stripes we are healed . . . Yahweh laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3). Flesh purified will conquer the undisciplined world eventually (Isa. 6:6-7), hence the reference to the Seraphim in Scripture (Isa. 6:2; Rev. 4:8).

The brazen serpent typed the sacrifice of the Lord, as he declared: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15. See also John 12:32,33). Christ came in "the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), but he conquered its power. The brazen serpent on the pole, therefore, represented flesh crucified. It testified to the Israelites that they had to figuratively crucify the flesh if they would be saved from the death that was even then working through their members (Gal. 5:24).

**"And set it upon a pole"** — The word is *nes*. The same word is sometimes used to describe an ensign designed to call the people together (Isa. 11:12). The serpent

on the pole, therefore, represented a public exhibition of sin's flesh silenced, conquered and crucified. Paul explained to the Galatian brethren that "Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1). His words signify that the crucified Lord Jesus had been publicly exhibited or placarded before humanity for the purpose of saving them from their sins. A similar exhibition was provided at this time of crisis in the wilderness.

**"And it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten"** — Those who felt the serpent's bite were invited to view the brazen serpent. This is the first essential to salvation to this day. A person must recognise his need of Christ, must realise that he is death-doomed and sinful, and so understand the urgency of his case, in order to acceptably approach God for salvation. In the wilderness those who felt the effect of the venom working through their bodies realised the urgency of their need and hastened to seek the salvation offered by Yahweh. The same urgency must be instilled into those who are drawn by the Gospel today.

**"When he looked upon it shall live"** — Those bitten by the serpents were taught by God's Word to look upon the brazen serpent. They did not dispute what they should do, because they realised that time was critical, and their opportunity to escape death was limited. Immediate obedience to the instructions was imperative if they were to live. The same urgency remains today. On the day of Pentecost, Peter spake many words making that point: "With *many other words* did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). In effect, he was repeating Moses' appeal.

However, it must be recognised that there was no magic in the serpent. The efficacy did not come from it, for it was lifeless and unable to help. The efficacy came from within the onlooker who had to exercise faith in the power of Yahweh to save. In the serpent on the pole they saw represented what was required of them: putting to death the desires and deeds of the flesh; a typical crucifixion of it as the way to life. It was the flesh that was responsible for the faithless murmuring that had brought the Israelites to the point of death: and it had to be repudiated. Those "bitten" by the serpent had been made conscious of personal sin, and therefore

humbled to seek the help of Yahweh through Moses. They realised that they did not conform to the harmlessness of the serpent on the pole, but manifested venom in their tongues like those on the ground. They had "sharpened their tongues like a serpent: adders' poison was under their lips" and they murmured against Moses and against God (Psa. 140:3). They had to learn to crucify the flesh, to overcome it whilst seeking the forgiveness of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 9

**"And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole"** — The metal would have had to go through the fire in order to be shaped, and in doing so would have been purified (Num. 31:23; 16:38). This pointed forward to the Lord Jesus of whom it is written: "he learned obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). The "things he suffered" were elements in his purification. In regard to the serpent in the wilderness, it is questioned as to whether the metal was bronze or copper. Both were known to the ancients. Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. Bronze utensils have been found at Lachish and at Troy, showing that it was in use in ancient times. It is suggested that such bronze was made directly from a copper ore containing tin long before the two metals were artificially mixed. See *The Cambridge Bible*. The Hebrew word *nechosheth* signifies "copper" in Job 28:2, where it is described as a metal smelted directly from the ore.

**"And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."** — Rotherham renders this: "As soon as he directed his look unto the serpent of brass . . ." A deliberate seeking of the serpent was required, not an accidental glance at it as the A.V. rendition might suggest. The Hebrew word "beheld" is *nabat* and signifies to scan, to look intently at. One can imagine the long, steady look that would be given by those bitten by the serpents, and who felt "the answer of death in themselves". "Look unto Me, and be ye saved", is the appeal of Yahweh (Isa. 45:22); "Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith" (Heb. 12:2). The eyes of those who would be saved must be earnestly centred upon the Lord, must consider him as revealed in the Word, pondering his character and ways (see John 6:40). "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sin of the world", proclaimed John (John 1:29). Israel after the flesh will be compelled to do this at his second coming (Zech. 12:10).

This drama in the wilderness taught the new generation of Israelites the need of disciplining self, and of seeking in faith the redemption that they could obtain in Yahweh. They were clearly shown that the healing power was not in the brazen serpent itself, but in Yahweh Who had ordered the whole process. When the afflicted Israelites looked at the serpent, they did so in obedience to God and in faith that it would heal. So with redemption in Christ. Christ is powerless to heal stricken humanity in the absence of a personal faith (Heb. 11:6). The whole process of redemption in Him is Divine, and must be according to God's requirements. It is God motivated, and witnesses to the love of God: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). That statement is made on the background of reference to the serpent in the wilderness. Love, faith and action are all fused to bring about redemption.

The brazen serpent was preserved until the time of Hezekiah, who destroyed it because it had become an object of worship, which was idolatry (2 Kings 18:4). This taught that it was not in the type, but in the reality, that the work of redemption is effected. See Paul's comment in 1 Cor. 10:9.

#### On The March — vv. 10-12

*The Israelites move north bypassing Edom, and make their way to the borders of Moab.*

#### VERSE 10

**"And the children of Israel set forward"** — Fuller details are given in Num. 33. See also Deut. 2:1-15. At the southern extremity of Mt. Seir (an alternative name for Edom), the tribes turned east, continuing in that direction until told to turn north (Deut. 2:3). As they moved north they came upon an area of Edom where the borders were less easily defended. The Edomites expressed fear regarding the intention of the Israelites. But the tribes moved steadily north without molesting them. They were strictly warned "not to meddle with the Edomites" and so they avoided them, except to purchase from them provisions for the way (Deut. 2:3-8).

**“And pitched in Oboth”** — See also Num. 33:43. The word signifies *water-skins*, and has been identified with Ain el Weiba, where there is found an oasis. Here the Israelites probably replenished their water-skins. It was about 15m (24km) south of the Dead Sea, and west of Punon. That being the case, the Israelites had moved up north to the area of modern Petra.

#### VERSE 11

**“And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim”** — The word signifies “the ruins (*iyim*) of those beyond” (*Abarim*). Moving north, a barrier of wild, rugged mountains extends along the eastern area of the Arabah, or great depression south of the Dead Sea, effectively shutting off the east from the west, and giving point to the name “beyond”.

**“In the wilderness which is before Moab toward the sunrise”** — The Israelites moved along the eastern border of Moab, for they had been commanded to avoid the Moabites. Ije-Abarim marked the border of Moab (Num. 33:44).

#### VERSE 12

**“From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared”** — Zared signifies *exuberant growth*. The valley, or wadi, meanders through the wilderness, and empties itself in the Dead Sea. The Israelites moved along the eastern border of Moab where the area is comparatively arid, but further west, the valley of Zared is in an area of abundant growth. This spot was a most significant one in Israel's history, for here the last of the old generation died (Deut. 2:13-14). The account in Deuteronomy implies that the Israelites encamped there until that unhappy event took place, after which Moses addressed the people, and exhorted them to move north. This pause at Zared marked the end of the 38 years of wandering (Deut. 2:14).

#### VERSE 13

**“From thence they removed, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, which is in the wilderness that cometh out of the coasts of the Amorites”** — The word “Arnon” signifies *rushing torrent*. This river rises in the east of the Jordan, and reaches the Dead Sea through a stony and precipitous chasm of red and yellow sandstone. As an enormous trench, it cuts across the

plateau of Moab; and at this point it is about 1700 feet deep (518m), and two miles broad from edge to edge of the cliffs which bound it, though the stream itself at the bottom of this mighty canyon is only forty yards wide. The Arnon, therefore, is a formidable barrier. Shortly before Israel's arrival, Sihon, an Amorite king from western Canaan, had crossed the Jordan, and driving Moab southward over the Arnon, and Ammon eastward to the sources of the Jabbok, had founded a strong kingdom for himself between the two rivers. As the children of Israel moved towards the west along the winding course of the Arnon, they were overshadowed by the steep, precipitous cliffs of this formidable canyon. On the southern side were the Moabites whom they had been told to avoid; on northern side was the powerful, well-organised Sihon ready to contest the right of way, and prepared to do battle with the Israelites.

**“For Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites”** — It was only established as such by the conquests of Sihon who had driven the Moabites back to that point (v. 29). Previously the territory of Moab extended further north. Later, the territory between Arnon and Jabbok (some 50m. or 80km) became disputed territory. The Ammonites claimed that it was originally their's, and that Israel annexed it from them (Jud. 11:13). Jephthah replied that this was not true. When Israel came out of Egypt they avoided the areas occupied by Edom and Moab, and desired peace with the Amorites. But, stupidly, the Amorites refused the peace offered them, and suffered the consequences. The Ammonites certainly occupied the area surrounding Amman in later times (Jer. 49:1). Over the centuries, the northern border of Moab varied. Its ancient capital was Dibon north of the River Arnon.

#### Victories Won and Progress Made — vv. 14-15

*A note of joyous anticipation enters the narrative at this point. The Israelites skirt the south and eastern borders of Edom and the eastern border Moab, and then turn west along the deep chasm formed by the River Arnon. South of this point is the territory of Moab, north of it is the area dominated by Sihon the Amorite; against whom a notable victory is won. As they near the Promised Land, the excitement of the people grows, and their joy finds ex-*

pression in poems of triumph and happiness, of which are recorded at this point: *The Son of Triumph* (vv. 14-15), and *The Song of the Well* (vv. 16-20).

**VERSE 14**

“Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of Yahweh” — This was a book, subsequently lost, in which were recorded notable incidents of the wars of Israel in which Yahweh had clearly helped. It contained directions of benefit to the future work of Joshua in the conquest of the land. See Exod. 17:14-15; Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18).

“What he did in the Red Sea” — The margin gives the Hebrew *Waheb in Suphah*. If this reading is to be followed, the statement would seem to denote names of places in the area. Concerning this, *The Century Bible* declares: “This is the opening phrase in a fragment from the ancient song-book. If the text is correct, they are two place-names in Moab or to do with the watersheds in that area. The AV has followed the Vulgate, ‘as he did in the Red Sea, so will he do in the streams of Arnon,’ which depends on ancient Jewish exegesis. It involves reading *waheb* as the rare Hebrew root *y-h-b* (give: common in Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic), *besupah* as equivalent to *be (yam) sup*, and the objective particle as introducing what to us is the subject, which does happen occasionally in Hebrew.” According to *The Century Bible*, the AV could be right. The alternative, therefore, is to accept the text as it stands, or interpret the Hebrew words as relating to certain towns in Moab. If the former, the part of the song recorded, and which was placed in *The Book Of The Wars of Yahweh* compares the victory of Moses at the Arnon with what took place in the Red Sea when Pharaoh’s host was destroyed. On the other hand, if it is accepted as the name of a town, and support for this is found in Deut. 1:1 (where the reference to the “Red Sea” is not to the place of crossing, but to a town in Moab), it must have been the site of a notable victory adjacent to Moab (see v. 24).

“And in the brooks of Arnon” — A remarkable victory was won by Moses at the Arnon. Sihon, who enjoyed an outstanding reputation as a successful warrior, gathered his forces, and from the northern elevation above the deep chasm of the valley, shadowed the Israelitish tribes as they made their way along the

course of the Arnon below. At the spot where the King’s Highway moves north, the banks of the Arnon rise precipitously some 1700 feet. Here Moses contested the passage with Sihon. The Israelitish forces were set the task of scaling those difficult slopes, and defeating an enemy whose prowess had been proved in battle, and before whom the nations round about trembled. Sihon’s forces were well armed and battle-hardened, and he possessed every advantage over Moses and the Israelites. But, incredibly, the victory was with the latter. The Israelites scaled the difficult, precipitous slopes, and drove



Sihon and his forces back (v. 24). This miraculous victory, compared by the AV with the overthrow of Pharaoh, opened the way north to Moses and the Israelites.

#### VERSE 15

**“And at the stream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar”** — Rotherham renders this: “And the bottom of the ravines, that extendeth towards the dwelling of Ar”. The ravine of the Arnon extends towards the Dead Sea. It then formed the border between Moab and the feared Amorites. Close to the border was Ar of Moab (Isa. 15:1), the nation’s capital at that time. Ar signifies “city”, and in this context relates to the main city of the nation. The victory won at that spot, not only repulsed Sihon, but caused fear in Moab (Num. 22:3). This became a contributory factor to its rulers seeking the help of Balaam.

**“And lieth upon the border of Moab”** — The territory of Moab had once extended north of the Arnon, but had been compressed by the conquests of Sihon the Amorite. Israel had avoided Moab in obedience to the command of Yahweh to do so (Deut. 2:9); moving in a westerly direction along the course of the river which then divided Moab from the Amorites. But even though the Israelites showed no intention of invading Moab, the presence of such a large body of people on its borders, and their obvious skill in battle (as the Moabites understood it, not recognising the help of Yahweh) filled the people with fear. Sihon had humiliated them and now, in turn had been defeated by the Israelites. It was only a matter of time, reasoned the Moabites, that they would be attacked; so they viewed the movements of the Israelites with concern and hostility.

#### The Joyful Song of the Well — vv. 16-20

*The appearance of the pleasant, fertile highlands of Moab north of the Arnon (then occupied by Sihon), the evidence of exuberant growth, and the supply of ample water cheer the people, as the opposite experiences had depressed them (cp. vv. 4-5). They express their feelings in a delightful little psalm of praise, that occupies vv. 17-20.*

#### VERSE 16

**“And from then they went to Beer”** — Beer denotes an artificial well in comparison with *ain*, a natural spring. The re-

ference could be to Beer-elim, or *The Well of the Heroes* or *Mighty Ones*, a city of Moab (Isa. 15:8). After inflicting an initial defeat on Sihon at the Arnon, the Israelites moved north. The scenery dramatically changes at this spot. The wild maze of hills and valleys south of the ravine gives place to the fertile plateau and flat countryside north of it. So the Israelites saw an agreeable change of countryside, and moved along an easier terrain. But evidently there was further shortage of water, for which a search was made. With the blessing of Yahweh, this proved successful at the place afterwards named *Beer*.

**“That is the well whereof Yahweh spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water”** — The shortage of water was evidently made a matter of prayer, after which the people were taught an important lesson. They watched as under the direction of Yahweh, their



The waters of the Arnon have cut a deep canyon into the highlands east of the Dead Sea. In the days of Moses it formed the border between Moab and the Amorites under Sihon. Here a remarkable victory was won by the Israelites against Sihon.

princes made search for water, and at the place indicated commenced to dig. Though the search was God-directed, it involved labour on the part of the leaders, as they dug at the spot indicated. How significant in view of the need to dig the *Well of Living Water* found in the Word (John 4:10-14). To obtain the best results from that Well a God-directed search for truth must be made, and laborious digging through hard "earth" must follow. But the final results are sweet and refreshing, and the water obtained will be of such a nature that the seeker need never thirst again. In type, Yahweh issued the invitation to Moses and the people, which later, Isaiah proclaimed to the whole nation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat . . ." (Isa. 55:1). "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness," taught the Lord, "for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). The well of living water, hidden within the covers of the Bible, has a supply of refreshing water adequate for every circumstance and need. But we must be guided of God and dig hard ourselves to obtain it!

#### VERSE 17

"Then Israel sang this song"—The singing and rejoicing of the people celebrated the changed conditions into which they had now moved (Exod. 15:1; Psa. 106:1-12). This found expression in *The Song of the Well* (vv. 16-20) that expressed the joy of the people the evidence they now saw that Yahweh was with them. The song anticipates a further *Song of the Well* that the regenerated nation will sing in the Age to come. See Isa. 12:2-3.

"Spring up, O well"—This is the first line in the Song of praise. The Hebrew *'alah* signifies "to ascend". One can imagine the princes digging the well, and the water bubbling up in its profusion.

"Sing ye unto it"—The Hebrew word rendered "sing" signifies to *respond*, or, as the margin renders, *answer* it. As the well filled with water providing evidence of Yahweh's goodness, the people responded with expressions of thanksgiving unto Him. How greater should be the songs of thanksgiving of those who drink from the copious water of the well of salvation (John 4:10).

#### VERSE 18

"And the princes digged the well"—The word "digged" in the Hebrew de-

notes to *search*. There was a need for water, and they searched for it. This will be the reaction of all who really thirst for the water Yahweh alone can provide. He has promised to assuage their thirst if they are prepared to search it out. See Isa. 55:1-3. Those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6) is the blessing of the Lord. He offered to satisfy the woman of Samaria with life-giving water.

"The nobles of the people digged it"—There was heavy labour associated with obtaining this needed water, and Yahweh blessed the effort. This is also the case with those who labour to search out the water of life.

"By the direction of the lawgiver, with their staves"—The lawgiver was Moses (Deut. 5:31) who, in that as in other capacities, typed Christ (Gen. 49:10; Deut. 18:18-19; Isa. 33:22). However, the use of italics in this line of the poetry, brings the rendition under suspicion. Others have rendered: "By the decree, their act of government." This last part of the line is derived from the reference to "staves". It is a translation of the Hebrew *mish'enthim*, "supports" from *sha'an* to protect, or support oneself. The staff was the symbol of authority and government. The government authorised and assisted the search for water. Hence the alternative rendition above. It signifies that the princes searched for water in obedience to a Divine decree, enforced by the authority of their rulers.

Refreshed by the water, encouraged by evidences of Divine blessing and goodness in the initial victory over Sihon, and now by the discovery of the rulers' well, the people marched on with increased enthusiasm, singing as they went.

"And from the wilderness they went to Mattanah"—This is still part of the song, and has been rendered: *So, after the wilderness was Mattanah*. Mattanah signifies a gift. It has been vaguely identified with a place in the area named Kirbetel-Medey'neh. However, the places named in this verse find no reference in Num. 33 where the stopping places are reiterated. It could be, therefore, that these are not place names at all, but references to the state of the Israelites. They saw in the profusion of water following the digging of the well, the blessing of Yahweh: the gift in the wilderness!



**VERSE 19**

**“And from Mattanah to Nahaliel”** — The Song continues in this verse. Nahaliel signifies *Streams of El*, implying a plentiful supply of water, which, apparently, they now enjoyed.

**“And from Nahaliel to Bamoth”** — Some identify Bamoth with Bamoth-baal of Josh. 13:17. The *Century Bible* identifies it with Khirbet el-Quweiqiyeh, five miles north of Dibon. The word signifies *Heights*. The Israelites had reached a place of glorious wooded heights and fertile valleys, entirely different to the harsh aridity of the wilderness. But it was also a place of evil Baal worship. See Num. 22:41.

**VERSE 20**

**“And from Bamoth in the valley”** — This line has been rendered, “And after Bamoth was the valley”. The area is noted for its deep valleys and steep hills which provide glorious views.

**“That is in the country of Moab”** — This was originally the country of Moab, but Sihon had invaded and annexed it.

**“To the top of Pisgah, which looked toward Jeshimon”** — Pisgah signifies *The View*, or to *Survey*. Moses viewed the Land of Promise from this elevation (Deut. 3:27; 34:1), and Balaam viewed the assembled tribes and tents from an adjacent spot (Num. 23:13-14). However, whilst the view took in the Land of Promise, it also looked towards Jeshimon. Jeshimon signifies a *Waste*, a *Desolation*, a *Wilderness*. The title designates the area below Pisgah, north of the Dead Sea (Num. 23:28; 1 Sam. 23:19), including the part where the Israelites ultimately encamped. The land stretching down towards the Jordan has a wild and depressing appearance, with short bushes, thorns, and creepers covering it. On the other side of Jordan is the wilderness of Judea, with its brown, yellow, steep, arid barrier of mountains that continues to the roots of the Mount of Olives. What a parable of the Kingdom! Faith sees the promises “afar off” (Heb. 11:13), but before they will be vindicated, the wilderness of Jeshimon must be traversed.

The *Song Of The Well* concludes at that point.

**Complete Defeat Of The Amorites**

— vv. 21-31

*Though an initial defeat has been suffer-*

*ed by Sihon, he regroups his forces for further conflict. Moses has offered him peace, with the assurance that if the Israelites be permitted to move through the land they will not trespass upon the rights of the inhabitants in any way. This, however, is refused, and the Amorites are given over to complete annihilation. References to the incident throughout Scripture are numerous: Deut. 1:4; 2:24-37; 3:2,6; 4:46; 29:7; 31:4; Josh. 2:10; 9:10; 12:2,5; 13:10, 21,27; Jud. 11:19-23; 1 Kings 4:19; Neh. 9:22; Psa. 135:11; 136:19; Jer. 48:45; Amos 2:9 etc. Among these references note: offers of peace were made (Deut. 2:26), and refused (Deut. 2:30). Israel is told to fear not (Deut. 3:2), and the ensuing victory is linked with that of the Red Sea in its magnitude (Josh. 2:10).*

**VERSE 21**

**“And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying,”** — Having outlined the events that led to the ascent of Pisgah, the narrative now returns to detail them more particularly. The sending of messengers west to Sihon as described in this verse took place before the battle of the Arnon. Sihon signifies *A Sweeping Away*, doubtless referring to his ruthless power. The Amorites were formidable antagonists, among the most powerful nations of the area, with kings ruling on both sides of the Jordan (Josh. 10:5; 13:27; Jud. 11:22). Moab had already been reduced by Sihon (Num. 21:25), who now occupied their territory. The Midianitish tribes were among his vassals (Josh. 13:21), and he numbered other, powerful allies, outstanding among whom was the redoubtable Og of Bashan (Josh. 12:4-5). Between them they dominated a very large area east of the Jordan (Josh. 12:1-5). Moses' first offers of peace were contemptuously refused (Deut. 2:26-33). Sihon gathered his forces against Israel, occupying the high plateau overlooking the deep canyon of the Arnon. Down below, Moses was encouraged by Yahweh to fear not (Deut. 2:25), and was instructed in the order of attack (Deut. 2:24). The ensuing victory against overwhelming odds was of such a magnitude as to be compared to the Red Sea crossing. It made a tremendous impact on all the nations of the Middle East (Josh. 2:10).

**VERSE 22**

**“Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vine-**

yards; we will not drink of the waters of the well; but we will go along by the king's highway, until we be past thy borders" — The King's Highway stretched from Aqaba in the south to Damascus in the north. Moses' conciliatory request to Sihon was similar to that made to Edom (Num. 20:17). Israel was commanded to always make offer of peace before engaging in actual hostilities (Deut. 20:11-13), except when attacking the Canaanites in the Land. The preaching of the Gospel is likewise described as an attack on the citadels of error and evil (2 Cor. 10:3-6), in which offers of peace are made (Acts 10:36; Matt. 10:13).

### VERSE 23

"And Sihon would not suffer Israel to pass through his border" — The obstinate Sihon rejected the offer (Deut. 2:30-31). Accordingly, Yahweh commanded Moses to prepare the army for war, and promised them victory (Deut. 2:24,31).

"But Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out against Israel into the wilderness" — Evidently there had been an initial clash at the Arnon which is referred to incidentally in the narrative. However, Sihon's defeat at that point may have been excused, or explained away as being the reversal of a mere skirmishing party. Now his whole army was recruited for a trial of strength. He moved south into the wilderness. The word "wilderness" is *midbar*, and signifies *pasture land*, not desert. In comparison, *Jeshimon* (v. 20) does signify a desert, relating to its aridness. The RV everywhere renders *Jeshimon* as the desert.

"And he came to Jahaz, and fought against Israel" — Sihon chose Jahaz as a convenient place to attack Israel. It is thought to have been located a little north of Dibon; but its site has not been identified beyond all doubt. Jahaz signifies to *tread underfoot*. Sihon's intention was to do this to Israel, but, instead, he suffered that fate.

### VERSE 24

"And Israel smote him with the edge of the sword" — This was another notable victory for Israel against what appeared to the eye of flesh as insurmountable odds. It was a victory referred to frequently, being long remembered (Neh. 9:22; Psa. 135:11; 136:19; Amos 2:9). Yet it did not witness to the might of Israel, nor the nation's

ability to wage war, for it is clearly stated that "Yahweh smote" the forces of Sihon and Og. How, is not recorded (See Num. 32:1-4).

"And possessed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok" — Those two rivers were of great significance in Israel's history. At the Arnon, the people had evidence of the truth of the statement: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). At the river Jabbok, Jacob wrestled with the angel and was given a change of name, and the promise of the overshadowing care of God Almighty. Now the whole of that very beautiful, fertile and significant territory was in their hands. No wonder, when they reached Nebo's heights they could look "towards Jeshimon" or the desert with confidence, and ponder their great privileges under Yahweh. What now of their murmurings against Moses and against Yahweh!

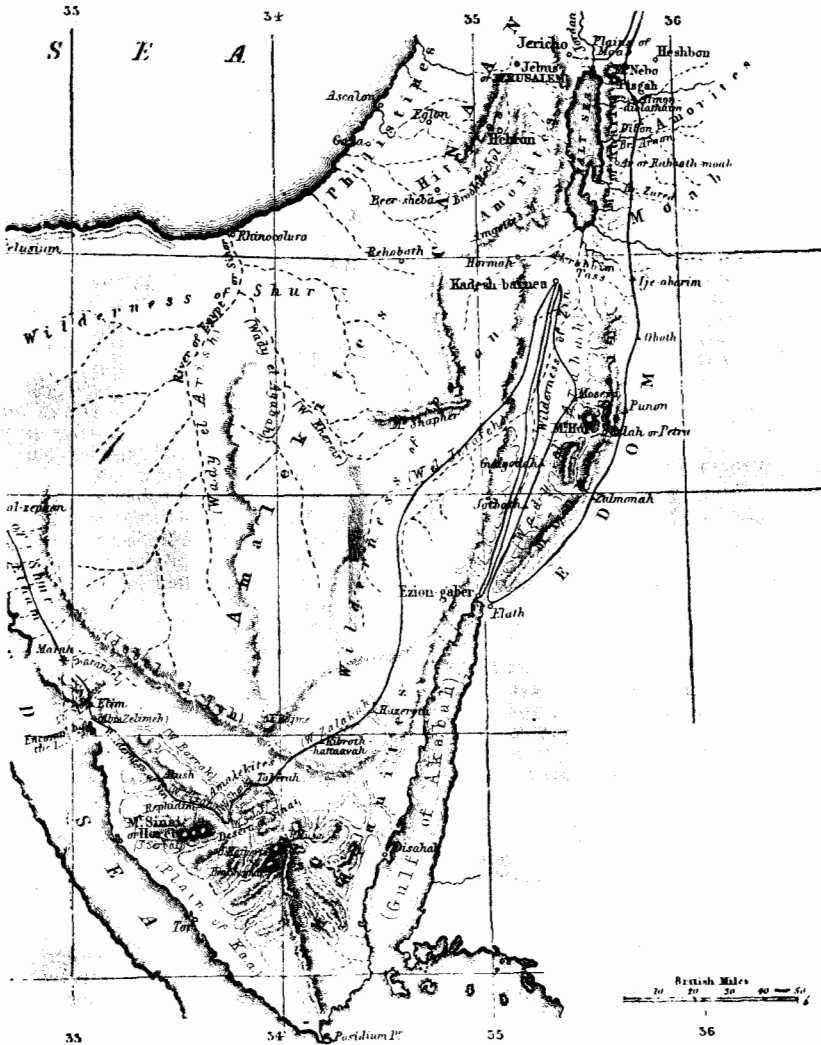
"Even unto the children of Ammon" — Israel had been commanded to abstain from attacking the Ammonites. Ammon, like Moab, was an incestuous son of Lot, but because of Lot's relationships with Abraham and Israel, the latter was ordered to abstain from distressing the Ammonites, and warned against "meddling" with them (Deut. 2:19). But, typical of the flesh, which both Moab and Ammon represented, instead of appreciating the immunity granted them, they later joined in hiring Balaam to curse Israel. The word Ammon signifies *people who are fleshly*.

"For the border of the children of Ammon was strong" — The strength of Ammon's border became a trap for Sihon. He could not penetrate it, and therefore was caught and finally overwhelmed in defeat by Israel at this point. The RSV gives an alternate rendition: *For Jazer was the boundary of the Ammonites*. This follows the Septuagint, reading in the Hebrew 'zr (Jazer), whereas the Hebrew has 'z ('az strong). Jazer is probably Khirbet Jazir near the modern es-Salt, 12m (19km) south of the Jabbok. It was later made a Levitical city (Josh. 21:39). Then the Moabites took it (Isa. 16:8; Jer. 48:32). In the days of the Maccabees, it was captured by Judah Maccabaeus (1 Macc. 5:8).

### VERSE 25

"And Israel took all these cities" — The cities are listed in Num. 32:1-4, and Jazer is described as a district as well as a city. In the apportionment of the territory east of the Jordan, this area was given to Reuben and Gad (Num. 32:2,33).

**ILLUSTRATING THE WANDERINGS OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS OF SINAI**



Numbers 33 provides details outlining the route of the children of Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness. Forty years were occupied from the time they left Egypt, but thirty-eight years from the time that the spies returned with their scandal on the land.

**“And Israel dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all the villages thereof”** — Heshbon was a very important centre, appointed as the capital of Sihon (v. 26). It was famous for its beautiful fish pools (see Song 7:4). Heshbon signifies *reason, intelligence*, though Sihon did not show much of either! It is situated about 20m (32km) east of the Jordan. Its ruins still exist, and there is a modern village.

#### VERSE 26

**“For Heshbon was the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon”** — The overthrow by the Israelites of such a redoubtable warrior and monarch as Sihon, caused fear in the counsels of the Moabites and Ammonites. They recognised that they could not hope to succeed where Sihon failed, and sought other means to defeat Israel. This led them to hire Balaam, as we shall see.

#### VERSE 27

**“Wherefore they that speak in proverbs say”** — A proverb is a weighty saying which should be heeded. This proverb, however, is based upon a song, or saying, of the Amorites consequent upon their victory over Moab, with which Israel now mocked them. The RSV renders this phrase as: *“Therefore the ballad singers say . . .”* The Hebrew *mashalim*, “proverbs” is from a root signifying *to be like*, and therefore to compare one thing with another. A similar word *ha-meshalim* has been rendered “the poets” from which, possibly, the RSV rendition is developed. The same word *mashalim* supplies the title of the *Book of Proverbs*. The word is used also of the Song of Triumph over Babylon (Isa 14:4), the parable of Ezek. 17:2; and the prophecies of Balaam (Num. 23:7-10; 24:3-9).

**“Come unto Heshbon”** — This line of the Parable or Song repeats the boast of the Amorites at the overthrow of Moab, when Heshbon, one of its main cities, fell before their army.

**“Let the city of Sihon be built and prepared”** — Sihon made Heshbon his capital, extending and fortifying it.

#### VERSE 28

**“For there is a fire gone out of Heshbon”** — Sihon, having taken Heshbon and

made it his headquarters, made preparations to consume the rest of Moab.

**“A flame from the city of Sihon”** — The declaration, or flame, of war.

**“It hath consumed Ar of Moab”** — The word “Ar” denotes a city. The city (Ar) of Moab was situated on the southern side of the Arnon (cp. v. 15), and was made the capital of Moab at the time.

**“And the lords of the high places of Arnon”** — The Septuagint renders this: “has swallowed up the high places of Moab,” reading *bale’ah* for *ba’ale*. However, the AV, which is in accordance with the Hebrew, is satisfactory.

#### VERSE 29

**“Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, O people of Chemosh”** — The song now becomes ironically sympathetic. Previously the poet had repeated an Amorite poem or parable of victory, now it sarcastically speaks sympathetically of Moab. Chemosh was the god of Moab. According to Young his name signifies *Subduer*. This terrible god was honoured with horribly cruel rites like those of Molech, in which little babies were roasted to death in a frightful form of sacrificial worship. The Moabite stone claims that it was the fierce anger of Chemosh against his people that resulted in the conquest of Moab by the Israelites some centuries later (cp. Judg. 11:24).

**“He hath given his sons that escaped, and his daughters into captivity”** — The Moabites are described as the sons and daughters of Chemosh because they were his chief worshippers. The Song sarcastically sympathises with the Moabites in that their god could not help his sons and daughters! It is suggested that the first part of the statement can read: “he has given his sons to be runaways”. They have had to retreat before Sihon.

**“Unto Sihon king of the Amorites”** — This line concludes the Amorite song which, apparently, the Hebrew poet repeated and amended in order to give greater emphasis to the Hebrew victory. In the next verse he alludes to that victory.

#### VERSE 30

**“We have shot at them”** — There is a dramatic change in the song at this verse. In the first lines (vv. 27-28), the poet repeats an Amorite Song of Victory. In the next lines (v. 29) he continues in half ironical sympathy for Moab whom their idol

Chemosh was unable to save. But in the last lines (v. 30) a startling change takes place. The decisive triumph of Israel is abruptly introduced; and the boastings of the Amorites fade utterly away.

**"Heshbon is perished even unto Dibon"** — Dibon (it still exists) was another prominent Moabitish city captured by Sihon. The name signifies *destruction, puny, or waster*.

**"And we have laid them waste even unto Nophah"** — Nophah signifies *to blow away*. It is probably the same as Nobah (Jud. 8:11), near Jobeha north west of modern Amman, not far from the eastern desert. Its modern name is Nowakis.

**"Which reacheth unto Medeba"** — Some renditions give: "a fire reacheth unto Medeba". Medeba signifies *waters of rest*. It remains a large centre to this present time, and is identified by many as the original dwelling place of Ruth. It is remarkably like Bethlehem in appearance.

### VERSE 31

**"Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites"** — The Israelites occupied the territory on the eastern side of the Jordan. This area was subsequently granted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32:1-4; Deut. 29:7-8).

### Defeat Of Og — King of Bashan — vv. 32-35

*Sihon has been decisively defeated, but the menacing power of his ally, Og of Bashan remains to threaten Israel. This now engages the attention of Moses, and is likewise brought to a successful conclusion. References to this remarkable victory are frequent throughout the Word: Num. 32:32-33; Deut. 1:4; 3:1-13; 4:47; 29:7; 31:4. Josh. 2:10; 9:10; 12:4-5; 13:12-31; 1 Kings 4:19; Neh. 9:22; Psa. 135:11; 136:20; Amos 2:9 etc. Moses first plans the campaign and then conducts it with outstanding success.*

### VERSE 32

**"And Moses sent to spy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that were there"** — Jaazer signifies *Helper*. It was south of Gilead (Num. 32:1), evidently a place of some strength and importance, for Moses "sent to spy" it out, and it is described as having villages, or daughters, as the word signifies. These "daughters" would be dependant towns or villages. The remnant of

Sihon's power was lodged there, and perhaps some of his army had taken refuge in this town. Be that as it may, the conquest of Jaazer completed the victory over the Amorite Kingdom of Sihon, and paved the way for the next work of conquest: the threat presented by Og of Bashan. The tribes of Reuben and Gad were ultimately settled in the pastoral lands previously held by Sihon (Num. 32:33-42). Jaazer, subsequently, was constituted a Levitical city (Josh. 21:39; 1 Chron. 26:31). It was of sufficient importance to be several times mentioned in Scripture: 2 Sam. 24:5; Isa. 16:8-9; Jer. 48:32. It is identified with Khirber Jazzir south of Salt, east of the Jordan above Jericho, and north of Heshbon near Ain Hazir.

### VERSE 33

**"And they turned and went up by the way of Bashan"** — This implies a peaceful survey of the land. Bashan (one of its meanings signifies *fertile*; Gesenius gives it as *soft soil*) is one of the most fertile districts of the Holy Land. The scenery of this elevated territory is extremely beautiful. Its plains are covered with rich soil, its hills are clothed with forests, and at every new turn there is presented the most beautiful landscapes imaginable. Bashan is familiar to the modern world as the Golan Heights.

**"And Og the king of Bashan went out against them"** — Without any provocation, Og adopted a belligerent attitude, and marched his army out against Israel.

**"He and all his people, to the battle of Edrei"** — Edrei signifies *Strong*. The town was noted for its strength, so that normally it would have been beyond the ability of the Israelites to take it. So notable was the victory won that it, like that over Sihon, was recalled for centuries (Amos 2:9). These conquests showed to Israel that Yahweh was with them, and were evidences of His mercy towards them (Psa. 136:20). Edrei was one of Og's two capitals, the other being Asharoth (Deut. 1:4; Josh. 12:4-5), and these dominated sixty fortresses scattered throughout the area (Deut. 3:4). Og, himself, was a huge, powerful and impressive personality. His bedstead was kept as a memorial of his size (Deut. 3:11), and his name signifying *Round*, was a possible indication of his size.

Archaeologists identify Erei with Ed-Dera'-ah, and are loud in their praise of its size, its strength, and the ingenuity of its

palaces and subterranean buildings. This amazing city was strongly fortified by underground buildings, so that it could be easily defended. They were supported by massive columns ten feet high, and provided scope for underground shops, a market place, dwellings and temples. One archaeologist has commented:

"This remarkable subterranean city was presumably hollowed out to receive the population of the upper town in times of danger, and the people were thus prepared to stand a siege on the part of the enemy for as long as their warehouses were filled with food, their stables with cattle, and the cisterns with water.

"If, however, the enemy had found out how to cut off their supply of air by covering up the airholes the besieged would have had to surrender or perish. The average depth of the city from the surface of the ground is about seventy feet."

No wonder Moses' victories over Sihon and Og are compared with the victory at the crossing of the Red Sea (Num. 21:14).

#### VERSE 34

**"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Fear him not; for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land"** — "Fear not" is the constant exhortation of Moses at this time. See Deut. 1:21,29; 3:2; 31:6,12,13 etc.

**"And thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon"** — The overthrow of the powerful Amorites was a sign to Israel and to the nations at large that Yahweh was about to establish His people in the Land of Promise. See Psa. 135:11-13.

#### VERSE 35

**"So they smote him, and his sons, and all his people, until there was none left alive"** — The Psalmist (Psa. 135:11) links the victories over Sihon and Og with that of the Canaanites west of the River Jordan.

**"And they possessed his land"** — This land, together with that occupied by Sihon, was given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half of the tribe of Manasseh (Num. 32:1-5,32-33; Deut. 3:4-12). Og's domain was given to the half tribe of Manasseh (Deut. 3:13).

#### Encampment On The Plains of Moab — Ch. 22:1

*The Israelites move to the Plain of the Acacias under the shadow of Nebo, as they*

*await the next command from Moses.*

#### VERSE 1

**"And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho"** — This is the first mention in the Bible of Jericho. The Israelites encamped at this spot until Joshua led them over the river in their assault upon the Land of Promise. Meanwhile the events of the next few chapters took place, and Moses rehearsed the law in the ears of the people in a speech we now know as Deuteronomy (see Deut. 1:5).



Was this Sihon? A statue of a king of the Amorites found at Amman, called Rabbath-Ammon in the Bible.

### **3. BALAAM'S CURSE TURNED INTO A BLESSING**

#### **Ch. 22:2-25:18**

*The Third sub-section of the third section of the Book of Numbers can be called The Prophecy of Balaam. Suddenly, dramatically, Balaam enters the narrative as unexpectedly as Elijah; but once there he never really leaves it. He is found throughout Scripture, even in the Apocalypse (Rev. 2:14). It is even the spirit of Balaam that is responsible for the revolt at the end of the thousand years' reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7-9). Balaam is hired to curse the people of God, but Yahweh turns the curse into a blessing. He speaks well: "Let me die the death of the righteous" (Num. 21:10); "God is not a man that He should die" (Num. 23:19); "He hath blessed and I cannot reverse it" (Num. 23:20). But his influence is pernicious to the children of God, as is his type in every age (Rev. 2:14). He cannot curse the people because God won't permit it, but he can seduce them; and that is what he ultimately does, bringing about the death of many. His parables, or prophecies, are apocalyptic in their concept, and can be divided into five: 1. Israel's separateness (Num. 23:9); 2. Israel's righteousness (Num. 23:21); 3. Israel's strength (Num. 24:8); 4. Israel's king (Num. 24:17); 5. Israel's conquests (Num. 24:23). The manner in which Yahweh "turned the curse into a blessing" (Neh. 13:2) was recalled over 800 years later by Micah, as he pleaded with the people to lean upon God for help (Micah 6:5). The future will see that blessing manifested in the earth.*

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO**

### **BALAK SEEKS THE HELP OF BALAAM**

*As fear sweeps the nation of Moab, the king seeks the help of Balaam the false prophet. At first, Yahweh denies him permission to assist, but afterwards He grants it upon conditions. Without the conditions, however, Balaam eagerly seeks the Moabitish messengers, and makes his way*

*towards the land of Moab. He is unaccountably delayed by an angel in the way who frightens the animal on which he rides, but who is invisible to the prophet. When, at last Balaam realises what is taking place, he desires to return home; but having once commenced on his mission, he is commanded to continue. He makes his way to Balak, and they offer sacrifices to their gods in anticipation of cursing Israel.*

**Moab And Midian Join In Alliance Against Israel — vv. 2-4**

*Israel's success in battle causes the king of Moab to fear. He enters into alliance with the King of the Midianites, for both kings feel inadequate to successfully battle against forces that have already defeated Sihon and Og. They search for other means of conquest, and decide to hire Balaam, a prophet of Babylon, to curse Israel preparatory to a concerted attack on the nation.*

**VERSE 2**

**“And Balak the son of Zippor”** — His name signifies *Waster, Consumer, Destroyer*. His father's name, a *small hopping bird*, like a sparrow. His name commemorates his prowess in war, his father's name implies his moral characteristics.

**“Saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites”** — The sight of his eyes caused Balak to fear. Yet he had no need to do so, for Moses had made it clear that he would not molest the Moabites. Balak, however, did not trust the Israelites (Deut. 2:9).

**VERSE 3**

**“And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many”** — While the Israelites moved along the eastern and north-eastern border of Moab, the Moabites supplied them with provisions (Deut. 2:29); perhaps in fear, desiring to be rid of them, but, at the same time, not disdaining the opportunity to make profit of them. But the sudden defeat and overthrow of such powerful monarchs as their own Amorite conquerors filled the Moabites with terror, for they realised that they would fare worse in conflict. This forced them to take some action, whilst avoiding open hostilities. They first sought allies.

**“And Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel”** — With such a large body of people hovering on their borders, and with powerful enemies succumbing to the Israelitish attacks, the anxiety of the Moabites is understandable.

**VERSE 4**

**“And Moab said unto the elders of Midian,”** — An embassy is sent to the Midianites inviting them to join with Moab in some action against Israel. Whereas the name Moab signifies *Pertaining to a father* (i.e. the flesh — John 8:44), Midian signifies *Contentious*. In a figurative sense, the flesh always is willing to join with contention.

The Midianites were descendants from Abraham and Keturah (Gen. 25:2), and therefore more closely related to the Israelites than the Moabites. The Midianites lived a semi-nomadic life on the plains east of Moab and Ammon (Gen. 36:35). They supported themselves partly by grazing and partly by caravan trade.

**“Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field”** — With these words the Moabites sought to instill fear into the Midianites so that they would join with them in some action against the Israelites. Their words expressed a simile based on the strong scythe-like sweep of the ox's tongue as it consumes the grass of the field. It was a most expressive and appropriate expression for a pastoral people. As the words are repeated with due emphasis, one can almost hear the lick and the crunch, and see the slow-moving jaws inevitably and inexorably chewing the grass.

**“And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time”** — As king he had not proved very effective, for he had lost much of his territory to Sihon.



**Help Sought Of Balaam****The Soothsayer — vv. 5-7**

*Lacking confidence in their ability to successfully wage war against Israel, the allies decide to seek the aid of a necromancer. Balaam is a world-renowned soothsayer of Babylon, and the kings of Moab and Midian decide to hire his help. An embassy is sent to him describing their problems, and seeking his assistance in cursing the people. A rich reward is promised for a successful curse.*

**VERSE 5**

**"He sent messengers therefore unto Balaam the son of Beor"** — Balaam signifies *Waster of the people* (see *Eureka* vol. 1, pp. 288-290). Beor signifies to *burn or consume*, indicating the means whereby the people would be wasted. References to Balaam are frequent throughout Scripture, as follows: his title as soothsayer (Josh. 13:22), his love of money, the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet. 2:15-17; Jude 11); his hire (Deut. 23:4-5; Neh. 13:2); his evil counsel (Num. 31:16); his death (Num. 31:8; Josh. 13:22); his anti-type (Rev. 2:14). See also Josh. 24:9-10; Jud. 11:25, and the exhortation of Micah 6:5.

**"To Pethor, which is by the river of the land of the children of his people"** — Pethor was in Aram, beyond the river Euphrates in Babylonia (Num. 23:7) in Mesopotamia (Deut. 23:4). It has been identified with Pitru mentioned on the Assyrian inscriptions. It has been identified with modern Tell Amar, south of Carchemish on the west of the Euphrates, involving a journey of about 400 miles (644 kms). Pethor signifies to *Interpret, opening, a place of secrecy*. Young gives the meaning of the place as *Interpretation*, implying a religious centre. In Josh. 13:22, Balaam is described as a soothsayer, or diviner, against which class of men Israel was warned (Deut. 18:10-14).

**"To call him"** — He was a soothsayer or medium (Josh. 13:22) whose magnetic personality was taken as evidence of the powers of enchantment, or divination (Num. 23:23; cp. Acts 6:16). Such were self-deceived mystics, imagining themselves *en-rapport* with men and gods. Their power stemmed from the flesh, not from God.

**"Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me"**

— The victories of Moses had brought the presence of Israel prominently before all the nations, as the restoration of Israel today has done likewise. Investigation had been made of their origins, and as the marvel of their deliverance became known, the nations feared them greatly, as Rahab noted (Josh. 2:9-11). The verb "abide" is from *yashab*, and implies that the Israelites were sitting there awaiting the opportunity to attack. The word is expressive of one waiting in ambush for an enemy to move.

**VERSE 6**

**"Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me; peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land"** — The word for "curse" is *'arar* and denotes to proclaim evil against one. See its use in Gen. 12:3; 27:29; Num. 23:7-8; Deut. 23:4; Josh. 24:9. Balak had sufficient confidence in the efficacy of Balaam's curse to risk a war if it were proclaimed. In fact, it was his intention to arrange for the curse to be proclaimed and then attack.

**"For I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed"** — Balak was convinced that God was with Balaam in his utterances. His profound regard for Balaam's decrees is matched by the regard that flesh today has for those of the Pope.

**VERSE 7**

**"And the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the rewards of divination in their hand"** — The rewards of divination are the "wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15-16). The ways therein are the "ways of death" (see Prov. 14:12; Rom. 6:23).

**"And they came unto Balaam and spake unto him the words of Balak"** — The embassy reached Pethor and set forth the proposal of Balak. Nothing further is recorded of the elders of Midian, so it is clear that the Midianites adopted a subordinate position in the approach.

**Yahweh Warns Balaam Not To Accept — vv. 8-14**

*Throughout the narrative it is clear that Balaam believes that he possesses the ability to do what Balak requires of him. In fact, like the Pope, he is a self-deceived mystic who imagines himself to be en-rap-*

*port with all gods. He is sincere but completely in error. He believes in the gods of all nations, and he knows, as was common knowledge, that Yahweh is Israel's God. Moreover, Balaam believes his mission will only succeed if he has Yahweh on his side, in the same way that a prophecy for or against Moab will succeed only with the support of Chemosh its god. Therefore, when Yahweh warns him against proceeding on the mission, he refuses to go.*

**VERSE 8**

**“And he said unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as Yahweh shall speak unto me”** — The use of the divine name by Balaam does not necessarily signify that he was a true worshipper. As a medium, fully believing in his own powers, he sought contact with the God of the people he had to curse much the same as any medium would do today. By enquiring from the embassy, he would be able to ascertain the name of Israel's God. In fact, the divine name is used on the Moabite Stone and elsewhere, even though those using it did not worship Yahweh. When Balaam was with Balak he worshipped Moabitish gods (Num. 23:1), for he was quite accommodating when it came to worship.

**“And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam”** — As far as they were concerned, it was night-time both spiritually and literally.

**VERSE 9**

**“And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?”** — The word *Elohim*, here, and frequently elsewhere, rendered “God” is given as “angels” in Psa. 8:5. Evidently an angel was sent to interview the false prophet.

**VERSE 10**

**“And Balaam said unto God, Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me, saying”** — Balaam ignored the presence of the Midianites, recognising the Moabites as the principals in the matter.

**VERSE 11**

**“Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth; come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them, and drive them out”** — Balaam's description of Israel identified the nation as “the

Ecclesia in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), having “*come out of Egypt*”. The word “*curse*” that he used is different to the Hebrew word in v. 8. It is *kabab*, “to pierce”, that is, with words. Balaam's curse was to be preliminary to an attack by Moab and Midian against Israel. The literal Hebrew renders Balak's words as, “I shall prevail in fighting against him”.

**VERSE 12**

**“And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them”** — This was a clear and absolute refusal.

**“Thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed”** — The word used by the angel is *'avar* as in v. 6: *to speak evil against*. Balaam was not permitted to so speak against a people upon whom Yahweh had pronounced a blessing (Gen. 12:3; 27:20). The comment of Micah should be borne in mind whilst reading the negotiations of Balaam with God or with Balak: “Oh my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of Yahweh” (Ch. 6:5). Such a statement as Balaam received should have ended the matter as far as Balaam was concerned.

**VERSE 13**

**“And Balaam rose up in the morning, and said unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land; for Yahweh refuseth to give me leave to go with you”** — Note how shrewdly and cunningly Balaam told only half the truth, and thereby left open the opportunity for further negotiations. He omitted to tell the embassy that it was useless him going, for Israel could not be effectively cursed. If he had plainly and openly stated that fact, there would have been an end to any further approach.

**VERSE 14**

**“And the princes of Moab rose up, and they went unto Balak, and said, Balaam refuseth to come with us”** — The statement of the princes was again an evasion of the truth. Perhaps they did not want to appear as having failed in the mission set them to do. They told Balak that Balaam refused to come, whereas he had said that Yahweh refused him permission to come. As they had been deceived by Balaam into believing he was open to negotiations, so they misled Balak.

**Greater Rewards Offered:****Balaam Accepts — vv. 15-21**

*Balak is not willing to take no for an answer. Believing he has not offered a large enough gift, he sends more important messengers with a larger reward, begging Balaam to come curse the people. Instead of plainly answering that this is impossible, Balaam invites the men to spend the night, whilst he again seeks Yahweh. He is placed under test by God and fails.*

**VERSE 15**

**“And Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they”**— Having suppressed the fact that there was no way in which an effective curse can be pronounced against Israel, Balaam, in effect, had left the way open for this second approach.

**VERSE 16**

**“And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me”** — Balak had been deceived into imagining that Balaam had refused to come because he was not satisfied with the reward. His invitation was an inducement to defy Yahweh, the God of Israel. The margin introduces a more definite note into his words: “Be not thou letted (hindered) from coming unto me.” Let nothing stand in your way.

**VERSE 17**

**“For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me: come therefore I pray thee, curse me this people”** — In offering greater honour and additional hire, Balak played upon Balaam’s greatest weakness: his cupidity. Peter remarks that “he loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Pet. 2:15).

**VERSE 18**

**“And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Yahweh my God, to do less or more”** — These words express the sincerity of Balaam. He was absolutely confident that he could make contact with Yahweh, and in that he was sincere, as are many self-deceived men. Preachers like Billy Graham, or the Pope are undoubtedly sincere, but hopelessly misled. If they did not believe in themselves they would not command the re-

spect they do. Balaam’s reputation and influence stemmed from his confident belief in his mystical powers, in his absolute conviction that he was *en rapport* with any God. His words would have impressed the embassy as the words of a prophet who was completely reliable. They were sure that what he said would have the endorsement of the God of Israel.

Balaam spake of Yahweh as “my God”. On what grounds could he do so? The Septuagint renders this as merely “Lord God”. However, in using the personal pronoun, Balaam claimed to be able to approach Yahweh, in common with all other gods of the nations (see Num. 23:1). The Pope claims to worship Yahweh, and the divine name is used in the Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*, but, in fact, he is ignorant of the Truth relating to God. It was part of Balaam’s stock in trade to assume familiarity with all forms of worship. It is significant, that nowhere does Yahweh claim him as His!

**VERSE 19**

**“Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye also here this night, that I may know what Yahweh will say unto me more”** — Yahweh’s previous message had been quite specific, so that there was nothing to be gained from a further approach. But Balaam, desirous of “the wages of unrighteousness”, hoped that He might reverse His previous decision.

**VERSE 20**

**“And God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do”** — Was it likely that the men would rise up and repeat their request, seeing that they had already retired for the night? The conditions imposed by Yahweh would make it most unlikely.

**VERSE 21**

**“And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab”** — Balaam did not wait for the conditions to be fulfilled. His avarice (2 Pet. 2:15-16) got the better of him. His action justified the indictment of the angel who met him on the way (v. 32). Evidently Balaam sent the princes of Moab ahead, and doubtless they eagerly hastened on their way to tell Balak of the success of their negotiations. That left Balaam to follow with his two servants.

**The Angel And the Ass — vv. 22-35**

*Balaam's action in taking the initiative without awaiting the stipulated conditions, angers God. An angel, invisible to Balaam, but apparent to the ass, stands in the way with a drawn sword, causing the animal to stop. Balaam, quite unaware of the cause of the apparent stubbornness of the animal, beats it until the angel withdrawing, it moves on its way. Again the angel stands before the ass, and this time, trying to pass, it moves close to a wall and grazes Balaam's leg. A third time, the angel appears, causing the animal to crouch in fear, so that again the prophet harshly beat it. Then, to the astonishment of Balaam, the ass speaks. The prophet's eyes are opened, and he sees the angel with drawn sword! He learns that what has appeared as a hindrance and distressing has really saved his life. This is explained to him, and he is warned against opposing Yahweh in any way.*

**VERSE 22**

**"And God's anger was kindled because he went"** — The *Companion Bible* claims that the Hebrew signifies he "really did go". God's anger was kindled because Balaam went without awaiting the condition that had been imposed.

**"And the angel of Yahweh stood in the way for an adversary against him"** — The angel was doubtless the one referred to in Exod. 23:20; Num. 20:16; Josh. 6:13. The welfare of Israel had been placed in his care; his name appears to have been Michael (cp. Josh. 6:13 mg. with Dan. 10:21).

The word "adversary" is *satan* in Hebrew; but, of course, this angel was not a "fallen angel", though it must be acknowledged that here *satan* was a supernatural being! It is useful to note all the occurrences of the word "satan" in the O.T. They are found in the following places: v. 32; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:14,23,25; 1 Chron. 21:1; Job. 1:6,7,8,9,12; 2:1,2,4,6,26,29; Zech. 3:1-2. The word means nothing more than adversary. It can relate to evil as adverse to good or vice versa. As these references show, in the days of Solomon, "there was no *satan* occurrent" (1 Kings 5:4), and in the days of David, Yahweh was adverse to Israel, and so, Himself, was constituted a *satan* to the nation (cp. 1 Chron. 21:1 with 2 Sam. 24:1). Nowhere is *satan* described as an evil, fallen angel. In order to be able to counter the false doctrine of the Apostasy,

it is valuable to check on all places where the term is used, and to come to a clear conception of what it relates to in each place. On this occasion, the angel went forth as an adversary to Balaam, but for his good. Nowhere does the word denote a fallen angel tempting humanity to sin.

**"Now he was riding upon his ass, and his two servants were with him"** — The princes of Moab had evidently gone on ahead, and the servants followed up at the rear. They may have been in a position to hear the ass speak, but the narrative is silent on that point.

**VERSE 23**

**"And the ass saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand"** — The ass saw the menacing presence of the angel, but the prophet was blind to it. One needs to have "eyes to see" to perceive the ways of Providence. The servant of Elisha in Dothan wondered at the calmness of the prophet in view of the enemy encircling the town, because his eyes were closed to the reality of the situation. Accordingly Elisha prayed Yahweh: "I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see" (2 Kings 6:17). Blindness of spiritual vision is a common ailment with humanity. We need all to open our eyes to the realities of faith (Heb. 11:1).

The "drawn sword" in the hand of the angel menaced the false prophet, as the angel with a drawn sword over Jerusalem threatened the city in the days of David (1 Chron. 21:16).

**"And the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field"** — This was an unaccountable action on the part of the ass as far as Balaam was concerned.

**"And Balaam smote the ass to turn her into the way"** — Actually, the angel of Yahweh was an angel of mercy, sent by God to keep Balaam from doing wrong. But, as so often happens, what God meant for good was viewed as troublesome interference. This often was the case with Israel when the nation failed to recognise the merciful guidance of Yahweh in difficulties that faced it. It is often the case with us. Like Balaam, we beat the ass instead of yielding to the guidance of Yahweh. It is interesting to recall that the ass is used in Scripture as a symbol of Israel. When guided by the false prophet it was opposed by God and became troublesome; but the true prophet was able to ride the unbroken ass safely to Jerusalem (Luke 19:30-35).

## VERSE 24

**"But the angel of Yahweh stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side"** — The reference to a vineyard, a path and walls, implies that he was approaching a city, perhaps the city of his destination. The Hebrew word translated "path" signifies a *narrow path*. At one place this was walled in on either side leaving little room except for the ass. Meanwhile, there would build up in Balaam a sense of achievement in having safely made his way to the appointed place, as he mentally prepared himself for the task before him.

## VERSE 25

**"And when the ass saw the angel of Yahweh, she thrust herself unto the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; and he smote her again"** — Balaam, concentrating upon the task before him, was rudely disturbed by the action of the ass. The injured prophet angrily smote the animal, unable to account for its strange behaviour. As the angel withdrew they again moved on.

## VERSE 26

**"And the angel of Yahweh went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left"** — On the previous occasion the ass had been able to scrape past the angel in the way, but not now: there was no way to turn.

## VERSE 27

**"And when the ass saw the angel of Yahweh, she fell down under Balaam"** — Young renders "fell down" as *crouched down*. The angel evidently displayed an even more menacing attitude, and in fear the animal crouched before him.

**"And Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff"** — The prophet's impatience got the better of him. Unable to account for the behaviour of the ass, and wrongly concluding that it was mere stubbornness or laziness, he roundly beat it with his staff.

## VERSE 28

**"And Yahweh opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times"** — Peter draws a lesson from this incident and applies it to those who stubbornly pursue a pathway of in-

quity impervious to the opposition of Yahweh. He describes them as having "forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. 2:15-16). In these words, Peter describes Balaam as having "forsaken the right way", loving the wages of unrighteousness, committing iniquity, and possessed of a mad desire to please himself. This is the Divine estimate of Balaam's action and character. We have little sympathy for Balaam despite the sound words he often spake. Pretty platitudes are easy to mouth; but they are no adequate substitute for action consistent with Yahweh's requirements.

## VERSE 29

**"And Balaam said unto the ass"** — The astonishment of Balaam at the ass speaking is not expressed, but doubtless was very evident. As a sorcerer, he lived in an atmosphere of superstition, so that his wonderment would not have been so marked as otherwise would have been the case.

**"Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee"** — The Hebrew word rendered "mocked" signifies to *overdo a thing, to upset one by unexpected action*. Balaam was so irritated by the action of his erstwhile faithful animal, that, forgetting past services, he would have killed him in temper. When mere fleshly anger takes possession of a person, he will react unreasonably and foolishly.

## VERSE 30

**"And the ass said unto Balaam, Am I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? was I ever wont to do so unto thee?"** — This, of course, was not the reasoning of the ass, but of the angel speaking through the animal, and bringing home to Balaam a very important truth, namely, when the unexpected happens exercise patience to seek the cause, do not lose your temper and take it out on those you think may be worthy of it.

**"And he said, Nay"** — Doubtless astonished at the ass speaking, Balaam could only acknowledge the truth of what he heard.

## VERSE 31

**“Then Yahweh opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of Yahweh standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand”** — Now Balaam plainly saw the gravity of his situation, and realised that the ass he had so cruelly smitten had actually saved his life. How easy it is to react in that way when our little plans and schemes are upset. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend”, the Proverb declares, and how true it is. The animal had stubbornly refused to comply with the prophet’s urging, had crushed his leg against the wall, had jolted him as she crouched in fear before the angel, and so had greatly irritated the prophet. But actually, she had also saved his life! Have we considered how often an angel may have stood in the way of our little plans and schemes, and we have not known it, or have ignored it, and have reacted as did Balaam? What a wonderful lesson this miracle has to tell us! And it is a miracle. Some find fault with it because of that. But miracle is essential to the Bible and the way of faith. Did not Christ rise from the dead? Is it any greater miracle for an angel to speak through an ass? How often have two-legged asses irritated us in their refusal to comply with something we want to do, and we have reacted angrily, whereas there may have been an angel in the way!

**“And he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face”** — The margin renders the latter as *he bowed himself*. He humbled himself before the angel. It was a wise thing to do, but little real virtue in it; for Balaam was not only conscious of the angel, but also the drawn sword.

## VERSE 32

**“And the angel of Yahweh said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold, I went out to withstand thee”** — Note the marginal rendition: *to be an adversary (satan) unto thee..*

**“Because thy way is perverse before me”** — There are frequent references in the Word to God’s way in contrast to the way of flesh. See note on Gen. 6:12. Moses sought to know “the way of Yahweh” (Exod. 33:13); Solomon declared, “there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12); Micah taught that Yahweh desires a man to humble himself to “walk with his God” (Mic. 6:8); and the

Gospel is described as “that way” (Acts 22:4; 24:22). On the other hand, Peter describes certain as having “forsaken the right way” to follow “the way of Balaam” (2 Pet. 2:15-16). This is the “perverse way” of fleshly arrogance (see Prov. 28:6). The word used by the angel signifies *to be rash, precipitate, to rush headlong to disaster*. Balaam was dominated by the desire of gain; it coloured his thinking even though he spake well as in v. 18; and it led him into rash actions that ultimately brought about his destruction.

## VERSE 33

**“And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive”** — In the miracle, Balaam witnessed the visible hand of God; in the opposition he received, he learned of the ways of Providence! How wise it was of God to give the story of Balaam in such detail!

## VERSE 34

**“And Balaam said unto the angel of Yahweh, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again”** — Balaam recognised his motivation was wrong; but he should have realised that from the first. He had eagerly pursued his course, failing to observe the condition that Yahweh imposed upon his proceeding with it (cp. vv. 20-21).

## VERSE 35

**“And the angel of Yahweh said unto Balaam, Go with the men; but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that thou shalt speak”** — Having proceeded that far, Balaam is permitted to continue on his way, the intention of Yahweh doubtless being to put all to the test. However, before the transactions were completed, Balaam again departed from the restrictions placed upon him, and ultimately was put to the sword during the battles of Moses (Num. 31:8,16).

**“So Balaam went with the princes of Balak”** — Possibly other princes had arrived at this point to conduct him in state unto the King of Moab.

**A State Welcome For Balaam — vv. 36-38**

*The dreadful appearance of the Angel on the way, the desperate resistance of the terrified animal, the furious determination of the Prophet to advance in spite of every*

*delay, the voice which breaks from the dumb animal that has saved his life, all heighten the expectation of the message he is to deliver; and now with due ceremony, he is conducted to the spot where the cursing is to commence!*

#### VERSE 36

**“And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which is in the border of Arnon, which is in the utmost coast”** — “City of Moab” is Ir-Moab in Hebrew. It was probably Ar of Moab, the boundary town at the time (Num. 21:15). The Israelites had moved far north of Ar and the Arnon in their conquests of Sihon and Og.

#### VERSE 37

**“And Balak said unto Balaam, Did I not earnestly send unto thee to call thee? Wherefore comest thou not unto me? Am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?”** — Balak evidently suffered from an inferiority complex which caused him to assert himself in a boastful manner, and to take umbrage at Balaam’s rejection of his first invitation. His claim to be able to promote Balaam was a vain vaunting of himself, particularly in view of the fact that he was fearful of losing the whole of his kingdom. But the flesh is wont to brag like Balak.

#### VERSE 38

**“And Balaam said unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say any thing? The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak”** — These words sound good, but lack real humility. Balaam claimed that he was the confidant of God, and that his words were inspired and infallible — as, indeed, they did prove to be on this occasion. But Balaam also knew that his power was limited. The memory and fear of the angel and the ass were still with him; so that he spake truly. See Psa. 33:10; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 44:25; 46:10.

#### Balaam’s Sacrifice At Kirjath-Huzoth — vv. 39-41

*In spite of Balaam’s claim that he is a worshipper of Yahweh, and can only speak as He dictates, he goes with Balak to Kirjath-Huzoth where he participates in Baal-worship. He shows his intention of using the worship of Moab and of the God of Israel to curse the people. The location of Kirjath-Huzoth is unknown, but the Apo-*

*calyptic typology of the incident is remarkably significant.*

#### VERSE 39

**“And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-Huzoth”** — Kirjath-Huzoth signifies *A city of streets*. Its location is unknown. However it was near Balthoth-baal, located somewhere near Mt. Nebo. So the prophet and the king must have moved north from the Arnon for this purpose. The name of the place is significant for *The Apocalypse* mentions a *City of Streets* (Rev. 11:8), that has cursed the people of God, naming it Babylon the Great. And at this point, the typical character of Balaam emerges into clearer light. As a prophet of Babylon, who speaks pleasing platitudes in the name of the true God of Israel, but whose actions belie his words and who has no hesitation in participating in pagan worship, he types the false prophet of Rev. 16:13, the Man of Sin of 2 Thess. 2:8, whom the Lord is going to destroy at his coming, (v. 8), as Moses destroyed Balaam. In Balaam, there is a foreshadowing of the false prophet of the Roman Catholic apostasy.

#### VERSE 40

**“And Balak offered oxen and sheep, and sent to Balaam, and to the princes that were with him”** — The king and the prophet combine in order to curse the people of God. In the past the Pope and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire endeavoured to do just that; and in the future, Gog of Russia, like the emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire before him, will join with the Papacy in an endeavour to “solve the Jewish problem” (see Dan. 8:25; 11:38-41; Ezek. 38:16). Balak “sent to” Balaam and the princes, portions of the sacrifices offered to Baal, thus joining them all in fellowship in the project of cursing Israel.

#### VERSE 41

**“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal”** — The “high places of Baal” is better rendered *Bamoth Baal*. It was a place name of a site near Modera, known today as Khirbet el-Quweiqiyeh just south of Nebo.

**“That thence he might see the utmost part of the people”** — From these heights, Balak, Balaam, and the princes of Moab and Midian could look down upon the

encampment of Israel in the plains of Moab, east of the Jordan below. The word "utmost" means *extremity*. The whole camp could be seen from the vantage place selected (see Num. 23:13). The purpose of this was a superstitious idea that if

the whole encampment was brought into view, the curse, which Balak now thought would be uttered, would involve all the people. Therefore, it must have been with a great sense of satisfaction that he awaited the speech of his false prophet.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### BALAAAM'S FIRST TWO PARABLES: THE CURSE IS TURNED INTO A BLESSING

*Building seven altars, and offering animals on each one, Balaam commences with a form of worship in which he hopes to still the voice of conscience and smother the blessings of Yahweh with the fumes of sacrifice. He fails to do so. He is compelled to utter words which reveal that Israel is immune from the ill will of man, for the goodness of Yahweh rests upon the nation. Appalled by the incredible words he is forced to hear, Balak changes the venue, hoping from a new elevation and a new site to transfer the blessing into a curse. More sacrifices are offered, but to the frustration of the King and the Prophet, words of blessing continue to pour forth as inspiration takes control of the lips of Balaam, proclaiming that Yahweh's purpose with Israel is immutable: it cannot be changed. As the ass was compelled to speak words it did not understand, now Balaam is compelled to do likewise. Yahweh turns the curses into blessings. He testifies that as He redeemed Israel from Egypt, His purpose in the nation will be consummated. This is the precious heritage of the Israel of God in every age, and the attempted cursing of flesh will avail nought.*

#### **Balaam Views The Camp of Israel — vv. 1-6**

*Balaam now offers his own sacrifices, but is met by an angel who instructs him what to say. So he returns to Balak.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams"** — The place

selected was Bamoth Baal, the high places of Baal, evidently the site of a pagan Sanctuary. So whatever Balaam might mean in describing Yahweh as "his God" (Ch. 22:18), he is prepared to compromise his claim by worshipping in the Sanctuary of Baal. The multiplicity of altars is significant, they typify the multiplicity of worship comprehended in Babylon the Great: "the mother of harlots and abominations



of the earth" (Rev. 17:5). On the heights of Bamoth Baal, the false prophet attempted to unite in worship those with a common hatred of Israel, brought together by Balak. Seven is the number of agreement established by an oath that binds consenting parties together. Hence his sacrifice of seven oxen and seven rams. At the sanctuary of Baal there was a foreshadowing of what will be attempted by the Balak and Balaam of the latter days: a fusion in one of anti-semitic worship by Rome, and military and political power by Russia, in order to bring a curse upon the people of God. They shall "sanctify war" (Joel 3:9 — mg.), make it holy; and so "come down upon My people of Israel!", declares Yahweh (Ezek. 38:16). The Gogian confederacy will be joined with the false prophet of Rome in this venture. The forces of the former will go forth with the blessing of the latter, part of the mission being the securing of the holy places of the land for the exclusiveness of the Papacy.

#### VERSE 2

"**And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram**" — Referring to the latter-day policy of the political power to be destroyed by Christ upon the mountains of Israel, Daniel declared: "His policy also shall cause craft to prosper in his hand" (Dan. 8:25). The Hebrew word rendered "craft" in that place, and which signifies *deceit* or *fraud*, is used elsewhere for false religion (Jer. 9:6). It would appear, therefore, that Gog will employ false religion to help him in his policy of invasion in the last days, as Balak hired Balaam in the days of old.

#### VERSE 3

"**And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by thy burnt offering and I will go**" — Balaam made ready to leave Balak in order to be on his own to practice his arts of augury, seeking an omen to curse Israel and earn his hire (Ct. Num. 24:1). It was common for necromancers, to seek for such in the heavens (Jer. 10:2), though true worshippers were warned against engaging in such superstitious rites (Lev. 19:26).

"**Peradventure Yahweh will come to meet me: and whatsoever He sheweth me I will tell thee**" — Balaam had respect for the God of Israel, but also for pagan wor-

ship and superstitious rites — much like the Roman Apostasy.

"**And he went to a high place**" — The Hebrew word signifies a *bare* place, one devoid of growth. In v. 9 it is described as "the top of the rocks", so that it evidently overshadowed the Heights of Baal. Here the solitary prophet sought an augury from the God of heaven.

#### VERSE 4

"**And God met Balaam**" — Balaam was met by an angel, for Yahweh was about to use the false prophet to serve His own purposes. He often does this. He used Assyria to punish Israel, and then punished Assyria because of its motives (Isa. 10:5,7,12); He used Israel to bring about the sacrifice of the Lord, and then justly punished the nation because of its motives (Acts 2:23); He will use the schemes and ambitions of the Soviet and the Papacy today to that same end. God rules in the kingdom of men (Dan. 4:17). Accordingly, as noted by Bro. Thomas, who wrote: "Not a kingdom has been established, nor a king dethroned, but it has formed a move, which has contributed to the maturity of the present crisis, which will ultimate in the introduction of the kingdom of God . . . . When their wickedness and stupidity becomes obstacles to His purpose, He removes them out of the way, and introduces other actors upon the stage. In this way, He controls and regulates the world's affairs; but in every interference He shapes the course of events towards the consummation predetermined from the foundation of the world" (*Elpis Israel* p. 323). This observation also applied to Balaam. Yahweh used him for His purpose, and then punished him for his wickedness.

"**And he said unto Him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram**" — Balaam expected Yahweh to be well pleased with his sacrifices, and to respond by agreeing to curse His own people! What folly the man manifested! In that light, his sacrifices (seven representing completeness or agreement) were but a superstitious bribe to ensure the success of a mission contrary to God's purpose! A sacrifice is useless to Yahweh unless the worshipper so identifies himself with it as to build the principles represented therein in his life and service. Balaam was not prepared to do that. He loved the wages of unrighteousness. How could he expect God to be

pleased with worship offered upon altars that also were used for Baal!

#### VERSE 5

**“And Yahweh put a word in Balaam’s mouth, and said, Return unto Balak, and thus thou shalt speak”** — This statement describes inspiration. A prophet so moved was compelled to speak according to divine oracles. Peter observed that “no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (or prophet’s own prompting). For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). See this feature of the true prophetic word expressed in the following places: Deut. 18:18; Isa. 51:16; 59:21; Jer. 1:9. They apply even to the Lord, the greatest of the prophets: John 3:34; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10,24; Acts 3:22-23. Even Balaam recognised this: See Num. 22:38; 23:12,16.

#### VERSE 6

**“And he returned unto him, and lo, he stood by his burnt sacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab”** — Balak and his officers waited expectantly, impatient to hearken to the words of Balaam.

#### First Parable: Israel Is Immune From The Curse Of Man — vv. 7-10

*The solitary figure of the prophet pictured standing on the craggy top of the Mount from whence he could see the camp of Israel in its magnificent order (Ch. 22:41), and then returning to the waiting and expectant king and his nobles standing beside the smoking altar of sacrifice. Balaam gives vent to his first parable. He delivers his words in poetic language; but to the angry disappointment of Balak, proclaims that Israel is immune from the curse of man.*

#### VERSE 7

**“And he took up his parable and said”** — The word “parable” is from the Hebrew *masnal*, from a root signifying *to rule*, thus denoting a discourse, simile, poem or saying that is authoritative. The same word is rendered “proverb” (Ch. 21:27; Prov. 1:1; 10:1).

**“Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram”** — Balaam, reciting the message as a poem, used the third person, addressing all present. Aram signifies *highland*. The term denotes the whole ele-

vated region, from the north-eastern frontier of the Promised Land to the Euphrates and the Tigris. The country between those rivers was designated “Aram-naharaim”, or “Aram of the two rivers.” The Greeks called it Mesopotamia; and there, in Babylonia, Balaam resided (Deut. 23:4).

**“Out of the mountains of the east, saying”** — Mesopotamia is east of where Balaam then was.

**“Come, curse me Jacob”** — The word “curse” is *atar*, and signifies *to speak evil* with the object of the curse being accomplished. See note Num. 22:6.

**“And come, defy Israel”** — The word “defy” is *za’am* and denotes *to be enraged*. Balak wanted Balaam to threaten Israel with the wrath of heaven, for, superstitiously, he imagined that the anger of Balaam was sufficient to encompass the destruction of the nation, or at least weaken it sufficiently for him to successfully attack it.

#### VERSE 8

**“How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?”** — Two different words for “curse” are used in this statement. The first, *nakab*, signifies *to revile*; the second, *kabab*, denotes *to pierce with words* as in Num. 22:11. How is it possible to successfully revile a people, against whom Yahweh has not spoken? The word for “God” is *El*, and relates to God in His power. It denotes that God is all-powerful. Mere human words could not prevail against the will of such a God.

**“Or how shall I defy, whom Yahweh hath not defied?”** — What use is it of flesh to threaten with the wrath of heaven, any whom Yahweh has not threatened? The words uttered by Balaam did not originate from him but from God. The false prophet expressed truths of which he was imperfectly aware. Micah, 800 years later, called upon Israel to “remember what Balaam answered . . .” (Micah 6:5), for Yahweh spake through the prophet, as the angel did through the ass. In fact, Balaam had not manifested the sense of his own ass! Nevertheless, the thought expressed by Yahweh through him is very true. See the principle again in 1 Sam. 17:10,25, 26,36,45; 2 Sam. 21:21; 23:9.

#### VERSE 9

**“For from the top of the rocks I see him”** — Whom did Balaam see? Not

merely the camp of Israel, but *El* (v. 8). He saw the Mighty One, or God of Teman (Hab. 3:3), the Mighty God of heaven who shall "break in pieces and consume all kingdoms" (Dan. 2:44). He saw in vision the Lord Jesus Christ in power as the manifestation of Yahweh.

**"And from the hills I behold him"** — Balaam could see the tents of the Israelites, typifying the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) of the age to come.

**"Lo, the people shall dwell alone"** — Balaam's description was that of the future. He saw the fulfilment of Deut. 33:28; Mic. 7:14, of which the Israel of the Exodus was but a type. However, the implications of his vision were disastrous to the hopes of Balak. To "dwell alone" meant that Israel would be successful in its battles, and eject the enemy from the lands it claimed. Yahweh requires the separateness of His people, and will destroy their enemies before them. Israel, both natural and spiritual, are isolated by very worship from others Exod. 19:5-6; 33:16; Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9. Sonship of God is predicated on separateness (2 Cor. 6:14-18), so much so, that "friendship with the world" on the part of a brother in Christ, is treated as spiritual adultery (James 4:4).

**"And shall not be reckoned among the nations"** — The word "reckoned" is from a Hebrew word signifying *to plait, weave, or interpenetrate*. Israel should be separate and apart from all other nations, bound, or weaved together as a people unique: Yahweh's possession. For Israel national, see Ezra 9:2; Est. 3:8; for Israel spiritual, see 2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 2:12-14. Israel's present position in the UN is paradoxical in the light of Yahweh's requirements. Ultimately it will either withdraw or be ejected therefrom (Jer. 30:14). This is Yahweh's desire; for as an individual is required to be separate from the world, Israel as a nation must be isolated from other nations (Deut. 32:8; Ezra 9:2; Jer. 46:28; Amos 9:9; Mal. 2:15).

## VERSE 10

**"Who can count the dust of Jacob"** — In this statement, Balaam unconsciously referred to the promise of Bethel. The tired and despondent Jacob was promised that his seed "shall be as the dust of the earth" (Gen. 28:14); and now Balaam asks the question, Who can count the dust of Jacob? Young gives the question in the past tense: *Who hath done so?* The answer

is, None! The fulfilment awaits the future, for Israel was not then populous (Deut. 7:1; 9:1). See the extension of Israel in the future by conversions from the Gentiles (Isa. 49:20-21; 54:1-2; Rev. 7:9).

**"And the number of the fourth part of Israel"** — From the heights above, Balaam could see Israel encamped in four great squares; but in symbol the "four square encampment" represents the true Israel of God in its glory (Rev. 20:9; 21:2, 10, 16). Balaam's references to Jacob and Israel have application to national Israel and spiritual Israel. The latter are identified with the twelve tribes, and will represent a "multitude whom no man can number" (Rev. 7:1-9). They will constitute the four beasts of *The Apocalypse* represented as singing to the Lamb: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

**"Let me die the death of the righteous"** — The personal pronoun "me" is *soul* in Hebrew, *Let my soul die!* So Balaam was forced to proclaim the mortality of the soul! To die the death of the righteous, is to die in hope of a resurrection to glory, and therefore to die in hope. See Psa. 16:8-11; 37:37; 71:20-21; Prov. 14:32; Isa. 57:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:53-57; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Heb. 11:13. The word "righteous" is in the plural *yasherim*, and denotes righteous or upright ones, from a root signifying "straight" or "even". It is rendered "upright" in Psa. 37:37; 49:14; 64:10, and "Jasher" in Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18.

**"And let my last end be like his"** — Instead of "last end" render it as *latter days*. The latter days shall see the resurrection of righteous ones to glory; but in spite of his pious wish, and expressed hopes, Balaam will not be there. Words must be sealed with action before they are acceptable to Yahweh. "Faith without works is dead," counselled James.

## Balak's Disappointment And Anger — vv. 11-13

*As Balaam stops, Balak angrily speaks his mind. He fails to understand why Balaam could have so spoken when he is hired to curse Israel. Like those who are superstitious and indulge in magic, he believes that all Balaam has to do is to speak and it shall be done. Balaam calmly rejoins that he can only endorse the will of Yahweh in regard to Israel. But the persistent Balak*

*suggests that perhaps a different site might bring forth a different message, and proposes that they try a new one from where a different view of Israel is to be seen.*

#### VERSE 11

**“And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether”** — Here the word “curse” is *kabab*, “to revile”. Balak wanted Israel reviled; instead of that his hired help had blessed the people! Balak was incensed at this, believing that he had been robbed.

#### VERSE 12

**“And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which Yahweh hath put into my mouth?”** — Balaam, doubtless, would have liked to have cursed Israel (otherwise he would have remained at home), but his utterances were dictated by Yahweh. Like Saul before Samuel, he was compelled to speak words he did not want to hear. See v. 5.

#### VERSE 13

**“And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them”** — Balak did not realize that Balaam’s speech was dictated by Yahweh; and believed that a different site, with a different view of his enemy, might result in a different message. His confidence was in Balaam, not in God. In that, he is like the world today that places its confidence in popes, prelates and politicians, but who are yet to learn that all are false (Jer. 16:19-21).

**“Thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all”** — Balak proposed that Balaam view Israel from an elevated site where the full glory of the encampment around the Tabernacle could not be seen. Perhaps the appearance of only a section of Israel might change the augury! The superstitious suggestion is typical of the flesh. When the Queen of Sheba saw Solomon on his throne, she admired with wonderment all his glory, and spake of the future majesty of the kingdom that Yahweh had even then established on earth. But when humanity views but the “utmost part of them,” when they see but a few Jews in the land striving against great odds to establish themselves therein, they fail to acknowledge the purpose of Yahweh in them or consider any future glory possible.

**“And curse me them from thence”** — Balak wanted Balaam to “pierce them with words”, or “revile” them as the word signifies.

#### Second Parable At Zophim: Yahweh’s Purpose With Israel Is Immutable — vv. 14-24

*The king conducts the seer to a new elevation at the top of Pisgah, and the earlier process is repeated. Sacrifices are offered on altars, Balaam seeks isolation to invite a Divine response. The message comes. This time the prophet addresses Balak directly, warning him that he is foolish to think that God is as a man who can be influenced to change His mind. The blessing has been pronounced on Israel and is irrevocable. In great detail Balaam proclaims the intention of Yahweh with His people.*

#### VERSE 14

**“And he brought him into the field of Zophim to the top of Pisgah”** — Pisgah (see Num. 21:20; Deut. 3:27; 4:49; 34:1) signifies a *hill*. However, the particular site cannot be located with certainty, as the name is given to a range of heights, rather than a particular mountain. The Pisgah of this statement is identified as the headland of the rugged Abarim range in modern Jordan (ancient Moab) which breaks through the ridge and skirts the north-eastern end of the Dead Sea by Jericho (Deut. 34:1). It is slightly north-west of Nebo which is the highest summit of the range. It has been identified as Jebel Siyaghah. Of the view from this point, Dr. Smith in *Historical Geography* p. 563 writes: “The whole of the Jordan valley is now open to one, from Engedi, beyond which the mists become impenetrable to where on the north, the hills of Gilead seem to meet those of Ephraim. The Jordan flows below. Jericho is visible beneath. Over Gilead, it is said, Hermon can be seen in clear weather, but the heat hid it from us. The view is almost that described as the last one upon which the eyes of Moses rested, the higher hills of Western Palestine shutting out all possibility of the sight of the (Mediterranean) sea.”

The term “field” denotes a cultivated field, which evidently was dominated by the peak Zophim. Zophim means *Watchmen*. So now the King and the false prophet, as watchmen, view the remnant of Israel, hoping to receive a message of Apocalypse. An amazing type, for in *The Apocalypse*, the two-horned beast of the earth

(Rev. 13:11) comprising the Emperor and the Pope acted as Watchmen around the city of Babylon, prepared to suppress those related to the Hope of Israel, whether Jews or Gentiles (cp. v. 10).

**“And he built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar”** — Whilst Balaam gave lip-service to Yahweh, he joined with Balak in his pagan worship. See v. 1.

**VERSE 15**

**“And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, whilst I meet yonder”** — As before, this was for the purpose of enchantment, which, however, Yahweh did not permit. See v. 3; Ch. 24:1.

**VERSE 16**

**“And Yahweh met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus”** — There was no augury for Balaam, only the angel who proclaimed Yahweh’s message. This was a repetition of his previous experience. See v. 5.

**VERSE 17**

**“And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath Yahweh spoken?”** — Balak impatiently awaited the message of Balaam, hoping against hope, that it might pronounce a curse upon the remnant of Israel now seen from the vantage point above.

**VERSE 18**

**“And he took up his parable and said”** — See note v. 7.

**“Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor”** — These lines are poetic in structure. Balaam is speaking not of himself, but Yahweh is speaking through him.

**VERSE 19**

**“God is not a man that He should lie”** — The word “God” is *El*, expressive of God in the fulness of His power. He has the strength and ability to carry out His purpose, which man has not. See 1 Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; Rom. 11:29; James 1:17.

**“Neither the son of man, that He should repent”** — The Hebrew word for “repent” can signify to *change one’s mind*. See Gen. 6:6. God can, and has, changed His declared purpose when His people

have not conformed to His will; but He is not limited, as flesh is, to be compelled to change His mind because of lack of power or ability to perform His purpose.

**“Hath He said, and shall He not do it?”**

— These are the words of Yahweh which Balaam, perforce had to proclaim (v. 16). Balaam had hoped to have arranged for a change of Yahweh’s declared purpose. Note a similar pronouncement on behalf of Yahweh in regard to the conquest of Babylon itself (Isa. 44:24-28).

**VERSE 20**

**“Behold I have received commandment to bless”** — The word *commandment* is in italics, indicating that there is no comparable word in Hebrew. Balaam received a revelation, not a commandment.

**“And He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it”** — Yahweh’s blessing on Israel is confirmed by an oath, and is irrevocable (Gen. 22:16; 28:13-15; Jer. 33:20-26). Rotherham renders this line according to the Septuagint (but not the Hebrew): “I will bless nor will I take it back”. However, to our mind, the A.V. seems better.

**VERSE 21**

**“He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob”**

— The setting is in the future, when Israel’s sins will be blotted out on the basis of the new covenant. See Jer. 31:27-40; Micah 7:18-20; Rom. 11:25-28). However, the word rendered “iniquity” is not the usual one relating to wickedness, but is *’aven*, and signifies to *exert oneself in vain*. It has been rendered *misfortune*. To the present, Israel wears itself out in vain, and experiences misfortune, through fruitless labour, but that will not be the case in the Age to come.

**“Neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel”** — The Hebrew *’amal*, rendered “perverseness” signifies the *wearing effect of toil*. It is rendered “travail” (Ecc. 4:4,6; Isa. 53:11), “sorrow” (Job 3:10; Psa. 55:10), and is here given as “misery” in the NIV. For the true Israel of God, “sorrow and sighing will flee away” with the coming of the Kingdom, and that also will be the case with Israel after the flesh. Therefore, “there remaineth a rest to the people of God” (Heb. 4:9). The use of the names Jacob and Israel embrace the people nationally and spiritually, whilst, at the same time, indicating the change of status granted Jacob after wrestling with the angel, to which status both can attain.

**“Yahweh his God is with him”** — This is the memorial title to be given “the generation of the race” who obey the precepts of Yahweh (cp. Exod. 3:15; Psa. 22:30). Accordingly, the call of the Gospel is a call to separate from the generality of mankind as a “people for the Name” (Acts 15:14). Christ promises: “To him that overcometh will I name upon him the Name of my God” (Rev. 3:12). Therefore, the company of the redeemed, with Christ at its head, will have the title: *Yahweh Elohim*. This status will be recognised universally, so that Isaiah portrays the nations coming before the glorified saints acknowledging their Divine status, saying: “Surely God is in thee” (Isa. 45:14). Zechariah declared: “Yahweh shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Yahweh, and His name one” (Zech. 14:9). The redeemed will comprise, “a great multitude, which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues” (Rev. 7:9), yet united as one, as the family of God, bearing the name of their Father. The title *Yahweh Elohim* signifies Yahweh in multiplicity; and in that day of glory He will be seen as such, and yet as one united body. God-manifestation then will be revealed in its fulness. That is the day that Balaam saw in vision. “He shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but Yahweh will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel (Joel 3:16).

**“And the shout of a king is among them”** — The word “shout” is *teruwah*, the same word used for the “blowing” of the shofar trumpet as in Lev. 23:24, or for the sounding of the Jubilee, the Year of Release of Lev. 25:9. The same expression is used of exultation or of battle (Josh. 6:20; Ezra 3:11,13; Psa. 47:5). The King Messiah will not only declare war on the forces of darkness and of evil, but will deliver the people from their oppressors, and restore them to their inheritance, as required under the terms of the Jubilee year (Lev. 25:10). The shofar trumpet sounded on the first day of the 7th month of the religious year, which was the first day of the civil year (Lev. 23:24). Hence, “the shout of the king among them” will announce the beginning of a new era for Israel and the world. A “holy convocation” took place on that day, that is, a sacred gathering of the people; and this, also, will be the case at Christ’s return.

Paul taught that “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise” (1 Thess. 4:16), and with the living will “be gathered together unto him” (2 Thess. 2:1). Israel nationally shall also be restored to the land as the result of the “shout (or trumpet call) of the king” (see Isa. 18:3; 27:13).

Though Balak may not have understood all this, the words of his hired prophet both disturbed and dismayed him. But even worse was to come for him.

## VERSE 22

**“God brought them out of Egypt”** — As in v. 19, the word “God” is *El* and denotes Yahweh’s strength. In *Phanerosis* (p. 42), Brother Thomas notes: “As often as this word *ail* (*el*) passed before his (the Israelite’s) mind, the idea of POWER, might, strength would stand out in bold relief. ‘It always,’ says Gesenius, ‘presented to the Hebrews the idea of strength and power.’” There was mighty power manifested in the Egypt of the Pharaohs when the plagues were poured out, and the Red Sea divided to enable Israel to escape. Yahweh brought them out, declared Moses, “with great power, and with a mighty hand” (Exod. 32:11). And He will do so again, for typically, Egypt represents the whole world; and Isaiah declares: “Yahweh shall set His hand again the *second time* to recover the remnant of His people from Assyria, and from Egypt” (Isa. 11:11). This, again, will be with mighty power: “I will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out” (Ezek. 20:34). “The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf” (Mic. 7:16). Balak must have understood what Balaam meant when he spake of *El* delivering Israel from Egypt. The amazing miracles performed to deliver the nation from bondage were on the lips of all. Rahab told the spies: “We have heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the kings of the Amorites” (Josh. 2:10). Those mighty manifestations of power foreshadowed even greater ones to come under the King Messiah.

**“He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn”** — The unicorn of Scripture is identified with the now extinct aurochs or

wild ox as rendered in the R. V. According to *Animals of Bible Lands*, the aurochs was a massive animal, the bulls weighing over a ton. The comment is made: "Bringing under control such massive and powerful beasts (the bull standing about 6 ft. at the shoulder) would be hard enough today, with all modern aids, yet then men did it before the age of metals. This is an achievement that defeats the imagination". The aurochs had two large horns, indicative of its power. In the Hebrew, the word "strength" is in the plural *strengths* answering to the horns. In Deut. 33:17, Moses likens the two horns to Ephraim and Manasseh who shall "push the people together to the ends of the earth." He identifies the two horns as Ephraim and Manasseh. Ephraim was the younger son who was elevated to firstborn above his older brother, and therefore, in the family of Joseph (the typical Christ), represents the firstborn Israel of the spirit (Gal. 6:16). Manasseh, the older son who was deposed from his position of privilege in favour of his younger brother, represents the firstborn of the flesh, that is, national Israel (Mic. 4:8). The massive aurochs, with its two large horns was a formidable animal for size, strength, speed and ferocity; and that is how the world will see Israel in the age to come, when mortal Israelites, officered by immortal saints will destroy their previous oppressors (see Zech. 10:5-12).

### VERSE 23

"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob" — The word "enchantment" is from *nachash*, to hiss. It is a cognate word to that rendered "serpent," and in this context, indicates a magical incantation, which Balaam had used in order to induce an augury against Israel. In stating that none is available, Balaam confessed his utter failure to curse the people of God, and revealed that he had no strength to defeat the expressed purpose of Yahweh. See Isa. 44:25-26; Jer. 50:7; 51:5.

"Neither is there any divination against Israel" — The word *qesem* is rendered "witchcraft" (1 Sam. 15:23), and "soothsayer" (Josh. 13:22). "Divination" in such a context represents predictions based upon the flesh. Nothing the flesh can say, propose or predict can defeat the purpose of Yahweh in Israel.

"According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel" — The time referred

to is the Age to come; and the names Jacob and Israel relate to the people of God both national and spiritual. For Yahweh's goodness towards such, note the expressions of Ps. 31:19; 44:1; 64:9; 126:2-3; Luke 5:26; Rom. 11:22.

"What hath God wrought" — The word for "God", again, is *El*, signifying Strength, Power (see vv. 19,22). The future will reveal amazing events that will completely overshadow the miracles of the past. As far as Israel after the flesh is concerned, the remarkable deliverance will so exceed the escape from Egypt, that the latter will no longer be commemorated as before. The Passover of the past, will be superceded by a greater deliverance of the future. "It shall no longer be said, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt (said at the celebration of the Passover), but, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all lands whither He hath driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers" (Jer. 16:14-15). Meanwhile, the Israel of God will be brought again from the dead, clothed upon with immortality, and constituted the king-priests of the age to come. The full wonder of the work of God within their individual lives, what "God hath wrought" (see Phil. 2:13), will then be recognised. See the following passages: Ps. 44:1; 46:8-11; Isa. 60:21; 65:22-25; Jer. 33:7-9. And the exhortation: Ps. 31:19; 64:9.

### VERSE 24

"Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion" — The Hebrew is in the feminine gender, a *lioness*. A lioness in defending her cubs is a more fiercesome animal than a lion. It matches sagacity with strength. See Gen. 49:9; Deut. 33:22; Mic. 5:8; Rev. 5:5.

"And lift up himself as a young lion" — The reference is not to the cub, but to a young lion in its strength. It suggests the ideas of vigour, enthusiasm, eagerness, unfailling strength, virility.

"He shall not lie down until he eat of the prey" — This speaks of the success of conquest. See Gen. 49:27.

"And drink the blood of the slain" — See Isa. 60:12. Upon this note of unfailling strength and successful campaigns of conquest on the part of Israel, Balaam concluded his second Parable. In effect, it

rebuked Balak for imagining that Yahweh is like a man whose intentions can be changed. He had blessed Israel, and the blessing was irrevocable. Moreover, even as the mighty Egyptian nation had been humbled by *El*, so all nations will be in the future. There is no way, either by enchantment or divination, that this purpose can be changed.

#### Balak's Increasing Irritability — vv. 25-26

*It is not hard to understand the desperation of Balak at this point. He irritably tells Balaam that if he cannot curse Israel, it is best if he keep quiet! Balaam excuses himself by claiming that he must speak as Yahweh directs. Though in that he speaks truly, he must not be exonerated from blame, for he had eagerly sought leave to go to Balak, and even now desires to curse God's people.*

#### VERSE 25

**“And Balak said unto Balaam, Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all”** — This was a reasonable request. After all, Balak had hired Balaam to curse the people of God, and the latter had willingly accepted the summons to do so. He had come under false pretenses of being able to satisfy Balak.

#### VERSE 26

**“But Balaam answered and said unto Balak, Told not I thee, saying, All that Yahweh speaketh, that I must do?”** — Though Balaam's words are true, he had sought occasion to go to Balak, and had endeavoured by the use of enchantment, to change the blessing into a curse. He must have implied that he could help Balak in his quest, and therefore cannot escape responsibility for his part in the drama.

#### Balak Tries Again — vv. 27-29

*Despite his disappointment at the blessings that pour from the lips of his hired prophet, Balak, having instructed Balaam that if he cannot curse he must not bless (v. 25), decides to try again. He selects another*

*site, taking Balaam to the top of Peor, where they repeat the same motions of worship as before.*

#### VERSE 27

**“And Balak said unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee unto another place; peradventure it will please God that thou mayest curse me them from thence”** — Balak is persistent in his superstition, attributing greater powers to Balaam than to God, hoping that the prophet can influence God.

#### VERSE 28

**“And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor”** — Peor signifies *cleft* or *opening*. It was the headquarters of the worship of Baal-Peor (Num. 25:1-9; Psa. 106:28; Hos. 9:10). This deity was worshipped with the most immoral rites, and is by some identified with Chemosh. If so, children were sacrificed to it similarly as was done Molech. Balaam therefore was taken to the very centre for false and immoral worship.

**“That looketh towards Jeshimon”** — See Ch. 21:20; Josh. 12:3. Jeshimon signifies *wilderness*. From Peor they could look down upon the wasteland of the wilderness, to the place where Beth-Jeshimoth, the *House of the Desert* could be seen. Previously this was the possession of Sihon (Josh. 12:3), but now the Israelites were encamped there (Num. 33:49).

#### VERSE 29

**“And Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven bullocks and seven rams”** — Balaam was prepared to offer sacrifice at this site of Baal worship to further the plans of Balak.

#### VERSE 30

**“And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar”** — So the search for a curse was renewed.



It seems sad that Moses could not lead the people over Jordan, but it was not without its blessings. He did not experience the decline of old age, he did not have the heartache of observing the failure of the people in the land; he died with the hope of the Promise before him, and with the commendation of God in spite of his limitations (Deut. 34:10). He rests from his labours awaiting the coming of the Lord. Even Balaam was compelled to request: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Meanwhile, as we study the section of Numbers treated with in this issue of *The Expositor*, we have the great pleasure of hearing amazing words flow from the lips of a man who was hired to curse Israel, but had to give expression to blessings. The world is in that situation today. It curses Israel, but soon, with the coming of its Messiah, it will learn that the channel of blessing is through the very nation that it today opposes (see Zech. 8:23).

The circumstances whereby Yahweh turned the curse into a blessing, is but one of the many remarkable events of this most interesting Book of the Bible. And astounding as was the miracle that compelled the prophet to speak words he did not want to hear, the veracity of it is established beyond all doubt by the fact that Israel is back in the land, and circumstances are unfolding today, to bring about the vindication of Balaam's prophecies. We stand upon a firm, sure foundation when we place our confidence in the Scriptures.

*The Book of Numbers* contains a series of the most astonishing providences and events. Everywhere and in every circumstance God appears; and yet there is no circumstance or occasion which does not justify those outstanding displays of His grace and mercy which the Book also records. In every relation we see the consistency of the Divine intentions, and the righteousness of the laws which He established.

We can certainly read ourselves rich by the study in depth of the *Book of Numbers*.

## Christadelphian Expositor

H. P. Mansfield, Editor

Published by Logos Publications,

9 West Beach Rd., West Beach, South Australia, 5024.

(Telephone: Adelaide 08-356 2278)

Registered by Australia Post Publication No. SAR0251.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Australia — \$6; Overseas — \$7; U.K. — £3; Sth. Africa — R7.

### MAIL ORDERS TO:

Make Money Orders, Cheques, etc., out to "Logos Publications," and send direct to —

*Logos Publications, 9 West Beach Road, West Beach, South Australia, 5024.*

OR to our Representatives:

*In U.K.:* E. S. Cherry, 33 Bellwood Road, Northfield, Birmingham B31-1QB, U.K.

*In Sth. Africa:* B. Law, 1 Centre House, Crompton Street, Pinetown, Natal, South Africa.

*In New Zealand:* P. MacLachlan, Algernon Road, R.D. 2, Hastings, N.Z.  
*American Edition:*

Registered Periodical published by Logos Publications, 9728 Nevada Ave., Chatsworth, Ca. 91311. Application to mail at 2nd class postage rates is pending at Chatsworth, Ca. 91311. A Quarterly Publication.

*The Christadelphian Expositor*  
A Verse by Verse Commentary Upon the Scriptures

# Editorial

## COMPLETION OF OUR EIGHTH VOLUME

This number of *The Christadelphian Expositor* completes our present volume, so that, God willing, our exposition of Numbers will continue into the next. Our objective is to provide an in-depth commentary upon the Scriptures. Of course, we do not claim it to be exhaustive; there has never yet been an exposition of the Scriptures that can claim so proud a title. No matter how much we ponder upon the Word there are always new facets to be revealed, for in the pages of the Bible we are in the presence of God. The depths there are unfathomable.

To produce *The Expositor* has imposed a great strain on available time. The year has been a very busy and heavy one for us, and it has demanded many hours of patient endeavour to produce the copy. And not only patient endeavour on our part, but great patience and understanding on the part of our co-workers,

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

## BALAAM'S FINAL PARABLES

*On the heights of Peor, Balaam varies his approach. He realises that God will not curse Israel, and therefore, the uselessness of isolating himself to seek such a curse. The spirit of God takes hold of him and he proclaims in poetic prophecy the divine purpose with Israel. He views the orderly camp of Israel as typical of the greater order of the future. He sees Israel as strong, vigorous and completely unafraid, destroying its enemies. His words so irritate Balak that he hits his hands together in anger and frustration. He irritably turns on Balaam declaring that he has lost the reward reserved for him. So he dismisses his hireling. But before he leaves, Balaam gives one last parable, in which he outlines what will happen in the last days. This terminates the attempt of Balak to curse the people.*

**3rd Parable: Israel's Future Glory, Triumph and Strength — vv. 1-9**

*Balaam no longer seeks enchantments for he realises that they are useless. Instead, the spirit of God coming strongly upon him, he describes the glory of Israel as it will be revealed in the future.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And when Balaam saw that it pleased Yahweh to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments”** — This explains the purpose of Balaam isolating himself on previous occasions (cp. 23:15). Balaam was not a genuine worshipper of Yahweh, though he mouthed the Divine name as so many religionists do today. He depended upon superstition, upon consulting “familiar spirits” (Deut. 18:10-14). The word “enchantments” is *nechashim*, from the same root as the word rendered “serpent” in Genesis 3. He sought an omen of the flesh in which to curse Israel; but Yahweh took hold of the prophet, and turned the curse into a blessing.

**“He set his face toward the wilderness”** — The wilderness of Judah lay before him beyond Jordan. That is the direction from whence Israel had come. The view before

him has been described in the following terms: “Behind him lay the vast expanse of desert extending to the shores of his native Assyrian river. On his left were the red mountains of Edom and Seir; opposite were the rock fastnesses of Engedi; further still was the dim outline of the Arabian wilderness where ruled the then powerful tribe of Amalek; immediately below him lay the vast encampment of Israel among the acacia groves of Abel-Shittim — like the water courses of the mountains, like the hanging gardens beside his own river Euphrates, with their aromatic shrubs, and their wide-spreading cedars. Beyond them on the western side of Jordan rose the hills of Palestine, with glimpses through their valleys of ancient cities towering on their crested heights. And beyond all, though he could not see it with his bodily vision, he knew well that there rolled the deep waters of the Great Sea, with the isles of Greece, the isle of Chittim; a world of which the first beginnings of life were stirring, of which the very name here first breaks upon our ears.”

**VERSE 2**

**“And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he**

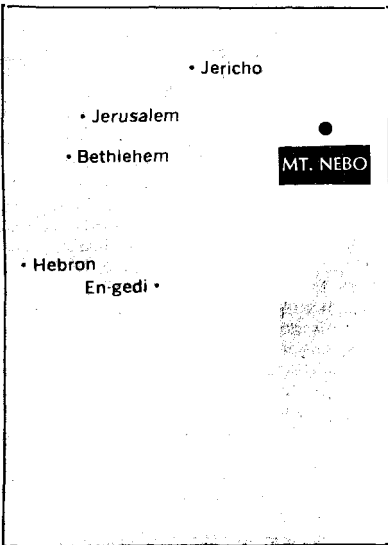
**saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes**" — Like the serpent he used his eyes, and saw the orderly encampment of Israel. The words *in his tents* are printed in italics, showing that they do not appear in the original. Balaam saw Israel "abiding according to their tribes" Yahweh then took hold of the prophet, and in vision enabled him to see the Israel of the future, established in its tribal cantonments (Ezekiel 48).

**"And the spirit of God came upon him"** — This divine afflatus he had not expected on the present occasion, but God had not yet declared the whole of His will. Sometimes Yahweh uses ungodly men to proclaim His purpose. See Matt. 7:22; John 11:51.

**VERSE 3**

**"And he took up his parable and said"** — The prophetic declaration that follows is couched in highly poetic terms, and in regular metre, as were the previous ones.

**"Balaam the son of Beor hath said"** — His name was expressive of his attitude as one who would curse Israel if he could. Balaam signifies *Waster of the people*, and Beor denotes *Burning*, from a root "to kindle" or "consume," to "become brutish," to "set on fire". That is what Balaam would have done if he could, but Yahweh prevented him.



**"And the man whose eyes are open hath said"** — The word "man" is *geber*, great man. The word "open" is rendered *unveiled* by some. The Hebrew word can signify *shut*, so that the expression can mean that his eyes were shut, but his spiritual vision was clear, and this is suggested in the margin. He "saw" the Israel of the future, for his spiritual vision had been opened. Accordingly, the RV renders "are open" as "were closed". It also gives "hath said" in the present tense as: "saith"; hence "the man whose eyes were closed saith...."

**VERSE 4**

**"He hath said, which heard the words of God"** — The word "God" is *El*, suggesting that the One speaking has the power to perform His word. The past tense should be rendered in the present: *heareth* instead of "heard".

**"Which saw the vision of the Almighty"** — The word "saw" is *chazah*, to "gaze at mentally," to "perceive," to "contemplate intently."

**"Falling into a trance"** — The last words *into a trance* are in italics, indicating they are not in the original. They are best removed. Balaam prostrated himself to the ground, as the Holy Spirit took possession of him.

**"But having his eyes open"** — The expression "open" in this verse is from a different Hebrew word to that rendered "open" in v. 3. Here it is the word *galah* which signifies to open, uncover or reveal; but there it means to close. At first the eyes of Balaam were shut, and so tight that he could not see the angel who withstood him, till God opened his eyes! Nor could he mentally perceive the gracious intentions of Yahweh towards Israel, till the eyes of his understanding were opened by the Divine Spirit. But now his eyes were opened to the realities of the Divine purpose in Israel.

**VERSE 5**

**"How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob"** — These words express the greatest admiration. The word "tents" is *ahalim*. It denotes tents or dwellings as clearly conspicuous from a distance (Strong), derived from a root *'ahal*, "to be clear, or to shine". Balaam's spiritual vision has been attracted to the conspicuous dwellings of Jacob, not as they were then set up in the Plains of Moab, but as they will be when

they dwell in the land in the future. The full restoration of Jacob in the age to come, and their confident dwelling therein, will draw the wondering eyes of all mankind as they did those of Balaam in his vision. His physical eyes were shut, so he could not see the tents of Israel then, but his spiritual vision was open. The establishment of Israel in the land in the age to come will not only be conspicuous, so that all shall see it, but will be acknowledged as "goodly", because it will be the channel of blessing to all nations. See Jer. 33:9; Zech. 8:13, 23.

**"And thy tabernacles, O Israel"** — *Mishkenoth* is the plural, feminine form of *Mishkan*, which is from a root *shakan*, "indwelling", describing a permanent abode in which Yahweh will dwell. *Mishkan* is used in Scripture for the Tabernacle proper, and also for the Temple, as dwelling places of Yahweh.

Balaam saw the "tents of Jacob" and the "tabernacles of Israel". He saw Israel after the flesh established in the land in dwellings that though goodly were temporary; and he saw the Israel of God permanently established as the Tabernacles of God. He saw, in fact, what John saw in Patmos, for John heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Rev. 21:3). The plural form is given by Balaam, because, as Christ taught, "In my Father's house are many abiding places" (John 14:2, cp. Heb. 3:5-6). And the feminine form is given because the Holy Jerusalem, in which Yahweh will tabernacle or dwell is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2).

Balaam, with his physical eyes closed, but his mental vision wide open, saw this wonderful manifestation of divine goodness as it will be revealed in Israel mortal and immortal (Rom. 11:22).

## VERSE 6

**"As the valleys are they spread forth"** — The word "valleys" is *nachalim*, "water courses", or torrents which pour down in parallel courses from the upper slopes. They suggest the channels of the water of life (Psa. 104:10). Israel's tents are described as "spread out" implying a numerous people.

**"As gardens by the river's side"** — The *Septuagint* renders this as "Paradises" (*paradeisos*), recalling the words of the Lord to the thief on the cross: "Thou wilt

be with me in Paradise". Balaam saw Israel as a paradise: cultivated; properly ordered, beautifully set out. Isaiah describes the Israel of the future as "a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not" (Isa. 58:11). Her "deserts", he declared, would be "like the garden (*paradise*) of Yahweh" (Isa. 51:3). It was that picture of the future, that Balaam saw in vision as he looked down upon the tents of Israel in the desert of Jeshimon.

**"As the trees of lign aloes which Yahweh hath planted"** — The *Septuagint* renders this: *as the tents which God pitched*. Rotherham has: *Like aloe-trees Yahweh hath planted*, but with a footnote drawing attention to the rendition of the *Septuagint* and other versions. First consider the reference to aloes contained in the A. V. It is most significant. Psalm 45:8 describes the garments of the warrior-bridegroom (Christ) as scented with aloes. The lign aloe is also called *Eaglewood*, and the eagle is used as a symbol of the spirit. It also is used to describe the strength of the multitudinous Christ of the age to come (Isa. 40:31; Rev. 8:13 — where "angel" should be rendered eagle). It therefore can relate to judgment poured out in strength upon the enemies of Yahweh.

In form the tree is large and spreading. Its inner trunk or centre contains a dark-coloured fragrant substance, but the branches of the younger wood are white and almost scentless. In India (for the tree is native to tropical Asia), it attains a height of 120 feet (36.5m). Its wood, which takes a high polish and reveals a lovely grain, is highly esteemed. In ancient times, the soft, fragrant inner wood was moulded and used as a setting for precious stones. In value it is rated as worth its weight in gold. To this day it is called *Shoot of Paradise* or *Paradise Wood* (see *The Plants of the Bible*, by W. Walker). So for elegance, height, beauty, fragrance, and value, the lign aloe was a splendid illustration of the glory of Yahweh's encampment (Rev. 20:9).

In favour of the *Septuagint* rendition, it should be noted that the Hebrew word rendered aloes is *ohalim*, the same word as is rendered "tents" in v. 5. Using that rendition, Balaam saw the dwelling places as Yahweh-provided, and as such impossible to be overthrown by flesh.

To "plant" a thing or a nation is to establish it on a permanent basis. That is

what Yahweh intends as far as Israel is concerned. See the use of the word in the following places: Exod. 15:17; 2 Sam. 7:10; 1 Chron. 17:9; Psa. 44:2; 80:8,15; 104:16; Isa. 5:2; 51:16; Jer. 24:6; 31:28; Amos 9:15. Once "planted" in that way, Israel will never again be uprooted.

**"And as cedar trees beside the waters"** — The Hebrew word rendered "cedar" is from a root signifying *to be firm*, indicating the tenacity of its roots. See Hos. 14:5. The cedar tree is not only of handsome, majestic appearance, but its sap is resistant to disease, so that its wood is most durable. It is considered incorruptible under normal circumstances. The cedar has never been known to have been attacked by the worm; there is something in the sap that is death to that creature.

Balaam described the cedar trees as amply fed by water, suggesting that they would appear in full majesty and permanence. The Kingdom of God is designed for eternity (Luke 1:32-33) for at the conclusion of the millennial reign, it will be presented to Yahweh as a perfected system, that He might be "all and in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). This was part of the vision the false prophet of Babylon was compelled to describe.

#### VERSE 7

**"He shall pour the water out of his buckets"** — This implies a plentiful supply of water drawn up from a well for the benefit of those who are thirsty (cp. Isa. 55:1). The spiritual significance of a well as is suggested by the figure as explained by the Lord at the Well of Jacob (John 4:10-14). See also Psa. 68:26; Prov. 5:16-18; Isa. 48:1, and contrast with the folly of Israel in the past in turning away from such a source of water to establish its own cisterns that do not hold water (Jer. 2:13).

Rotherham, in a footnote, states that according to the Massoretic pointing, the reference is to "his two buckets". This suggests that in the future, the world will be refreshed by water from two buckets, both Israelitish: dispensed by Israel after the flesh and spirit. The immortalised saints will minister to the needs of the mortals in all parts of the world (Mal. 1:11), then when worshippers ascend to Jerusalem for the purpose of worship (Zech. 14:16), they will be ministered to by national Israel acting as hosts to those in the Temple. So the refreshing water of life from the wells of salvation shall be dispensed by Israel both immortals and

mortals (see Isa. 12:3).

**"And his seed shall be in many waters"** — In Scripture, water not only represents the refreshing doctrines of truth, but also nations (see Isa. 17:13; 57:20; Jer. 51:13; Rev. 17:1,15). The literal Hebrew is *the seed of him*, and the *Septuagint* renders the line significantly as: *There shall come a man out of his seed, and he shall rule over many nations*. Figuratively, and (if we accept the *Septuagint*), literally the words predict the world-wide domination of Israel under the Messiah, the seed promised (cp. Psa. 2:6-8; 18:50; Jhn. 1:49; Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 19:16).

**"And his king shall be higher than Agag"** — Agag appears to be a title used by the kings of the Amalekites, for it occurs again in connection with the king in the days of Saul. Saul spared the king, but Samuel "hewed him in pieces" (1 Sam. 15:8-33). When Israel was moving towards Sinai, the stragglers among the people were attacked by the Amalekites in the Pass of Rephidim. Under Divine instructions, the Israelites retaliated under Joshua, whilst in the mount above, Moses besought Yahweh through prayer supported by Hur and Aaron. So long as Moses arms were held aloft in prayer, Israel prevailed; but when his hands fell down through weariness of the flesh, Amalek prevailed. With his arms supported by his companions Israel won a notable victory. However, this was due to Yahweh, and not the prowess of Israel; in consequence of which an altar was built unto Yahweh, and given the title *Yahweh Nissi*: "He Who will be my Ensign." The circumstances foreshadowed the day when Yahweh shall set up His Ensign for His people and the nations (Isa. 5:26; 11:10,12; 18:3), and the antitypical Gog "shall be afraid of the ensign" (Isa. 31:9). It tokened the Lord, who, as an ensign to Israel, will call the people together, and will ensure victory over the forces of the enemy. Amalek was of Esau, and as such represented the flesh in political manifestation.

One further type, that can be related to Balaam's theme also foreshadowed Gog. The powerful anti-semite Haman, depicted in the book of Esther, was an Agagite (Est. 3:1; 8:3,5; 9:24). He was destroyed on the gallows he erected for Mordecai. He, too, represented the flesh in political manifestation.

Agag, therefore, points forward to Gog (Ezekiel 38). *Strong's Concordance* claims

of both titles that they are of uncertain derivation. According to Jackson's *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*, Agag signifies, *I will overtop*; Gog denotes, *the one at the top*. The translators of *The Septuagint* translated both words as "Gog". Balaam's statement, therefore, claims that the future King of Israel will be higher than Gog! The prophecy of Ezekiel 38 shows that to be so, for Gog will be manifested in power only to be destroyed.

**"And his kingdom shall be exalted"** — Many Scriptures endorse Balaam's words in relation to Christ's rule. Daniel represents the kingdom of the future as a mountain filling the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

#### VERSE 8

**"God brought him forth out of Egypt"** — Notice that Balaam aligns Israel with the Ecclesia, for it was brought "out of Egypt" (Deut. 6:21-23). Egypt is from the word *Mitsrayim*, from *matsoor*, to "hem in, wound, besiege, distress". Israel was brought out of the Land of Slavery and Oppression, of Sin and of Death to become the Ecclesia in the wilderness (Deut. 5:15; Acts 7:38). The word for "God" is *El*, the title that emphasises Yahweh's unequalled strength. This was extended to deliver Israel from Egypt in the past, and will be so again, when this is done the second time (Isa. 11:1; Hos. 11:1). Jeremiah declares that at that time it will "no more be said, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel.... from all the lands whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land" (Jer. 16:14-15). The deliverance of the past will pale into insignificance alongside that of the future. Meanwhile, let it be clearly observed (for this is sometimes challenged by the religious world of darkness), that the Israel to be restored is the nation that was called out of Egypt in the days of Moses. David recognised that fact, when Yahweh made His covenant with him (see 2 Sam. 7:23-24). It is disputed by modern religionists who claim that God "hath cast off His people" (cp. Jer. 33:24-26).

**"He hath as it were the strength of an unicorn"** — See note Num. 23:22.

**"He shall eat up the nations his enemies"** — See the past (Num. 14:9), and the future (Num. 23:24). See Psa. 2:8-9;

22:27-28; Isa. 2:2-4; 9:7; Dan. 2:44; Mic. 4:8, and numerous other passages of Scripture.

**"And pierce them through with his arrows"** — See Psa. 45:5; a Messianic Psalm.

#### VERSE 9

**"He couched, he lay down as a lion"** — See notes Gen. 49:9; Num. 23:24.

**"And as a great lion: who shall stir him up?"** In the Hebrew this is in the feminine gender, lioness. Therefore, the feminine and masculine genders are both used. The strength and majesty of the lion as the king of beasts, is linked with the ferocity of the lioness when her cubs are to be defended. Christ as the "lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5) linked with his bride will present a fearsome antagonist to his enemies.

**"Blessed is he that blesseth thee"** — Balaam is compelled to confirm the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:3).

**"And cursed is he that curseth thee"** — This section of the Abrahamic covenant had particular application to Balak, and angered him beyond all measure.

#### Balak's Anger — vv. 10-14

*The third parable is so disturbing to Balak that he slaps his hands in annoyance and frustration, and berates Balaam for blessing Israel three times when he has been hired to curse the nation. He irritably tells him that he had intended to heap great honours on him but now he will not do so.*

#### VERSE 10

**"And Balak's anger was kindled against Balaam, and he smote his hands together"** — In great temper Balak irritably smote his hands together and turned on his hired prophet with a face suffused with anger.

**"And Balak said unto Balaam, I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times"** — As noted previously, the word "curse" is *kabab*, to stab with words, which is what the diabolos, or false accuser does. Balak and Balaam acted that part towards Israel, but Yahweh protected the nation by compelling the prophet to bless instead of to curse.

#### VERSE 11

**"Therefore now flee thou to thy place"** — The expression used by Balak implies

that if Balaam did not "flee" he might experience the curse that the king wanted to hear pronounced against Israel!

"I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but, lo, Yahweh hath kept thee back from honour" — Like Simon, the one-time sorcerer, Balak thought that "the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20). He learned his lesson, as did Balaam.

#### VERSE 12

"And Balaam said unto Balak, Spake I not also to thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying" — Balaam made ready to justify himself.

#### VERSE 13

"If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of Yahweh, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what Yahweh saith, that will I speak?" — Balaam self-righteously reminded Balak of the statement he made earlier (Num. 22:18), but, nevertheless, he "loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15), and had gone beyond the restrictions of Yahweh to obtain them (see Num. 22:35). What he was compelled to do (for Yahweh turned the intended curse into a blessing. See Mic. 6:5), he now claims as a virtue.

#### VERSE 14

"And now, behold, I go unto my people: come therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days" — The Hebrew word here rendered "advertise" signifies *to advise, counsel, or deliberate* (see its use in Exod. 18:19; 1 Kings 1:12; Psa. 32:8). Balaam did counsel Balak what to do in view of the divine blessing, and so evil was his advice, that Israelites succumbed to the temptation placed before them, and suffered devastating punishment (see Num. 31:16).

The term "latter days" is literally *The end of the days*, and denotes a definite period of time. See the use of the term in Gen. 49:1; Deut. 4:30; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Ezek. 38:16; Dan. 10:14. The expression is used both in relation to the end of Mosaic times and the end of Gentile times (see Heb. 1:2; 9:26).

#### 4th Parable: Balaam's Prophecy Of The Latter Days — vv. 15-24

*Claiming divine inspiration, and with*

*open vision of the future, Balaam sets forth what will take place in the latter days. He refers to the manifestation of a great King in Israel who shall subdue Moab, destroy Edom, and extend the power of Israel to the ends of the earth. No nation will be able to stand before him; the mightiest powers will be forced to submit, whilst comparatively weak nations, like the Kenites, who seek his help, will be delivered and elevated. This, of course, is the very opposite to what the frustrated, and now angry, Balak wants to hear! But Yahweh turns the proposed curse into a blessing.*

#### VERSE 15

"And he took up his parable, and said" — His "parable" was also a prophecy. "Balaam the son of Beor hath said" — See note v. 3.

"And the man whose eyes are open hath said" — The Hebrew *shatham* means "shut" not "opened", and the R.V. renders the statement that way "whose eye was closed". Balaam thus confessed that his eyes had been closed to the truth, but Yahweh had opened them, as he declared as recorded in v. 4. There the Hebrew word is *galah*, "to open".

#### VERSE 16

"He hath said which heard the word of God" — The RV gives this in the present tense: "he saith which heareth". The word for God is *El*, emphasising the power of the words uttered.

"And knew the knowledge of the most High" — In the RV this also is given in the present tense as though the revelation has just come to him: "And knoweth the knowledge of the Most High". Young renders it, "and knowing". The verb is derived from a word signifying to know after a careful scrutiny of facts, in this case the revelation and the vision. In the term Most High (*Elyon*) there is a further title of God, and as with the use of *El* it is appropriate to the message about to be delivered. For the revelation Balaam had received showed that the object of Moab was hopeless: the most powerful nations will not be able to stand before the might of Israel in the future. It is further illustrated by the title now used. *Most High* first occurs in Gen. 14:19, and generally, the first occurrence of a divine title governs its use throughout Scripture. The Hebrew word *Elyon* signifies that which is elevated, lofty, supreme above flesh. It is



derived from the root *'alah*, to ascend. The Most High in His elevation is described as *the Possessor of heaven and earth*, and was first used when Abram returned from the slaughter of the powerful confederacy of the north. Whereas the most powerful nations were unable to successfully resist Chedorloamer and his allies, Abram overthrew him with his few men, they being men of faith (Gen. 14:14-16). But the patriarch did not accomplish that amazing victory in his own strength: it was God who did so; and hence the formation of the title: "*the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth*" (Gen. 14:19). That title is always associated with dominion (Psa. 83:18; 93; 95:3). In Psa. 91:1 it is linked with *El Shaddai*, and that, too, is significant. One title expresses Yahweh's lofty dominion; the other the dispensing of His grace in sustaining His subjects, or destroying their enemies. Nebuchadnezzar was told that a revelation was given unto him that "the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men" (Dan. 4:17), and of the Lord Jesus it was predicted: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest (the Giver of Victory and Dispenser of Dominion); and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). In the familiar words of both references cited, the title of Most High, or Highest, is again associated with conquest and dominion.

**"Which saw the vision of the Almighty"** — The Hebrew is *Shaddai*, a word that is derived from a root that can signify either nourisher or destroyer. Yahweh is a nourisher of those who put their trust in Him, but a Destroyer of those who oppose Him. He protected Abraham, but overthrew Sodom.

**"Falling into a trance, but having his eyes open"** — Notice that the words *into a trance* are in italics, indicating that there are no comparable words in the original. Eliminate them, and Balaam's statement simply means that he had prostrated himself to the ground, not that he was in a trance. In fact, his eyes had been opened to the purpose of Yahweh. The various divine titles used by Balaam in this verse reveal the God of Israel as a God of Strength (El), and Dominion (Most High); a Nourisher of His people, and a Destroyer of His enemies (*Shaddai*).

## VERSE 17

**"I shall see him, but not now"** — This statement should be in the present tense: "I see him, but not now". That is, Balaam saw the coming King of Israel in vision, though he was not then manifested in Israel. Rotherham renders the line: "I see One who is not now".

**"I shall behold him, but not nigh"** — Again, this should be rendered in the present tense: "I behold him". He saw him in vision, though he was not then literally manifested.

**"There shall come a Star out of Jacob"** — This is one of the titles of Christ. See Luke 1:78; 2 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 2:28; 22:16.

**"And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel"** — The sceptre is the symbol of royal dignity and authority. See Gen. 49:10; Psa. 45:6; 110:2; Isa. 9:7; Luke 1:32-33; Heb. 1:8.

**"And shall smite the corners of Moab"** — The margin gives: *Smite through the princes of Moab*. "Corners" or "direction" are the normal usages of the word, but it comes from a root signifying *mouth*, and could relate to spoken directions given, and, accordingly, signifies the princes who direct the counsels of the nation, though Strong gives it as *region*, or *extremity*. In any case, Balaam declared that Moab would be smitten, which was not very encouraging to Balak who had employed him to curse Israel! However, that is what shall take place in "the latter days". In *Elpis Israel*, Bro. Thomas identifies the latter-day Moab with Britain and her allies. Jeremiah predicted that there will be a latter day restoration of Moab (Jer. 48:47). Isaiah, also, predicted the smiting of Moab at a time when "in mercy shall the throne be established; and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David" (Isa. 16:5). At that time, declared the prophet, Moab will provide a "covert to them (Israel after the flesh) from the face of the spoiler" (v. 4), after which Moab will be brought under the authority of the King Messiah. It will become "his washpot" — a useful though humble vessel (Psa. 60:8). Now it is a remarkable fact, that there has been a restoration of the lands of ancient Moab, for they form a large part of modern Jordan, and it is a vindication of *Elpis Israel* that this has been brought about at the instigation of Britain after World War 1, even though, since then, British power has been withdrawn from the Middle East. In fact, the

strength of the Jordanian army originally was due to British training and assistance. Moab, therefore, can be identified with the Western world, for irrespective of present trends, Britain and the West will be drawn back into the Middle East at the time of the Armageddon crisis.

However, Moab also has a figurative significance. The word signifies *Pertaining to a father*, and in the light of John 8:44 relates to the flesh. The term Moab, therefore, can denote a Man of the Flesh. In the parable of Balaam, that Man of the Flesh, is allied with the Midianites, or Arabians, and that will be the case at the time of the end. It is significant, that Daniel when describing the descent of the Northern Power into the Middle East, declares that "Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon" shall "escape out of his hand" (Dan. 11:41). This requires the revival of independent nations east of the Jordan. The fulfilment is seen in the latter-day emergence of Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Balaam foresaw the pride of man humbled to the dust.

**"And destroy all the children of Sheth"** — The word "destroy" is better rendered *subdue*. The R. V. has *break down*. The prophet predicted the subjugation of the children of Sheth by the King Messiah, and his Israel of the future. The word "Sheth" denotes *tumult*, and the R. V. has rendered it as such: "Break down all the sons of tumult". The "sons of tumult" are those who will refuse to submit to Christ, will tumultuously rage against him (Psa. 2:1). Isaiah warns (Ch. 60:12), that such shall be destroyed. See how Christ will put down all opposition — Psa. 68:30; 72:7-11; Isa. 17:13-14; Rev. 11:18.

#### VERSE 18

**"And Edom shall be a possession"** — Edom and Adam are related words. The progenitor of the Edomites was Esau, the elder twin brother of Isaac. The two babies were described as "two nations" and "two manner of people". Rebekah was told that the older of the two would be stronger, but, ultimately, the "elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). In line with that prediction, Esau despised his birthright, and is described by Paul as "a profane person" (Heb. 12:16). Edom, therefore, always represents the flesh in political manifestation, and should not be confused with the Arabs, or descendants of Ishmael. Prophetically, the two peoples are different. Whereas Edom will be de-

stroyed completely (Obad. 18), the descendants of Ishmael or the Arabs, will find an honoured place in the Kingdom of God, in answer to the prayer of Abraham (Gen. 17:18). Indeed, Isaiah pictures them with their laden beasts conveying their offerings to the King in Zion, to "come up with acceptance" on Yahweh's altar (Isa. 60:7). The predicted overthrow and annihilation of the Edomites typed the complete destruction of the flesh in political manifestation, at the coming of Christ.

In predicting that "Edom shall be a possession", Balaam taught that the political power of the flesh will be taken over by Israel after the spirit under the King Messiah.

**"Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies"** — Edom will not give up its power without a struggle, and hence a little more is said by Balaam in regard to its subjugation. Seir means *shaggy, hairy, goat-like*, and therefore an appropriate nomenclature for the flesh. Seir is the mountainous territory of ancient Edom (Gen. 32:3; 36:30), and became the centre of Esau's power, and that of his descendants (Gen. 36:1-8). The headquarters of the nation was in almost inaccessible Petra. So easily defended was it, that when David conquered it, the record states: "David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians" (2 Sam. 8:13, but Syrians should be rendered *Edomites*). The strength of the turbulent and warlike Edomites of the past, will be matched by Gog in the plenitude of his power; as David conquered the Edomites, Gog's territory shall be taken over by Christ and the saints (Isa. 60:12; Zech. 6:8).

**"And Israel shall do valiantly"** — The amazing miracle of the future will be the conquest of the world by Israel officered by the saints (see Zech. 10:5-12; See Psa. 110:3; Mic. 7:15-17). In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas has this to say:

"Thus the little kingdom of Judea will become "a great mountain", or empire, "filling the whole earth". The "Economy of the Fulness of Times" will now have fairly commenced, and the Day of Christ in all the glory of the sun of Righteousness have opened in all its blessedness upon the nations of the earth. The gospel preached to Abraham, saying, "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed", will be a reality. The Lord with Judah as his bended

bow and Israel for his arrow, having subdued the nations, and 'bound their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron' as his conquests progressed, will have transferred their much-abused power to his saints, (Rev. 2:26,27) who shall rule them with a rod of iron which cannot be broken."

#### VERSE 19

"**Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion**" — See Gen. 49:10; Psa. 2:1-12; 72:10-11; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:10; Mic. 5:2,4; Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:10-11; Heb. 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 1:5-6; 11:15.

"**And shall destroy him that remaineth of the city**" — Cain built the first city, and called it Enoch, which means *Dedicated*. It, therefore, was a religious centre, but one in apostasy to God. The name Judas Iscariot signifies: *Praise the man of the city*, and like Cain and Balaam, Judas sought the wages of unrighteousness. The Apocalypse also speaks of a city that Christ will destroy, even Babylon the Great (Rev. 16:19; 18:8). This, like the city of Cain, is a religious centre of power, to be destroyed by the Lord at his coming (Psa. 21:7-10; Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Isa. 60:12; 2 Thess. 2:8).

#### VERSE 20

"**And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said**" — The term "looked" can signify to see either literally or figuratively. Balaam could not see Amalek literally, but did so in vision. His words concerning Amalek continues the parable already commenced. He evidently paused briefly, and then went on to expound.

"**Amalek, was the first of the nations**" — Agag (see v. 7) was the title assumed by the Amalekite kings. See 1 Sam. 15:7-8; Est. 3:1; 7:9-10; 9:14. The term "Agag" denotes *Flame, the Fiery One, or the Lofty One*. See notes, Num. 24:7. Amalek was a descendant of Esau, and in the time of Balaam was considered the first, or foremost of the nations or tribes of Edom. The modern counterpart, representing the flesh in political, anti-semitic manifestation, is Russia. Agag was spared by Saul, but destroyed by Samuel, the warrior-priest (1 Sam. 15; 8:32-38). Haman the Agagite, typical of the flesh in political manifestation, was put to death at the instigation of Esther. Yahweh has declared war to the end against Amalek

(Exod. 17:16), which means that He will not rest until the earth is rid of the flesh in political manifestation. The latter-day manifestation of this power will be revealed by Gog of Russia. Though Gog will be overthrown by Christ, the end of the millennial reign will witness a further and final manifestation of the system, to be then destroyed for ever (Rev. 20:8-15).

"**But his latter end shall be that he perish for ever**" — See 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

#### VERSE 21

"**And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said**" — Again a pause on the part of Balaam, followed by a resumption of his prophetic parable. The word Kenite signifies *My purchase* according to *The English and Hebrew Bible Students' Concordance*. Strong gives support to this by aligning it with *qanah, to elevate by purchase*. The Kenites were the descendants of Moses' father in law (Jud. 1:16). They were still identified as a separate people in the days of Saul and David (1 Sam. 15:6; 27:10; 30:29), though they had their registry with Judah (1 Chron. 2:55). They lived a nomadic existence within Israel, refusing to settle down into cities, but enacting the part of "strangers and pilgrims in the earth". They were Gentiles who embraced the hope of Israel, and maintained a separateness in the midst of the nation. They had family laws instructing them in this. Among the descendants of the Kenites were the Rechabites of Jer. 35 (cp. with 1 Chron. 2:55), who were commended by Jeremiah. They proved themselves faithful at a time when Israel was unfaithful. They dwelt in the land as "strangers" (Jer. 35:7), living in tents without any permanent abodes. They did so in anticipation of their permanent dwelling in the Kingdom to be set up under Messiah. As Gentiles who identified themselves with Israel, but who lived as strangers and pilgrims in the earth, awaiting the consummation of the divine purpose, they represented the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). They received this commendation from Yahweh: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever" (Jer. 35:19). The Rechabites will find honoured positions as immortal priests in the age to come: the Sons of Zadok, of the order of Melchizedek (Ezek. 44:15).

"**Strong is thy dwellingplace**" — The word "strong" is from 'eythan which de-

notes *continuance, permanence*. Rotherham renders it as *enduring*. The faithful among the Kenites (such as the Rechabites proved to be) will find an enduring, eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God.

**"And thou putteth thy nest in a rock"** — There is a play on words in this statement, for the Hebrew word for "nest" is *ken*, similar in sound to Kenite. The allusion is to the eagle which forms its nest among the inaccessible rocks and mountain crags. The metaphor suggests security. In identifying themselves with Israel, the Kenites made their future secure. See Isa. 40:31.



#### VERSE 22

**"Nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted"** — The Hebrew *biy'im*, rendered "nevertheless", in this context, according to Hebraists, can have the force of a negative statement: "Surely not shall Kain be wasted." The idea is that though the Kenites might experience reverses in common with Israel, though they may be taken into captivity, as they were, it shall not be for complete destruction. In the Kenites there can be seen a type of those Gentiles who embrace the hope of Israel, and of whom it is said: "It is through much tribulation they shall enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). Though subjected to trials, they will not be completely destroyed.

**"Until Asshur shall carry thee away captive"** — Rotherham renders this: "How long shall Assyria hold thee cap-

tive?" The Assyrians took the northern tribes into captivity, and represent the anti-semitic forces throughout the centuries. For example, Micah describes the attack of Gog as "the Assyrian shall come into our land" (Mic. 5:5). In prophetic typology, Assyria represents the military power of Gog, whereas Babylon represents the religious influence of Rome. Balaam's words reveal that the triumph of Gentile military might is limited. There is a "set time to favour Zion" (Psa. 102:13), and then Israel will be set free.

#### VERSE 23

**"And he took up his parable, and said"** — If these sub-divisions are treated as isolated parables (vv. 20,21,22), this forms the seventh parable.

**"Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!"** — Balaam uttered a cry of horror when the next vision was revealed unto him, for he saw his own people brought under affliction. Rotherham renders the exclamation: "Who shall survive its fulfillment by God!" The word "God" is *El* emphasising His power. See Num. 23:23; Mal. 3:2.

#### VERSE 24

**"And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim"** — Chittim was one of the sons of Japheth whose posterity, according to Josephus (*Ant. 1:3:22*) settled in Cilicia, Macedonia, Cyprus and Italy. Chittim is identified with Cyprus, the nearest of the western islands, the only one visible from Canaan, and so to Balaam and to Israel the representative of all those unknown western regions across the Mediterranean, from which, were at length to come the conquests of the mighty empires of the east. Accordingly, renditions have Italy instead of "Chittim". The term was used generally for the distant lands of the West, and, in ancient times, that pointed to Italy. The name signifies *breakers in pieces*, a characteristic of Rome, or the fourth beast, mentioned by Daniel (Dan. 2:40; 7:70). Daniel was told that the "robbers (*periyts*, "breakers," see Dan. 11:14, and *Elpis Israel* p. 399) of thy people" would "exalt themselves" at the time of the end of Judah's Commonwealth, and its latter-day representative, Russia, will do likewise. In Dan. 11:30, he was told by Gabriel that "the ships of Chittim" shall

move into the Middle East to play their part as predicted by Balaam. In his vision, therefore, Balaam saw the iron power of Rome exalt itself against the peoples of the world; and also the latter-day revival of that same 4th beast power under Russia. No wonder the vision brought forth from Balaam an exclamation of horror.

**"And shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber"** — Asshur is identified with Assyria, the mighty military power of the ancient world, and Eber (from whence comes the term *Hebrew* — Gen. 10:21, 25) points to Israel. Balaam's vision revealed that these powers would be superceded by the mighty power of Rome which would dominate all the area occupied by them in the past. The Fourth Beast, the mighty Roman Empire, fulfilled the prophecy, and brought Judah to an end in A.D. 70; the Russian power will revive that empire in the last days to likewise dominate those ancient territories for a time (Zech. 14:1-2).

**"And he also shall perish for ever"** — The Fourth Beast is to be entirely consumed (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 18). Whilst other nations will remain, Rome in its religion-political form will be completely destroyed. Today the Pope is consolidating and extending the power of the Papacy, and prophecy reveals that ultimately an alliance with Russia will revive and unite the Western and Eastern segments of the ancient Empire. Gog will wield tremendous power, and seek to assert himself in the area of ancient Assyria and Israel, but he will be entirely destroyed: to "perish

for ever."

There was small comfort to Balak in Balaam's prophecies. Moab would have no hope against such mighty powers as they envisaged. And whilst Israel might suffer reverses, such will prove but temporary; Balaam's final prophecy apparently was received in icy silence, for the narrative records no comment by Balak.

#### **Balaam Makes Ready To Leave — v. 25**

*His mission a failure, Balaam makes ready to return, but before doing so offers a suggestion to Balak which succeeds in bringing the Children of Israel under curse, but also seals his own doom.*

#### **VERSE 25**

**"And Balaam rose up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak also went his way"** — Josephus says that Balaam commenced to return, but was induced by an after-thought to turn back and give evil counsel to Balak that brought tragedy to Israel (Num. 31:16). For this Balaam is particularly remembered in Christ's message to the Ecclesia in Pergamos (Rev. 2:14). Whilst it was beyond his power to pronounce an effective curse upon the people, he counselled the Midianites and Moabites to use their women to entice Israel to the licentious worship at Baal-peor. The stratagem was successful, and resulted in disaster for the nation. The Midianites seem to have been foremost in acting upon this advice from Balaam (see Num. 31:8).



*The wilderness*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

**BALAAM'S EVIL COUNSEL BRINGS TRAGEDY TO ISRAEL: 24000 DIE!**

*Frustrated in his attempt to curse Israel, Balaam attempts to satisfy his greed of gain by a strategem and a temptation that proves too strong for many in Israel. They succumb to the wiles of seductive women, and commit literal and spiritual adultery, bowing down to the gods of the enemy. References to this tragedy, together with appropriate warnings, are found throughout Scripture: Deut. 4:3; Josh. 22:17; Psa. 106:28-31; Hos. 9:10; 2 Pet. 2:15-16; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14.*

**Israel Seduced Through Balaam's Insidious Counsel — vv. 1-6**

*Israel has been warned against the sin the people now commit (Exod. 34:12-16). Seduced by the Midianitish and Moabitish women many Israelites are also shamefully led to "eat the sacrifices of the dead" (Psa. 106:28-31). This sin is long remembered and recalled as a warning for the future (1 Cor. 10:8). It is greed that suggests the sin, and unbridled lust that stimulates it, and weakness of human nature that falls for it (Deut. 4:3-5). The most tragic feature of it is the fact that it is associated with religion, for the greatest sin took place at the site of the Baal Sanctuary in Beth-Peor (Deut. 3:29; 4:46; 34:6).*

**VERSE 1**

**"And Israel abode in Shittim"** — The Shittah Tree is an acacia. The Hebrew word is derived from a root signifying to pierce or scourge, so the name is appropriate to the unfortunate circumstances that now unfold. The area is the lowlands beneath Nebo that stretch to the Jordan. In Num. 33:49, the place is called Abel-Shittim, or the *Meadow of the Acacias*. Over this plain towered Baal-Peor (Num. 23:28), with its Sanctuary (Deut. 3:29). This was the local shrine of the fertility god, which was worshipped with the grossest rites (Hos. 4:14; 9:10).

**"And the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab"** — The Midianitish women were also

prominent in these seductive proceedings. They had been sent out for this purpose on the advice of Balaam (Num. 31:16). Idleness and curiosity got the better of the Israelites. Perhaps some of the young men of Israel began to "discuss religion" with the women of Moab and of Midian, and became deluded by the attractive, pleasant, manners of the young women, who proved to be all too ready to accommodate the men in whatever they desired. Soon the Israelites were indulging in the licentious worship of Baal-peor with the young women of Moab and Midian (see v. 6).

**VERSE 2**

**"And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods"** — Israel had been warned against this very sin. See Exod. 34:15-16, and see warning references to it in Josh. 22:17; Psa. 106:23; 1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 6:16-17; Rev. 2:14. The worship of Canaanitish pagan gods was often attended with the most licentious rites, temple prostitutes supplying the means. The sin of the Israelites was not merely sexual promiscuity, but spiritual adultery. In the verse before us the personal pronoun, *their*, is in the feminine gender.

**"And the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods"** — It seems incredible that they should do this on the eve of entering the Land of Promise, but acts of spiritual adultery are not unknown among the Israel of God today. The

greatest care needs to be taken. The account merely states what happened, and we learn of it in all its grossness. But it did not appear like that to the Israelites of the day. They were impressed with the personal appeal of the pagan women; they listened to their sweet counsel; they perhaps were seduced by their pretended interest in religion and at first merely desired to convert them. Be that as it may, the Israelites fell into the trap. It is recorded as a warning. Such folly is not unknown today, and can lead to a repetition of such action. The greatest care needs to be exercised. The flesh is very susceptible to arguments advanced that will justify what it wants to do.

The Israelites bowed down to the gods of Moab, and ate "the sacrifices of the dead" (Psa. 106:28), and were brought under the power of death by a plague that swept the camp. Hosea refers to this separation unto the abomination of paganism as "the shame of Israel" (Hos. 9:10).

### VERSE 3

**"And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor"** — The Hebrew word for "joined" signifies to be *coupled*, or *yoked*. See 2 Cor. 6:16. The *Septuagint* has the verb *teleo*, which is used by Herodotus (4,79) to mean "initiated into the mysteries" (*Century Bible*). These young women, the Temple prostitutes, initiated the Israelites that led them to this frightful wickedness. See this illustrated in the warning of Prov. 7. The wise man describes the curiosity of a youth "void of understanding", who passing through the street near the corner where he knew there dwelt a woman of loose morals, moved by curiosity, "went the way to her house". He probably did not intend to enter therein, but merely to observe what goes on. How like many who have been led from the Truth. Instead of remaining within the Ecclesia, they are moved by curiosity to learn something of other religions, and soon they are caught in a web of philosophy that is attractive to the flesh, but inimical to the things of God. In the parable of Proverbs 7, the women went and "met him". She went out of her way to show him affection, so pandering to his vanity. She spake words that dulled his sensibilities to the Truth and caused him to imagine that she was spiritually minded (see vv. 14-15). She told him that

there is no wrong in that which she proposed, for she loved him! And love is frequently claimed by those who know nothing of a true scriptural love, is the greatest of virtues! Significantly, she uses a term that the Lord applies to one of his parables portraying his status in relation to his followers; the "good man of the house" (Matt. 20:11). She is represented as saying: "For the goodman is not at home, he is gone on a long journey ... and will come home at the day appointed" (vv. 19-20). This is true of the Lord at present. So with those seductive words, she woos and wins him to her desires. But her house "is the way to hell" an abiding place in the chambers of death (v. 27).

The parable of Proverbs 7 was illustrated by what took place at Baal-peor. It has been illustrated many, many times since, as worldly influences take their toll of those who should know better. For what should be noted and pondered over is the fact that it is not only the simple who are taken in by such "women" (the world at large) but those "wounded", or those defined as "strong men" (v. 26). A person can be "wounded" in a figurative sense by foolish statements, or thoughtless actions on the part of others, that upset and "wound" them; a "strong man" can be one confident in his prowess, the flesh, to resist the enemy, and so does not recognize his susceptibility to evil influences.

That is what happened at Baal-peor; some of the princes were involved in the folly. In commenting upon the incident Paul warned: "Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:11-12).

Baal-peor signifies *The Lord of the Cleft*, or *Opening*. The local god was worshipped as the lord of fertility with the most abandoned festivity and religious prostitution (*Century Bible*). Archaeologists have been appalled at the extremity of sexual depravity and wild orgies that the evidence reveals took place. It is said that the very title of the site is suggestive of what might be expected.

**"And the anger of Yahweh was kindled against Israel"** — The word "anger" is from the Hebrew *aph*, and denotes the nose or nostril. When a person's anger is aroused sufficiently, he tends to breathe hard, to "snort" with indignation, and go red in the face. The two words used: "anger" and "kindled" are suggestive of this.

## VERSE 4

**"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people"** — The word "take" is from the Hebrew *laqach*, and can signify *fetch* or *bring*. Moses is commanded to summons all the leaders of the nation before him.

**"And hang them up before Yahweh"** — Dr. Kennicott states that the Samaritan and Hebrew texts must be united to make sense of this verse: "And Yahweh said unto Moses, Speak unto all the heads of the people; and let them slay the men that were joined to Baal-peor; and hang them up before Yahweh, before the sun". (See *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*). The word "hang" is derived from a Hebrew word denoting to impale, and therefore, is rendered by the Vulgate as *crucify*. Moses was instructed to call together the leaders of the nation, and to crucify those who were guilty of leading the people in this evil and morally debasing worship. Other passages of the Law demanded the death penalty for those guilty of such a sin are Deut. 13:6-9, 13, 15; 21:23. Crucifixion was also practised for those sufficiently guilty to warrant such an exhibition (see Deut. 21:23; Est. 7:9-10). In the age to come, the death penalty (though not by crucifixion) will be re-imposed on those that lead others astray in false worship (Zech. 13:3).

The crucifixion of those criminals guilty of the sin of Baal-peor provided a salutary warning to the rest of Israel, comparable to the elevation of the brazen serpent upon the pole. Those who allow the lusts of the flesh to dominate them must recognise the enormity of their action, and learn to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Moreover, this must be done publicly for all to see, so that the change in those who would turn aside the anger of Yahweh becomes apparent to all. Because of our failings, we are categorised as "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), and will only turn away the anger of Yahweh by recognising the criminal tendencies of the flesh, and attempting to put them to death (Gal. 6:6; Gal. 5:24).

**"Against the sun"** — The execution had to be conducted publicly, so that all might endorse the judgment manifested. In like manner, Christ was publicly crucified, that all may recognise that flesh must be figuratively crucified for one to please Yahweh (Gal. 3:1; 5:24).

**"That the fierce anger of Yahweh"** — In this expression the adjective *charown* is

added to *aph*. It signifies a *burning*, from a root to *glow, flush red, or grow warm*. When a person is really angry we might sometimes say that we can see smoke coming out of his nostrils. That is the significance of the expression of this verse.

**"May be turned away from Israel"** — This can always be done by publicly declaring and acknowledging the cause of such anger: sin.

## VERSE 5

**"And Moses said unto the judges of Israel"** — These "judges" were the "able men" appointed for such purposes, referred to in the previous verse. See Exod. 18:21, 25.

**"Slay ye every one of his men that were joined unto Baal-peor"** — This constituted a repetition of the judgment enacted on the previous generation when the golden calf was set up (Exod. 22:20). In the age to come there will be such revulsion against this form of sin, that the parents of any offenders will be the first to exact the penalty (Zech. 13:3). The Law demanded the death penalty for such a sin. See Deut. 13:6-9.

### Phinehas Vindicates Yahweh's Honour — vv. 6-9

*The execution of the ring leaders of the apostasy, and the numerous deaths resulting from the plague now sweeping the camp in punishment of it, brings the people to their senses. The survivors hasten to the Tabernacle to seek Yahweh's forgiveness, weeping in sorrowful repentance. But one man refuses to weep. Enamored of the Midianitish princess who has captivated and seduced him, a prominent prince of the chief house of Simeon, openly and brazenly parades with her before Moses and the children of Israel. This answers the indignation of Phinehas who, in righteous anger at such desecration, takes a weapon and slays them both.*

## VERSE 6

**"And, behold"** — This expression denotes something extra-ordinary.

**"One of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman"** — The Hebrew has the definite article: *the* Midianitish woman; the particular woman by whom he had been enticed. Her name and status are both given (v. 15). The name of the Israelitish prince is also given (v. 14). His high rank indicates



that he had not fallen in with her by mere chance, but had been deliberately singled out by the Midianites as one whom it would be advantageous for them to lead astray. The beautiful Cozbi, herself a princess of Midian, had been set the task of seducing the high-ranking Israelite.

**"Before Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel"** — Dominated by pride as well as by passion, this foolish prince believed himself above criticism, and in spite of the judgment already executed against some of the leading offenders, openly flaunted his association with the beautiful princess before Moses and the congregation. This was an act of brazen presumption, deserving of the death penalty (see Num. 15:30-31; Deut. 29:19-21; Jer. 8:12).

**"Who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation"** — Evidently the plague had already begun (v. 9), and recognising their guilt, the more God-fearing people had approached the tabernacle lamenting what had taken place. They were pleading the mercy of Yahweh, when Zimri committed this fresh and public act of outrage.

#### VERSE 7

**"And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest saw it"** — Following the death of Aaron, Eleazar was elevated as High Priest, so that Phinehas his son become the High Priest elect. As such, he typed Christ, whose priesthood superceded the Aaronic. "Phinehas" signifies *Mouth of a serpent*, though some give it as *Mouth of pity*. However, he did manifest the good qualities of the serpent (Matt. 10:16), being both observant and wise. He showed great zeal for Yahweh, and ultimately became the third High Priest of Israel, discharging his duties most faithfully. His zeal and forthright action at this time of licentious idolatry, was rewarded by the special commendation of Yahweh, and a promise that the priesthood would remain in his family forever (vv. 10-13). The Psalms, in commenting upon him and his action declares that it was "counted to him for righteousness and unto all generations for everyone" (Psa. 106:30-31); similar words to those made to Abraham (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). The zeal and attitude of this Phinehas was completely opposite to those of his namesake, Phinehas, son of Eli, who disgraced his sacred office (1 Sam. 2:34).

**"He rose up from among the congregation"** — Phinehas, evidently, was engaged in worship, probably playing a prominent part in the spiritual revival that was taking place.

**"And took a javelin in his hand"** — One can imagine the stern, set, determined look on the face of the priest, as openly, before all, he took hold of the weapon and strode after the guilty pair. Also the tension that would build up in those who observed the drama of this situation. The javelin was a similar weapon to the spear.

#### VERSE 8

**"And he went after the man of Israel into the tent"** — The word tent is *qubbah*, and denotes a high vaulted tent. It is rendered *pavilion* in the R.V. The *Companion Bible* describes it as "a pleasure tent used in the worship of Baal", and therefore a sacred brothel. The Hebrew word is not that normally rendered tent.

**"And thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly"** — The word "belly" is from *qobah*, the same root as the word rendered "tent". It signifies a hollow-place, or cavity, and so the abdomen. The word does not occur elsewhere, and the R.V. renders it as *body*. Quite obviously, this description of Phinehas' action is given in such detail, because the woman's body was the cause of the Israelite's evil and blatant action.

**"So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel"** — The plague was stayed, not merely because of the death of the guilty pair, but because nobody rose up to challenge the action of Phinehas.

#### VERSE 9

**"And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand"** — This large number shows both the enormity of the wickedness of the Israelites, and its widespread nature. Paul gives the number as 23,000 (1 Cor. 10:8), apparently excluding those who were specifically executed (v. 4).

#### Phinehas Rewarded With An Eternal Covenant of Peace — vv. 10-15

*Phinehas, whose action has brought both the sinning and plague to an end, is given a promise that he and members of his household will be priests in the age to come.*

## VERSE 10

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — some may have considered the action of Phinehas as being too ruthless, so Yahweh's open approval is made known.

## VERSE 11

**"Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest"** — The proclamation of Phinehas' name in such detail may have been for the purpose of emphasizing that his action fulfilled its meaning. In order, the names declare: *The mouth of wisdom, through the help of El has caused enlightenment to shine forth.* Phinehas had been placed in charge of the Kohathites (1 Chron. 9:20) who overlooked the most sacred articles of the Tabernacle in the order of march (Num. 4:4-15).

**"Hath turned My wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for My sake among them"** — The Hebrew has that he was *zealous with My zeal.* This was a "godly jealousy" (2 Cor. 11:2) such as the Lord manifested when he drove from the precincts of the Temple, those who were desecrating that holy place (John 2:17).

**"That I consumed not the children of Israel in My jealousy"** — The Hebrew word *qin'ah* has been rendered both *zeal* and *jealous.* Yahweh's zeal is shown in punishing wrongdoers, or extending mercy and help to those who fear and obey Him (Isa. 63:15). It is particularly mentioned in His role as Lord of history: for He displays it in His support of His people Israel against other hostile nations (2 Kings 19:31; Isa. 9:7; Ezek. 36:6; 38:19). The exclusiveness of Israel's relationship to Yahweh is shown also by His showing *qin'ah* or *jealousy,* at her unfaithfulness, which is often presented as spiritual adultery (Ezek. 16:38; 23:27). One of Yahweh's titles is that of *Qanna,* or *Jealous* (Exod. 34:14). He pronounced through Zechariah: "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy" (Zech. 1:14). His jealousy, or zeal for His people and city is revealed by His manifestation of hatred towards those who attack them; and, on the other hand, in preserving the remnant of His people (Isa. 37:32); arming His warrior (Isa. 59:17); going forth to war with His people (Isa. 42:13; Zech. 8:2); gathering the nations to judgment (Zeph. 3:8); establishing the throne of David (Isa. 9:7); and overlooking the land and people with such care, that none can touch them with impunity (Joel 2:18;

Zech. 1:14-17). The wantonness of Israel at Baal-peor threatened the success of Yahweh's project with the nation, and brought its future into jeopardy. Phinehas, recognising this, had acted as he did, therefore manifesting divine jealousy and zeal. See the following expressions relating to God's jealousy: Deut. 4:24; 32:16,21; 1 Kings 14:22; Psa. 78:58; Zeph. 1:18; 3:8; 1 Cor. 10:22.

## VERSE 12

**"Wherefore say, Behold I give unto him My covenant of peace"** — Reference to this covenant, and the reason why it was given is made by Malachi (Ch. 2:4-5). Its permanent benefit is expressed by Isaiah (Ch. 54:10). Its future application, and everlasting benefits are stressed by Ezekiel (Ch. 34:25; 37:26). The granting of this covenant to Phinehas ensured everlasting fellowship with God for him and "his seed," that is those who manifest his characteristics. It is appropriate that he, as a priest, should be granted such a covenant, for one of the functions of priesthood is that of peace-making. Therefore, of Christ it is recorded in relation to his followers: "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Eph. 2:14).

## VERSE 13

**"And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood"** — In the days of Solomon, Zadok of the house of Eleazar (a descendant of Phinehas) supplanted Abiathar of the house of Ithamar, to serve as High Priest in the Temple of Yahweh. This wonderfully typed the future, particularly when the significance of the names is considered. Zadok (*Righteousness*) of the house of Eleazar (*God, El, the Helper*) supplants Abiathar (*Father of superfluity* — the Law covenant was superfluous once grace appeared), of the house of Ithamar (*Place of palm trees* — the Temple under the Law). The immortal priests of the Age to come are described as Sons of Zadok (Ezek. 44:15-16), so that all who attain unto that honoured position will constitute his "seed". Phinehas, of course, as the High Priest elect typed Christ as the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, who has superceded the Aaronic High Priesthood; and his "seed" constitute the immortal king-priests of the future (Isa. 53:10; Rev. 5:9-10). The "covenant of an

everlasting priesthood" therefore, related not only to Phinehas as an individual, but to the saints generally. References to priesthood in the age to come are found in: Psa. 99:6; Isa. 61:6; Jer. 33:18,22; and for the necessary change of priesthood, see Heb. 7:11,17-18; 1 Pet. 2:5-9.

**"Because he was zealous for his God"** — In Psa. 106:31 it is said that his action was "counted unto him for righteousness". In action, therefore, he was likened to Abraham, whilst in his zeal he foreshadowed Christ (Psa. 69:9; 119:139; John 2:17).

**"And made an atonement for the children of Israel"** — Those Israelites who were prepared to endorse the vigorous action of Phinehas could receive a cover (forgiveness) for the sin committed. See also the action of Moses (Exod. 32:30), Joshua in relation to Achan (Josh. 7:26), and the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:14-17).

#### VERSE 14

**"Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, even that was slain with the Midianitish woman, was Zimri"** — In contrast to Phinehas, whose action of faith assured his future, the name of the offending prince is recorded to perpetuate his disgrace, as a warning to others to avoid such action. Young gives his name as signifying *Praised*, from a root *zamar*, "to touch the strings" of a musical instrument. Perhaps Zimri was praised for his entertaining personality!

**"A son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites"** — Salu signifies *Exalted*, probably relating to his prominent status as a prince of the chief house among the Simeonites. The word Simeon denotes *Hearing*, but Zimri did not hearken to the word of Yahweh. The plague that swept Israel in consequence of the national sin seems to have mainly affected the Simeonites, for that tribe was severely reduced in number. Compare Num. 1:23 with 26:14.

#### VERSE 15

**"And the name of the Midianitish woman that was slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur"** — Cozbi denotes *Lying, False, Deceiver*. This described her character without doubt. She led the foolish, infatuated Zimri astray by her deceptions. Her father's name means *Rock*, but he proved useless as a foundation for his daughter's character.

**"He was head over a people, and of a chief house in Midian"** — His status in Midian equalled that of Zimri in the tribe of Simeon. Thus a Prince and a Princess were foremost in providing an evil example for the people. This did not immune them from receiving deserved punishment. Zur was later slain by the Israelites (Num. 31:8).

#### Israel Ordered To War Against The Midianites — vv. 16-18

*Yahweh, as King of Israel, issues a declaration of war against Midian.*

#### VERSE 16

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — As some, perhaps, adversely criticised the action of Phinehas, the instructions of Yahweh to Moses thoroughly commends it.

#### VERSE 17

**"Vex the Midianites, and smite them"** — The word "vex" signifies to *attack, beset, distress*. It is a declaration of war. The Midianites were specifically mentioned but not the Moabites, which implies that it was Midian that took the lead in seducing the Israelites. The Midianites were vassals to Sihon (Josh. 13:21), and evidently feared that they would suffer in kind as did their overlord. Many of them were destroyed in the ensuing war, in which Balaam also lost his life (Num. 31:8; Josh. 13:21-22).

#### VERSE 18

**"For they vex you with their wiles"** — With cunning craftiness, they set out to allure and deceive the Israelites (see Num. 31:16; 2 Pet. 2:3; Rev. 2:14). The flesh is exceedingly deceitful, and easily taken in.

**"Wherewith they have beguiled you"** — The beguiling influence of the world is a danger against which true Israelites must ever be on their guard. See 2 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 6:11; 2 Pet. 2:14,15,18.

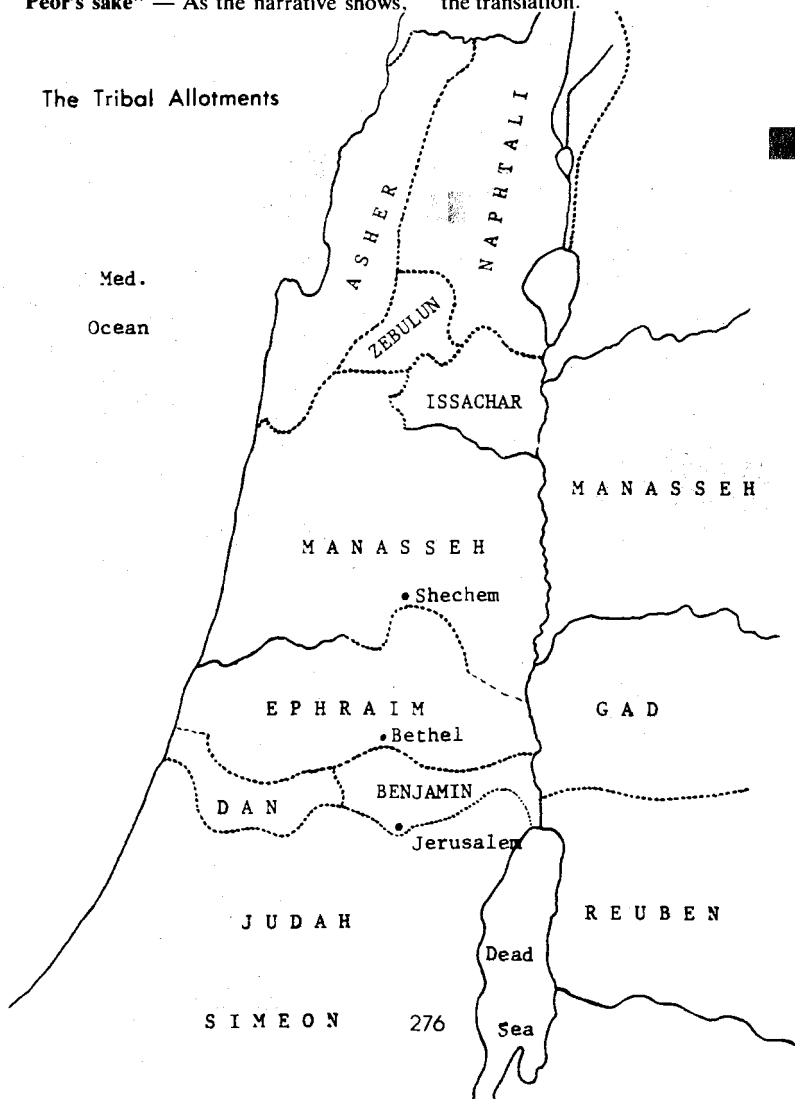
The word "beguiled" in its Hebrew form signifies to *defraud, to act treacherously*. The Midianitish women acted in that way. They beguiled the Israelites, perhaps by pretending they were interested in the religious differences between the two nations, and so led them on to commit whoredom. It is not difficult for flesh to be led astray in that way, and Scripture constantly warns regarding this. See Prov. 2:16-19. A believer needs to be

on his guard when an interest is shown in the truth by any who require some compromise be made for the sake of peace. Little matters have a tendency of developing into great issues, until the Truth itself is abandoned.

**“In the matter of Peor”** — As the word signifies, the rites of the worship at Baal-peor were both disgusting and degrading.

**“And in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor’s sake”** — As the narrative shows,

Zimri and Cozbi were openly defiant of the warning of Yahweh, even though many had already been stricken with death. Cozbi evidently had both personality and status, and used her standing to draw Zimri away from that separateness enjoined by the word. The very word Peor is suggestive of the depravity of the rites of worship indulged in on the high place. The flaunting of sex was basic to them, and this seems to be emphasised by the words of this verse, the coarse wantonness which they describe being mercifully hidden by the translation.



## **4. PREPARATIONS TO ENTER THE LAND**

### **Chapter 26:1-36:13**

*This is the final sub-division of the fourth Section of The Book of Numbers. A second census is made and it is found that a new generation has replaced the old that left Egypt, and that the loss caused by death throughout the wilderness wanderings has been repaired. There is a repetition of certain important laws preparatory to entering the Land. The Law of Inheritance is clarified: a successor for Moses is appointed: and certain miscellaneous commandments and instructions are given in anticipation of the tribes entering upon their inheritance. Among other matters, Moses is instructed that he is to die, and is invited to ascend Nebo where he can view from afar the Land of Promise which he is not then to enter. Though deeply disappointing to Moses, it provides a salutary lesson to the people, teaching that obedience in all things is necessary to obtain the blessing of Yahweh. The book concludes with a warning that the instructions given through Moses are authenticated by Yahweh. Meanwhile the people on the plains of Moab by Jericho await the order to advance into the land of promise.*

## **CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX**

### **THE SECOND CENSUS**

*At this stage, a further census of the people is ordered. In view of the severity of the plague following the folly at Baal-peor, this is necessary, and it reveals some interesting facts. It is, in fact, the third census on record to this point of time. The first (Exod. 30:12) was basically for the purpose of organising the religious life of the people. The second (Num. 1,2) was principally for military purposes, to ascertain the number who were "able to go forth to war" (Num. 1:28).*

*This third census, whilst in a measure military, is also political. Its purpose to prepare the tribes for occupation of their respective inheritances in Canaan. This chapter records in detail the results of the census. It lists, tribe by tribe, the numbers which each contained "from twenty years and upward". The sum total is slightly less than were obtained in the first census. In large measure the wastage is made up, so that a new generation has replaced the old.*

**Moses Commanded To Take A New Census — vv. 1-4**

*In preparation to enter the land, Moses is instructed to take a census of the people. This means that each adult must pay the necessary ransom money (Exod. 30:12). It is found that whereas the people multiplied rapidly in Egypt, they have decreased in the wilderness wandering, so that fewer enter the Land than passed through the Red Sea. (See Job 12:9, 10, 14, 23).*

**VERSE 1**

**"And it came to pass after the plague"** — This indicates one need for a new census, and also explains partly the reason for the decrease that it reveals (Deut. 4:3). At the Judgment Seat of Christ, there will be a decrease of numbers from those who have passed through the waters of baptism. Israel was subjected to two baptisms: through the Red Sea (salt water), and through the Jordan (fresh water), answering to the baptism of water and of the spirit through which a believer must pass in order first to see and then enter the Kingdom (see John 3:3,5).

**"That Yahweh spake unto Moses and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying"** — This census was divinely commanded, unlike that taken by David which was motivated by fleshly fear.

**VERSE 2**

**"Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their fathers' house, all that are able to go to war in Israel"** — See note, Num. 1:1.

**VERSE 3**

**"And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them, in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying"** — It was at that site also that the speech of Moses was given, known as Deuteronomy. See Deut. 4:45-49; 34:1,6-8.

**VERSE 4**

**"Take the sum of the people, from twenty years old and upward; as Yahweh commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt"** — This instruction was passed on to those officers appointed to do this. The terms of this census was the same as that of the original one.

**The Census of Reuben — vv. 5-7**

*Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, and though deposed from the privileges of such position, is numbered first. His name signifies "See a son!"*

**VERSE 5**

**"Reuben the eldest son of Israel"** — See Gen. 46:8-9.

**"Hanoch, of whom cometh the family of the Hanochites"** — Hanoch signifies *Dedicated*. The families of all the tribes, excluding Levi, number 57. The ancestral heads, after whom these families are named, correspond nearly with the grandchildren and great grandchildren of Jacob, enumerated in Gen. 46:8. Both lists consist mainly of grandchildren of Asher. The statement in Genesis, therefore, should be regarded as a list, not of those who went down, in their own persons with Jacob into Egypt, but of those whose names were transmitted to their posterity at the date of the Exodus as the heads of Israelitish houses, and who may thus be reckoned the early ancestors of the people.

**"Of Pallu, the family of the Palluites"** — Pallu signifies *Wonderful*.

**VERSE 6**

**"Of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites"** — Hezron signifies *Enclosure*.

**"Of Carmi, the family of the Carmites"** — Carmi signifies *Vinedresser*.

## VERSE 7

"These are the families of the Reubenites; and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty" — In the previous census, the tribe of Reuben totalled 46,500 a decrease of 2,770.

## Supplement To The Census Of Reuben — vv. 8-11

*Special reference is given to those of the tribe of Reuben connected with the great revolt under Korah.*

## VERSE 8

"And the sons of Pallu; Eliab" — Eliab signifies *My God is Father*. Additional attention is given to the descendants of Eliab, because the tragedy of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram contributed to the decline in the numerical size of the tribe.

## VERSE 9

"And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram" — Nemuel signifies *Day of God*. Dathan and Abiram signify *Their Law and Lofty Father* respectively.

"This is that Dathan and Abiram, which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against Yahweh" — Details of this are found in Num. 16. Apparently Korah did not die with Dathan and Abiram but by fire with the 250 Levites. See Num. 16:32.

## VERSE 10

"And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign" — See Num. 16:38, and for the "sign", cp. 1 Cor. 10:6; 2 Pet. 2:6. Some slight change is required in the text in this place, for, in fact, Korah was not included in those swallowed up by earthquake. The Samaritan text reads: "And the earth swallowed them up; what time that company died; and the fire devoured Korah with the 250 men who became a sign." Rotherham renders: "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up; with Korah also when the assembly died, when the fire consumed 250 men. . ." See also Ps. 84:10; 1 Cor. 9:20.

## VERSE 11

"Notwithstanding the children of

**Korah died not**" — A careful discrimination was made between Korah and his children. Evidently they refused to condone his action in rebelling against Moses, and were not involved in the tragedy. Their escape is witness to the righteousness of divine judgment. Many of the descendants of Korah rose to prominence in Israel, and performed valiant service on behalf of Yahweh, Samuel being a case in point. This illustrates the principle set forth in Ezek. 18:20: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. . . ."

Moreover, the children of Korah were not left fatherless, but were placed under the care of Phinehas (1 Chron. 9:20), endorsing the belief of Abraham that "the Judge of all the world will do right" (Gen. 18:23-25). Some of Korah's descendants rose to eminence in the Temple services and had much to do with its musical arrangements. So prominent were they, that many Psalms were dedicated to them. See Ps. 42, 44, 45 etc.

## The Census Of Simeon — vv. 12-14

*Simeon was next in line to Reuben the firstborn. His name signifies "Hearing".*

## VERSE 12

"The sons of Simeon after their families" — Ohad is excluded. See Gen. 46:10. Evidently he did not found a family.

"Of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites" — Nemuel is called "Jemuel" in Gen. 46:10; a name signifying *Day of God*.

"Of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites" — Jamin signifies *The right hand*.

"Of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites." — His name signifies *He will establish*. In 1 Chron. 4:24 he is named Jarib.

## VERSE 13

"Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites" — Zerah signifies *A rising, or A bursting forth*. In Gen. 46:10 he is named Zahar.

"Of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites" — Shaul signifies *Asked for*.

## VERSE 14

"These are the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred" — This represents a very steep decline, for the previous census gave a total of 59,300. The tribe had been foremost in the recent sin at Baal-peor when, apparently, the plague had swept it

with disastrous effect.

**The Census of Gad — vv. 15-18**

*The Census of Gad follows, the tribes being counted in the order of their placing around the Tabernacle. Gad signifies "company".*

**VERSE 15**

"The children of Gad after their families" — Gad was a son of Zilpah. Gen. 30:11.

"Of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites" — Zephon signifies *A watchman, or Looking out.*

"Of Haggi, the family of the Haggites" — His name signifies *Festive, a Gathering.*

"Of Shuni, the family of the Shunites" — Shuni denotes *Quiet.*

**VERSE 16**

"Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites" — His name is given as Ezbon in Gen. 46:18. His name means *Hearing.*

"Of Eri, the family of the Erites" — Eri denotes *Watching.*

**VERSE 17**

"Of Arod, the family of the Arodites" — Gesenius gives his name to mean *A wild ass.* In Gen. 46:16 it is given as Arodi.

"Of Areli, the family of the Arelites" — Gesenius supplies the meaning of *Son of a hero.*

**VERSE 18**

"These are the families of the children of Gad according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred" — As the first census (Num. 1) gave a total of 45,650, the tribe had experienced a loss of 5,150.

**The Census Of Judah — vv. 19-22**

*The Census of Judah commenced the numbering of the tribes stationed on the east of the Tabernacle. His name means "Praise".*

**VERSE 19**

"The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan" — See notes on Gen. 38:3-10; 46:12.

"And the sons of Judah after their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelasnites" — Shelah signifies *Request or Prayer.*

"Of Pharez, the family of the Pharezites" — Pharez signifies *A breach.*

"Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites" — Zerah signifies *Sunrise.*

**VERSE 21**

"And the sons of Pharez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites" — Hezron denotes *Enclosure.*

"Of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites" — Hamul denotes *Pities or Spared.*

**VERSE 22**

"These are the families of Judah according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred." — This compares with 74,600 of the first census; a gain of 1,900.

**The Census of Issachar — vv. 23-27**

*The census of Issachar follows. His name signifies "Reward".*

**VERSE 23**

"Of the sons of Issachar after their families" — Issachar was a son of Leah. His tribe was stationed with Judah on the east.

"Of Tola, the family of the Tolaites" — Tola signifies *Worm or Scarlet.* It is the name of the insect from whence is derived the crimson dye used in the Tabernacle.

"Of Pua, the family of the Punites" — Pua is the Hebrew word for *Mouth.*

**VERSE 24**

"Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites" — In Gen. 46:13 this name is given as Job. It signifies *Inhabited.*

"Of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites" — Shimron signifies *Watch or Guard.*

**VERSE 25**

"These are the families of Issachar according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred." — This compares with 54,400 of the first census, an increase of 9,900.

**The Census of Zebulun — vv. 26-27**

*Zebulun was another son of Leah.*

**VERSE 26**

"Of the sons of Zebulun after their families" — The name Zebulun signifies



*Dwelling.*

**"Of Sered, the family of the Sardites"** — Sered signifies *Fear, Humbling.*

**"Of Elon, the family of the Elonites."** — Elon signifies *Might, Strength.*

**"Of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites"**. — Jahleel signifies *Waiting for God.*

#### VERSE 27

**"These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred"** — This represents an increase of 3,100. All the tribes on the east revealed an increase in numbers.

#### The Census of Manasseh — vv. 29-34

*The census of the two sons of Joseph are now given. Joseph was represented by two tribes because he was the firstborn.*

#### VERSE 28

**"The sons of Joseph after their families were Manasseh and Ephraim"** — Manasseh signifies *Forgetting* and Ephraim denotes *Double fruit*. The names represented the experiences of Joseph in Egypt before being reconciled with his brethren.

#### VERSE 29

**"Of the sons of Manasseh"** — Manasseh was stationed on the west of the Tabernacle, under the direction of Ephraim. Manasseh was the literal firstborn of Joseph, but the privilege was transferred to Ephraim (Gen. 48:15-20). The tribe of Ephraim was made head over those stationed on the western side of the Tabernacle. Perhaps Manasseh is here placed before Ephraim because numerically it then was larger than that of Ephraim. But in the allocation of territory, Manasseh was divided into two parts: one east and the other west of the Jordan.

The descendants of Manasseh here listed are not recorded in Genesis 46, though they are mentioned, together with other details, in Josh. 17:1-2 in allocating the tribal inheritance. The record is also preserved in 1 Chron. 7:14-17.

**"Of Machir, the family of the Machirites"** — Machir signifies *Salesman*. He was the son of a concubine (1 Chron. 7:14), born during the lifetime of Joseph (Gen. 50:23), and is described as a "man of war" (Josh. 17:1).

**"And Machir begat Gilead; of Gilead come the family of the Gileadites"** —

Gilead signifies *A heap of witness*. It was so named because of the agreement reached between Jacob and Laban (Gen. 31:47-48). From 1 Chron. 7:14, it appears that Gilead's mother was a stranger from Aram, the country of Laban. Perhaps this was the reason he was called Gilead, for it was the border established by the agreement between Jacob and Laban mentioned above. This probably explains why the subsequent allotment of territory in that direction was granted to the Machirites (Num. 32:40).

#### VERSE 30

**"These are the sons of Gilead"** — See reference to Gilead's family in Jud. 11:2.

**"Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites"** — Jeezer's name signifies *Helpless*, or *Where is help?* However, elsewhere he is called Abiezer, or *Father of help* (Josh. 17:2). Perhaps the change of name indicates a change of circumstances or attitudes.

**"Of Helek the family of the Helekites"** — Helek signifies *Portion* or *Allotment*. It is from a root denoting *to be smooth*, implying the stone used in the lot.

#### VERSE 31

**"And of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites"** — Asriel means *I will be prince of God*.

**"And of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites"** — Shechem denotes *The neck*, or literally, *Between the shoulders*, suggesting a *Burden-bearer*.

#### VERSE 32

**"And of Shemida, the family of the Shemidites"** — Shemida signifies *Perceiving*, or *Fame of knowledge*.

**"And of Hopher, the family of the Hopherites"** — His name signifies *Pit, Shame*, from a root meaning, *To pry into, to be ashamed*.

#### VERSE 33

**"And Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters"** — His name means *Shadow of fear, First rupture*. The meaning of his name is significant in view of his fate, reference to which is found in Num. 27:1-3.

**"Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah"** — In order these names signify: *Sickness, Wandering* or *Wavering* (a different word to the Noah of Gen. 6). *The feast has languished, Queen, and Delight*

*someness*. These names in the order given seem to speak of decline to elevation. That, certainly, appears to have been the experiences of these Israelitish women.

#### VERSE 34

**"These are the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred"** — The total given displays a remarkable increase of 20,500 over the first census, and possibly explains why Manasseh's name is placed before that of his brother. This large number provided scope for the tribe to be conveniently divided into two, half among the eastern tribes and half among the western tribes.

#### The Census Of Ephraim — vv. 35-37

*Ephraim's name signifies "Double Fruit". The tribe ultimately developed into the most prominent of the northern tribes. Sometimes, in Scripture, the northern kingdom is designated by the name of this tribe (Jer. 31:20).*

#### VERSE 35

**"These are the sons of Ephraim after their families"** — In 1 Chron. 7:21-23, two other sons are mentioned who were killed during their father's lifetime, and a third, Beriah, who was the ancestor of Joshua. There is no evidence that he founded a separate family in the midst of the tribe, and so is omitted in the present enumeration.

**"Of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites"** — Gesenius gives the meaning of this name as *The crash of breakage*; but Jackson's *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names* gives it as *Freshly appointed, or Resembling rejuvenation*.

**"Of Becher, the family of the Bachrites"** — In 1 Chron. 7:20, his name is given as "Bered" signifying *Hail*, whereas Becher signifies a *Young camel* or *Dromedary*. See note v. 38.

**"Of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites"** — Tahan signifies *Station* or *Camp*.

#### VERSE 36

**"And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites"** — Eran signifies *Watchful*.

#### VERSE 37

**"These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two**

**thousand and five hundred"** — In contrast to his brother tribe of Manasseh, the tribe of Ephraim had experienced a loss of 8,000 men.

**"These are the sons of Joseph after their families"** — In numerical strength, the descendants of Joseph far outnumbered any of the descendants of the other members of Jacob's family, thus inheriting the blessing of the appointed firstborn.

#### The Census of Benjamin — vv. 38-43

*The tribes of the descendants of Joseph and Benjamin were associated together on the western side of the tabernacle. Benjamin's name signifies "Son of the right hand".*

#### VERSE 38

**"The sons of Benjamin after their families"** — These formed seven families. Five are named after sons, two after grandsons. The list in Gen. 46:21 contains ten names, but three are omitted, and others are changed in form. Evidently those omitted died out as families in the wilderness. Whilst Becher is given as the second son in Gen. 46:21; 1 Chron. 7:6, he is not mentioned here nor in 1 Chron. 8. However, a Becher is mentioned among the Ephraimites (see v. 35). Perhaps through marriage the family was *at that time*, for purposes of inheritance and possession, reckoned with Ephraim though blood descendants of Benjamin. The "family of the Bachrites" (v. 35) would then comprise descendants of Ephraim and Benjamin.

A further problem occurs in 1 Sam. 7:6, for it omits Ashbel, but includes Jediael (*Knowing God*). Perhaps Jediael was a descendant of Ashbel who distinguished himself in some remarkable way, so that the family was named after him. Ashbel is included as a son in 1 Chron. 8:1; and could have come into prominence in the days of David (1 Sam. 7:2).

Again, 1 Chron. 8:1-2 gives five sons to Benjamin as above. But it lists Aharah instead of Ahiram; and Nohah and Rapha instead of Shupham and Hupham. Perhaps they were variations of the names. Shuphan (*serpent-like*) becomes Nohah (*quietness*), Hupham (*Protection*) becomes Rapha (*Giant* or *Invigorating*).

To summarise and synchronise the various genealogies: the list in Genesis outlines those who went into Egypt; that in Numbers, families that remained after

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

forty years of wandering; that in 1 Chronicles 7, those prominent in David's day, and that in 1 Chronicles 8, the genealogy leading to Saul. Bearing this in mind, all the seeming discrepancies are reconciled.

**"Of Bela, the family of the Belaites"** — Bela signifies *Serpent-like*.

**"Of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites"** — The name signifies *A man of God* or *Opinion of God*.

**"Of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites"** — Ahiram signifies *Brother of heights*. In Gen. 46:21, his name is given as Ehi, whilst in 1 Chron. 8:1 it appears as Aharah.

### VERSE 39

**"Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites"** — His name signifies *Serpent-like*.

**"Of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites"** — His name means *Protection* or *Their covering*. He is named Huppim in Gen. 46:21.

### VERSE 40

**"And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard the family of the Ardites"** — Ard signifies *Fugitive*.

**"And of Naaman, the family of the Naamites"** — Naaman denotes *Pleasantness*.

### VERSE 41

**"These are the sons of Benjamin after their families; and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred"** — As the first census revealed a total of 35,400 there had been an increase in the tribe of 10,200.

### The Census Of Dan — vv. 42-43

*Dan was the leading tribe stationed on the north of the Tabernacle. His name signifies "Judgment".*

### VERSE 42

**"These are the sons of Dan after their families"** — See also Gen. 46:23 with notes.

**"Of Shuham, the family of the Shumamites"** — Shuham signifies *A pit-digger*.

**"These are the families of Dan after their families"** — In Gen. 46:23, only one family is given, but his name is listed as Hushim, signifying *Those who make haste*. Apparently this one family had a numerous progeny. The plural form of the

## CHRISTADELPHIAN EXPOSITOR

name, however, suggests it was made up of numerous branches which were not distinguished from the main family.

### VERSE 43

**"All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, were threescore and four thousand and four hundred"** — In the first census, Dan numbered 62,700 so there was an increase of 1,700.

### The Census of Asher — vv. 44-47

*Asher shared the northern position of the Tabernacle with Dan. The name "Asher" means "Blessed" or "Happy".*

### VERSE 44

**"Of the children of Asher after their families"** — See Gen. 46:17; 1 Chron. 7:30-31. One name is missing, Ishua. Evidently his family had become extinct.

**"Of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites"** — Jimna signifies *Prosperity*.

**"Of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites"** — Jesui signifies *Equal* or *Level*.

**"Of Beriah, the family of the Berites"** — Beriah signifies *In evil*.

### VERSE 45

**"Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites"** — Heber means *Company* or *Joined*.

**"Of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites"** — The name signifies *My King is God*.

### VERSE 46

**"And the name of the daughter of Asher was Sarah"** — The word rendered Sarah in this place signifies *The prince breathed*, according to the *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*. The Hebrew word is different to that of Sarah, Abraham's wife, and is rendered as Serah in Gen. 46:17; 1 Chron. 7:30. Serah means *Abundance*. She was a daughter of Asher, and a grand-daughter of Jacob by his wife, Leah's handmaid, Zilpah. As it is quite unusual for daughters to be recorded in the genealogies unless there is some specific reason for doing so (as in the case of the daughters of Zelophehad — Num. 27:1), Serah must have rendered some outstanding service to have her name recorded as it is. What that service was, we do not know, and it is vain to speculate in the absence of any Scriptural guidance.

Her status would not have been high as a daughter of Leah's handmaid, but the significance of her name, and her place in the records suggest her elevation.

**VERSE 47**

"These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those that were numbered of them; who were fifty and three thousand and four hundred" — In the first census, Asher numbered 41,500 so that the second census records a substantial increase of 11,900.

**The Census of Naphtali — vv. 48-50**

*Naphtali signifies "Wrestling". This tribe was also stationed on the north side of the Tabernacle.*

**VERSE 48**

"Of the sons of Naphtali after their families" — The record here can be compared with those of Gen. 46:24; 1 Chron. 7:13.

"Of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites" — His name signifies *God divides or Halves*.

"Of Guni, the family of the Gunities" — His name signifies *Coloured*.

**VERSE 49**

"Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites" — Jezer signifies *Frame or Formation*.

"Of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites" — Shillem signifies *Recompense*.

**VERSE 50**

"These are the families of Naphtali according to their families: and they that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and four hundred" — As the first census revealed a total of 53,400 this represented a loss of 8,000.

**General Summary — v. 51**

*The general total shows a slight decrease over the number that left Egypt.*

**VERSE 51**

"These were the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty" — The first census revealed a total of 603,550, so that overall there was a decrease of 1820.

**COMPARISON OF THE CENSUS**

Tribe	First Census Num. 1	Second Census Num. 26	Increase	Decrease
Reuben	46,500	43,730		2,770
Simeon	59,300	22,200		37,100
Gad	45,650	40,500		5,150
Judah	74,600	76,500	1,900	
Issachar	54,400	64,300	9,900	
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	3,100	
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	20,500	
Ephraim	40,500	32,500		8,000
Benjamin	35,400	45,600	10,200	
Dan	62,700	64,400	1,700	
Asher	41,500	53,400	11,900	
Naphtali	53,400	45,400		8,000
	<b>603,550</b>	<b>601,730</b>	<b>59,280</b>	<b>61,020</b>
Overall decrease .....				1820
Levites from a month old	22,273	23,000	727	

The greatest decrease was in the tribe of Simeon, of which the rebel Zimri was a prominent member (Num. 25:14).

There are one or two interesting features that emerge from this second census. 1. Among those numbered, there was not a man of the former census, save Joshua and Caleb (cp. vv. 64-65); though, of course, the Levites were not included in the general numbering. 2. Though there was an *increase* in seven tribes of not less than 74,800 men, yet so great was the *decrease* in the other five tribes, that the balance in reverse is 1,820, as appears above. 3. Notwithstanding the amazing increase in some tribes and decrease in others the same sort of proportion is preserved in the east, west, north and south divisions as before. This resulted in Judah which led the way being the largest number, and Dan which was foremost in the rearguard being next in size. So attack and defence were adequately provided for, showing the overshadowing care of Yahweh, even in the development of the tribes.

The families listed number 57. If the twelve patriarchs together with Jacob their father is added to this, the total is 70, the number of those in Jacob's house that went down to Egypt (Gen. 46:27). This also is appropriate. It reveals, together with the other features mentioned above, that there is proportion, harmony, and order in all the works and outworking of God, both in the natural as in the spiritual world.

#### Land Inheritances To Be Granted by Lot — vv. 52-56

*Following the census (and revealing part of the reasons for taking it), Yahweh gives Moses plans for the allotment of the land into which the people will soon enter. Two provisions laid down are: First, the land is to be allocated according to the number of names, or the size of the tribes; Second, the various locations of the tribal cantonments are to be decided by lot.*

#### VERSE 52

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — This formula introduces a new sub-division, and reveals that the instructions given are inspired.

#### VERSE 53

**"Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names"** — The extent of territory assigned to each tribe, and to be called by its name (v. 55), was to be regulated according to its numbers, at the discretion of Moses. Only the general location was determined by Lot.

#### VERSE 54

**"To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance; to every one shall his inheritance be given according to those that were numbered of him"** — Whereas the Lot would determine the location of the tribe, the extent of territory to be granted was to be decided by its size. However, within the borders established by Moses, each family inheritance was also established by the Lot. See Josh. 17:4-5.

#### VERSE 55

**"Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot"** — The lot determined the general location of the Tribe, whether north, south, east or west, and its decision was final. The use of the lot was supervised by the High Priest and Moses acting in conjunction with the Urim and Thummim (see Num. 27:21, and note on Exod. 28:15-30). After the death of Moses, the apportioning of individual family inheritances within the boundaries already established was likewise determined by lot, supervised by the High Priest and Joshua (Num. 34:17). In describing the process,

the expression is used, "the lot came forth", so that obviously some receptacle was used into which the Lot was placed and withdrawn. This could have been the breastplate of judgment, with which was associated the Urim and Thummim. It was folded in such a manner as would provide a "bag" (see Exod. 28:15-17,30 and see notes). Solomon declared: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of Yahweh" (Prov. 16:33, see also 18:18). The word "lap" can denote an enclosure or bosom, and so could relate to the Breastplate of Judgment (which, incidentally, was not a "plate" but was made out of material folded in such a way as to form a sort of a bag).

The word *goral*, translated "lot," is supposed by some to signify the stone or pebble formerly used for the purpose. The Greek word *kleros* comes from a root signifying "to break", because the lot, being an appeal to God, broke off all contention relative to the matter under consideration. Being under divine supervision, the lot was not a decision left to chance or caprice, but one as the result of divine apportionment or grant. It viewed Yahweh as the Disposer of all things. Hence such expressions as: "This is the lot of them that rob us" (Isa. 17:14), or, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter" (Acts 8:21) refer to appointments of God. The word "inheritance" as relating to God's provision for the saints has a similar meaning: "partakers of the inheritance (*lot*) of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12); "the earnest of our inheritance (*our allotted portion*)"; "the riches of the glory of His inheritance (*allotted portion*)" (Eph. 1:14,18). Cp. Dan. 12:13: "Thou shalt stand in thy *lot* at the end of the days".

As the Promised Land was divided by lot to believing Israelites as determined by Yahweh, none of the people could claim any inherent right to it; and the same principle relates to rewards of the future. The lot, therefore, openly revealed the will of Yahweh in regard to a matter hidden or under controversy. This being also the function of the breastplate (see Num. 27:21; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65), suggests that they were used in conjunction.

These principles brought home a powerful exhortation to those spiritually minded. Since the land belonged to Yahweh, His regulations should control the occupancy of it. Israel was called upon to keep His commandments, in order to live and remain in the land (Deut. 30:15-

20; Josh. 22:1-5). That principle should also govern saints in Christ in relation to their hope of a future inheritance, or lot.

**"According to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit"** — The individual family inheritance would be within the compass of the borders of the tribe from whence it was developed. It, therefore, was typical of an eternal inheritance in the Kingdom of God. The Gospel was designed that believers "may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance (*lot*) among them that are sanctified" (Acts 26:18).

#### VERSE 56

**"According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few"** — The word "possession" according to Young should be rendered *inheritance*. The inheritance allocated to the tribes, or to individuals, did not become their possession irrespective as to their future conduct, but one which they could enjoy only if they carried out the terms and conditions set down in the Law. In relation to this verse, one writer has stated: "This division by lot seems to have respect only to the quarter, or situation, which each tribe was to possess, and not to the quantity or extent of the land which was to be proportioned to the numbers of each tribe according to the register now formed. Thus, for instance, it was determined by lot which of the twelve tribes was to inherit in the south, and which in the north, etc. Then, in that quarter where the lot fell, a larger or smaller portion of land was assigned them, according to the goodness of the soil, and in proportion as the tribe was more or less numerous. . . . This equal division of property was, under God, the great *bulwark* and strength of the Hebrew Commonwealth. According to calculations, Canaan contained 14,976,000 acres which divided among 600,000 men will allow of about 21½ acres each, leaving 1,976,000 acres for the princes of tribes, Levitical cities etc. Accordingly there was an ample provision to enable each person with all the advantages of that fertile soil and fine climate to live in comfortable circumstances; and even more land when the 2½ tribes east of Canaan are taken into account."

#### The Levites Are Numbered — vv. 57-62

*The separateness of the Levites is retained in this second census, and also in*

their land inheritance. They are not given any special grant of territory, but are scattered among the tribes to provide an example and witness to all. Though Levitical cities are appointed them for this purpose, they are given "no portion or inheritance with their brothers; Yahweh is their Inheritance" (Deut. 10:9; 18:1). They share in the offerings and gifts made by the people to Yahweh.

## VERSE 57

"And these are they that were numbered of the Levites after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites" — Levi signifies *to join*; Gershon denotes *Exclusion*, or *A stranger there*.

"Of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites" — Kohath signifies *Assembly*.

"Of Merari, the family of the Merarites" — Merari signifies *Bitter*, *Unhappy*.

## VERSE 58

"These are the families of the Levites" — The census now lists the individual families that developed out of the three main divisions of the tribe of Levi.

"The family of the Libnites" — Libni signifies *My whiteness*. The Libnites were descendants of Gershon (see note Exod. 6:17; Num. 3:21).

"The family of the Hebronites" — Hebron signifies *Communion*. The Hebronites were descendants of Kohath. See Exod. 6:18; Num. 3:19.

"The family of the Mahlites" — These were Merarites. The name signifies *My sickness*. See notes Exod. 6:19; Num. 3:20.

"The family of the Mushites" — These were Merarites. The name signifies *My yielding* or *departure*. See notes Exod. 6:19; Num. 3:20.

"The family of the Korathites" — See note Num. 3:19; Num. 3:20.

"And Kohath begat Amram" — See Exod. 6:18-20.

## VERSE 59

"And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt" — See notes Exod. 2:1-2; 6:20.

"And she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister" — Aaron signifies *A shining light*; Moses, *Drawn out*, and Miriam either *Bitterness* or *Drops*

of Water. For the significance of Miriam's name see notes on Exod. 15:20.

## VERSE 60

"And unto Aaron was born Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar" — See notes Num. 3:2.

## VERSE 61

"And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before Yahweh" — See notes Lev. 10:1.

## VERSE 62

"And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward" — This figure shows an increase of 727 over the previous census as recorded in Num. 3:39. See our note reconciling the seeming mistake in the figure there given. Two families are missing in this census: the Shimites (Num. 3:21), and Uzzielites (Num. 3:27). Evidently their numbers were so depleted as to cause them to be merged into other families.

"For they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel" — See Num. 1:49; 18:23.

## An Entirely New Generation — vv. 63-65

*The wastage during the wilderness wanderings is almost entirely repaired, although that means that only half of the number that could have entered the Land, did so. It illustrates the parable of the virgins: half of whom were wise and half were foolish. This chapter ends with a general summary of the results of this second census.*

## VERSE 63

"These are they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho" — The numbering was actually done by the heads of the people at the command of Moses and Eleazar (see v. 3); but what a person of authority commands to be done by those under him is reckoned as being done by him.

## VERSE 64

"But among these there was found not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of

**Sinai**” — This is a sad commentary on the nation as recorded in the *Book of Numbers*. The first census was completed full of hope, and the opportunity was given all so numbered to enter the Land. But lack of faith robbed them of their inheritance, for “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). What a solemn warning to those who read the account with discernment (1 Cor. 10:11). The statement of the verse before us relates to the tribes, but excludes Levi which was separated from the rest (v. 62). There were some of the older generation of Levi, such as Eleazer, who did enter (Num. 34:17; Josh. 14:1). Of the other tribes, however, the last of the old generation perished at Zered (Deut. 2:14-15).

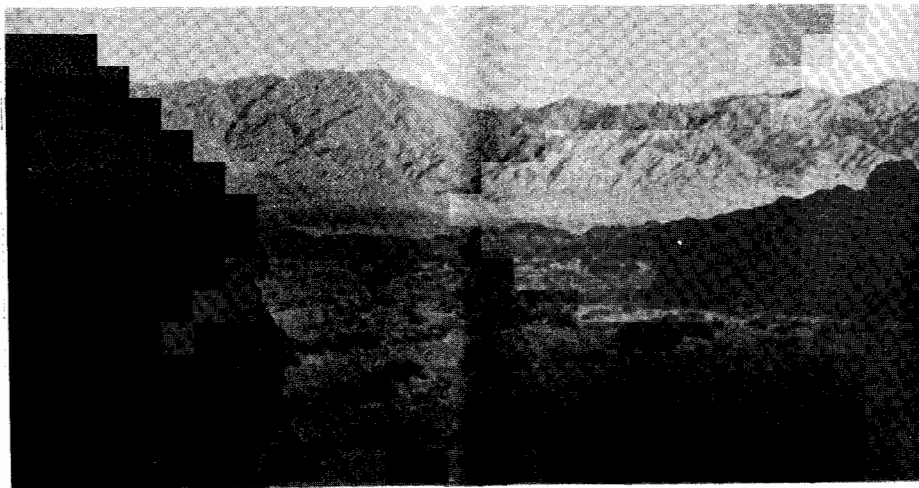
#### VERSE 65

**“For Yahweh hath said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness”** — See Num. 14:28-29.

**“And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun”** — There is a solemn warning in this statement. It shows that Yahweh will prove true to His word:

both in blessing and in punishing. We must not presume on His mercy whilst turning from His word; at the same time, that mercy is available to us, if we seek Him in truth. The congregation gathered at the foot of the mountains of Moab now comprised a nation of men under sixty years of age. It was ready to enter its inheritance.

To summarise: all who were numbered at Sinai in the first census, were numbered for victory and for an inheritance, but rebellion, sin and death made this second numbering necessary. In like manner, “God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name” (Acts 15:14). They are called “by name” (John 10:3; 2 Tim. 2:19) as were Israel out of Egypt, and their names will not be blotted out of the book of life if they remain steadfast to the end (Rev. 3:5; Phil. 4:3). In the aggregate they constitute “a great company which no man can number” (Rev. 7:9), but the number of the redeemed will be revealed at the second census at the Judgment Seat. As such, they will comprise the antitypical Commonwealth of Israel (Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:11-13; Rev. 7:1-9).



The Abarim range of mountains presents a formidable barrier overshadowing the Arabah to the east of the Land of Promise. From the summit of one of its peaks, Moses saw the land “afar off”. See Num. 27:12.



## CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

### THE FINAL DUTIES OF MOSES

*From chapter 27 onwards, the last duties of Moses, preparatory to the people entering the Land are recorded. These include establishing the line of inheritances (Ch. 27:1-11), appointment of Joshua as a leader (vv. 12-23), instructions regarding offerings (Chs. 28,29), warning to scrupulously pay all vows (Ch. 30), a war with Midian (Ch. 31), granting of territory to the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of Jordan, selection of Levitical cities, and similar requirements (chps. 32-36).*

#### **The Law of Inheritances Clarified — vv. 1-11**

*After the census, and the explanation of the manner in which the Land is to be divided among the men of each tribe, a legal problem is posed by the daughters of a man who died without sons. Since the Law provides no specific direction regarding daughters, these women desire the matter clarified, and approach Moses for that purpose. The result is a clarification of the law of inheritances: an important legislation for all Israelites.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**“Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph”** — The genealogy of Zelophehad (sig. *First breach*) is set out in detail to establish his standing in Israel. It forms part of the case prepared by his daughters for presentation to Moses.

**“And these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah”** — For the significance of their names see Num. 26:33.

#### **VERSE 2**

**“And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying”** — For a matter of this importance, designed to establish a precedent for the future, a general assembly of the leaders of the nation, as representing

the people as a whole are gathered to the east of the Tabernacle, where are located the tents of Moses and the priests. The conference took place in the void place on that side.

#### **VERSE 3**

**“Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against Yahweh in the company of Korah”** — Zelophehad was not guilty of any particular act of rebellion that would justify divine anger to the extent of denying him sons, or involving them in a punishment worthy of completely disinheriting his family, as in the case of Achan.

**“But died in his own sins, and had no sons”** — Notice that the daughters of Zelophehad do not accuse Yahweh of injustice, but merely state the facts. Their father “died in his sins”. See the expression in John 8:21-24, which endorsed the justice of the original decree (Rom. 5:12). There is forgiveness available for such sins. It was unfortunate, and not part of the punishment, that Zelophehad left no sons.

#### **VERSE 4**

**“Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he had no son?”** — In view of the fact that Yahweh is just (Gen. 18:25), and the man was not guilty of outstanding sin, why should his name be removed through death? Their mention of Korah in this context was appropriate. Korah had instigated a revolt, but his family had not been

blotted out, his name did not cease. This proves that Yahweh is both merciful and just, and it was on that basis that women pleaded their cause. On the other hand, a sin of great magnitude might result in the termination of the sinner's posterity (Psa. 109:13; Prov. 13:9).

**"Give us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father"** — Evidently the brethren of Zelophehad had received an inheritance which implies that he was among the younger generation which was about to enter the land. He evidently died in the plague of serpents (Num. 21), or some other sin. His daughters were unmarried but of age to inherit (Num. 36:11; Josh. 17:3), which argues their comparatively young age. They presented their case well, basing it upon the justice of Yahweh, and setting forward that which Yahweh recognised as "right" (v. 7). The problem, as far as Moses was concerned, was to get around the fact that genealogy is established by male descent, and inheritance was by family name.

#### VERSE 5

**"And Moses brought their cause before Yahweh"** — This was the correct thing to do, because the right of inheritance as established by the Lot was a disposal from Yahweh. Moses had access to the Most Holy for such purposes (Exod. 25:22). This being a case without precedence, he bypassed Eleazar, and as Lawgiver, made direct approach to Yahweh. See similar occasions; Lev. 24:11-12; Num. 9:8; 15:34, and compare Prov. 3:5-6.

#### VERSE 6

**"And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying"** — The divine concern for these orphaned young women illustrates a characteristic of Yahweh established by the Law, namely, that special consideration be given to the fatherless and widows (See Exod. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17-21; 26:12-13; 27:19).

#### VERSE 7

**"The daughters of Zelophehad speak right"** — They spoke "right" because they spoke in faith, and with the knowledge of the justness of Yahweh.

**"Thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them"** — See Num. 36:2; Josh. 17:3-4.

#### VERSE 8

**"And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter"** — This regulation was established not in order that she might have the wherewithal to maintain herself after the death of her father, but for the purpose of maintaining his line of descent in the inheritance granted him of Yahweh. See the cases of Sheshan and Jarha (1 Chron. 2:34-35), and the Levitical descendants of Barzillai (Ezra 2:61).

#### VERSE 9

**"And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren"** — This would retain the inheritance in the family. As it was a divine inheritance, it was important to do so.

#### VERSE 10

**"And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren"** — It is important to note that the person possessing the divine inheritance could not will it to whomsoever he pleased. Yahweh decided its destiny!

#### VERSE 11

**"And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel as a statute of judgment, as Yahweh commanded Moses"** — A statute of judgment established an irrevocable, legal right. This important legislation was governed by spiritual principles. The inheritance granted Israelites was a divine appointment, and in the case of the new generation, a reward of faith. As such it was not subject to disposal by will. The principle that Paul expressed when he instructed that in Christ there is "neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:26-29) is foreshadowed by the Law of Inheritances as decreed in favour of the daughters of Zelophehad. What they requested was acknowledged as being "right" (v. 7), and Yahweh is always reasonable and just. See Psa. 68:5-6; Ezek. 18:20. The Law thereby established the right of inheritance in the following order: 1. Sons; 2. Daughters (subject to them marrying within their own tribe — see Num. 36:2-3); 3. Brothers; 4. Uncles; 5. Next of kin. The word used for "kinsman" denotes a near relative. It is *shear*, and signifies *to be left behind*, im-

plying, in this context, the survivors in a family.

**Moses Warned Of Impending Death — vv. 12-14**

*Moses is warned that the time of death has come; he is invited to view the Land of Promise afar off.*

**VERSE 12**

**"And Yahweh said unto Moses" —** See note v. 6.

**"Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel" —** Mount Abarim comprises a long ridge of harsh, rocky, precipitous hills which extend along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea as far as the eye can see. "Aba" signifies *to pass over*, and Abarim, a plural word, *passages*. The range forms a barrier to the Promised Land. Among its peaks is Mt. Nebo (Deut. 32:49), the top of which is called Pisgah (Deut. 34:1, and see Deut. 34:5-67). It was with sadness that Moses received this message from Yahweh, and he pleaded to be allowed to enter the Land. His eloquent and appealing prayer is given in Deut. 3:23-25, together with an extended version of Yahweh's reply (Deut. 3:27). If left to us we would doubtless grant such an emotional appeal — particularly if made by such a faithful servant. Why did not Yahweh? Because He is wiser, kinder, and more understanding than we. In His great goodness and mercy, Yahweh refused Moses' request, and in so doing delivered him from the agony that otherwise would have been his lot to view with the failing powers of advancing age the tragedy of Israel's failure to make the most of its opportunities in the land. Moreover, in refusing his request, Yahweh provided Israel with a powerful exhortation to obedience, warning the people that they cannot presume on His goodness.

**VERSE 13**

**"And when thou hast seen it, thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered" —** Before he finally ascended the Mount, Moses completed the work of vengeance against Midian (Num. 31:2). He then ascended the mount as a man of faith to "see afar off" the land he will one day inherit (see Heb. 11:13-15; Rev. 15:3).

**VERSE 14**

**"For ye rebelled against My commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify Me at the water before their eyes" —** The word "rebelled" is from the Hebrew *marah* which signifies *to be bitter*. Moses was embittered by the faithless action of the people, and provoked so as to speak "unadvisedly with his lips". The fact that he was condemned for this in spite of the greater sin of the people in provoking him in the way they did, teaches the lesson that we must guard against being so moved. The word "commandment" is from the Hebrew *peh*, "mouth," and relates not so much to a direct commandment as to the word, or instruction of Yahweh. This teaches that His word must be treated as a command, even though not specifically set forth as such. In all circumstances, Yahweh should be sanctified, that is honoured above all else. For the incident itself, see Ch. 20:12,24; Deut. 1:37; 32:51-52; Psa. 106:32-33. The occasion involved the new generation, though it took place at the same site as the earlier revolt. See Num. 13:26.

**"That is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin" —** This explanatory note would appear to be quite redundant except to emphasise the importance of hearkening to the Word of Yahweh in all circumstances. See Exod. 17:7; Num. 20:13. What could have been refreshing water of life, was turned into the bitter water of Meribah, or *Strife*. Paul taught Timothy: "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; that they might recover themselves" (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Unfortunately, Moses, as the "servant of Yahweh" failed at that point.

**Joshua Appointed As Moses' Successor — vv. 15-23**

*Moses turns to Yahweh in prayer, and is accepted of Him. This implies that God has forgiven him, and now accepts him as a righteous man in spite of his provoked failure. Yet the punishment is to remain. This is a clear indication that God's forgiveness of sin, does not always remove its immediate results. Many sins carry with them results which are life-long. Nevertheless, Moses' main concern is the need of a right successor, for he knows how fickle are the hearts of men. He therefore makes known*

*his will in that regard.*

### VERSE 15

**"And Moses spake unto Yahweh, saying"** — With deep concern for the people, Moses answered Yahweh, requesting that a successor be appointed. It is possible that it was at that time he pleaded permission to enter the Land as reported in Deut. 3:21-26; a request that was not granted.

### VERSE 16

**"Let Yahweh, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation"** — See note on Num. 16:22. Moses addressed Yahweh in a most significant manner. He gave Him the title of "the God (*Elohim*) of the spirits of all flesh"; that is, One who knows the hearts of all men, Who controls all life, and needeth not that any should testify concerning what is in man (John 2:25). What Yahweh does, of course, He does through the *Elohim*, or angels. The lives of saints are constantly under their supervision (see Gen. 48:16; Exod. 23:20; Psa. 34:7; Matt. 18:10), and through the channel of their ministry (Heb. 1:14), all things are brought under His control. Clearly recognising that fact, knowing that Yahweh can discern the hearts of men, he prays God that his successor be appointed.

### VERSE 17

**"Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of Yahweh be not as a sheep which have no shepherd"** — This statement covers the qualifications of a shepherd. His duty is to thoroughly care for the flock so as to bring it into a safe resting place. Moses acted the part of shepherd (Psa. 77:20), and now his successor must do so also. It was not enough that the shepherd be skilled in warfare, he must also be able to care for the flock in all the needs of its individual members. These are outlined by Ezekiel in his chapter on the responsibilities of shepherds, and his indictment on those in Israel who had fallen short of such (Ezek. 34:1-23). His words conclude with a prophecy predicting the coming of the Good Shepherd, and the consequent blessings that will accrue from his ministrations (vv. 23-31).

Moses' description of the danger of Israel being "as sheep which have no shepherd" were taken up by Zechariah (Ch. 10:2), by Christ (Matt. 9:36; Mark

6:34) and by Peter (1 Pet. 2:25). The Lord taught Peter the need of shepherding the flock (John 21:15-17), and Peter passed the same message on to those appointed over the Ecclesias (1 Pet. 5:1-2). Christ set down the relative responsibilities of both sheep and shepherd, in his parables of "the door" (John 19:1-10), and "the good shepherd" (John 10:11-29). In the former parable he described the main qualification of under-shepherds set over Ecclesias: it is to lead the flock to the door (i.e. Christ v. 7). Such is "a (the word *the* is incorrect here) shepherd of the sheep" (John 10:2); whilst all others are merely pseudo-shepherds. Then follows the parable of the "good shepherd" and the sheep.

The duties of a normal shepherd illustrate what is required of Ecclesial shepherds. A shepherd was required to endure much for the sheep, living frugally, accustoming himself to hardship, braving all weathers, giving first care to the flock. He knew little of the joys of companionship except the animals about him which he guarded resolutely in time of danger. The shepherd's staff acted as both a guide and a defence. David's defence of a lamb of the flock against the attack of a lion and a bear at great personal risk, illustrates what was required of shepherds (1 Sam. 17:34-35).

Sheep, on the other hand, were noted for their affection (2 Sam. 12:3), docility, meekness and submissiveness (Isa. 53:7; Jer. 11:19), their helplessness when left to themselves (Mic. 5:8; Matt. 10:16), and their need of guidance (Isa. 53:6; Ezek. 34:5; Matt. 9:36; 26:31). They have a responsibility to listen for, recognise, and follow the voice of the shepherd (John 10:27-28). Yahweh is the great Shepherd of the flock (Psa. 80:1), and those who take upon the responsibility of shepherding must follow His example.

Sheep are not noted for good eyesight. Their wool has a tendency to grow over their eyes, impairing what vision they do have; and it is the responsibility of shepherds to clip it back, so as to improve their vision. Moses had endeavoured to improve the vision of his people, and to carefully shepherd them in every way. He realised, however, that age limits the vigour necessary for truly efficient shepherding, and that he had reached that point in life when it was desirable for him to relinquish his duties as such (Deut. 31:2). On the other hand, a measure of wisdom and experience were required on whoever

should take over his duties (cp. 1 Kings 3:7). In his request that Yahweh supply an effective shepherd to continue the work commenced, he gave expression to these needs.

**VERSE 18**

**"And Yahweh said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit"** — References to the outstanding service rendered by Joshua to that point of time are found in Exod. 17:9-13; 24:13; 33:11. Certainly, he had the experience necessary. He also possessed the Spirit of God, and had, in himself, a spirit to follow God. This was necessary to perform the duties he would be called upon to undertake (see Isa. 63:11). The Spirit was openly manifested in him (Num. 11:25), as it had been in Joseph (Gen. 41:38), and would be in Othneil (Jud. 3:10), Jephthah (Jud. 11:29), David (1 Sam. 16:13-14), Daniel (Dan. 5:14), John Baptist (Luke 1:15), Christ (John 3:34), Stephen (Acts 6:3), and other great men called to do an outstanding service in the development of Yahweh's purpose. It assisted to qualify them for leadership, as does the influence of the Spirit-word in the hearts of believers. For example, Joshua displayed outstanding knowledge, faith, courage and skill in controlling and leading the nation appointed to his care (Josh. 1:7-9). The record states that he was "full of the spirit of wisdom" (Deut. 34:9).

**"And lay thine hand upon him"** — The laying on of hands was the ceremonial designed to appoint a person to the position allotted him. When performed by an appointed leader like Moses or an inspired Apostle, it denoted the divine endorsement of the action taken. See its use in Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 6:2). Moses was instructed to perform this act publicly before representatives of the nation. As a result, Joshua was granted a gift of wisdom (Deut. 34:9), as Timothy was given a gift of grace (2 Tim. 1:6).

**VERSE 19**

**"And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation"** — Moses was appointed to take the lead in the appointment of Joshua, thus exceeding the status of the High Priest. Moses held a unique position in Israel (Deut. 34:10-12), not to be exceeded by any until the appearance of "the prophet like unto Moses" (Deut. 18:15). Moses, like Christ, was higher in status than Aaron, and on

occasions ministered for him (Exod. 25:22; 29:1; Num. 7:89).

**"And give him a charge in their sight"** — The authority and status granted Joshua were to be publicly attested before all. See Deut. 3:28; 31:7-8. Paul did likewise in appointing Timothy to a position of authority in the Ecclesia in Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:18).

**VERSE 20**

**"And thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him"** — By "honour" is meant the dignity and authority exercised by Moses (Num. 11:17,28). Joshua was granted a measure of this. See Deut. 31:3-14; Josh. 3:7).

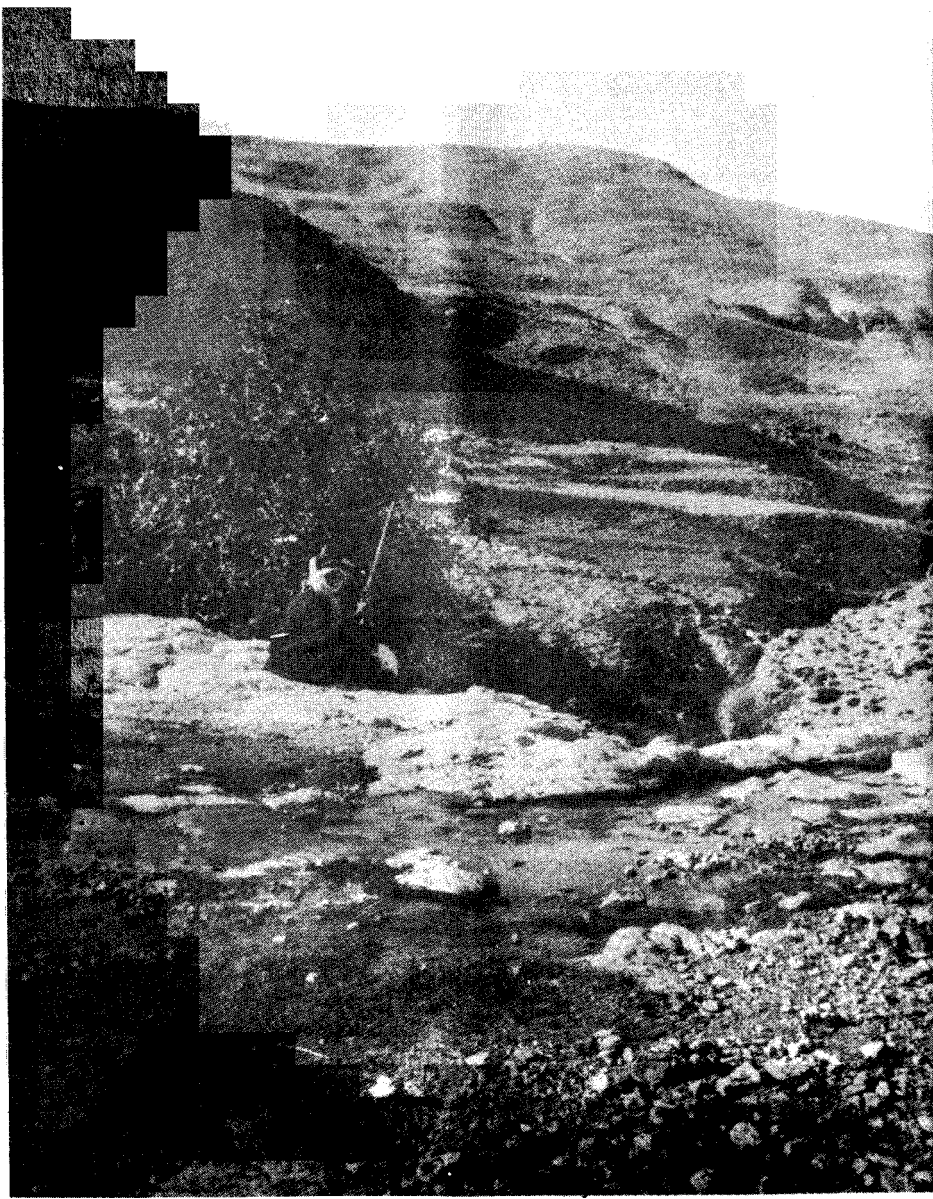
**"That all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient"** — The public endorsement of Joshua's position was designed to make evident to all that it was by Yahweh's appointment, and therefore, the people must obey his instructions, or answer to God. See Josh. 1:16-17.

**VERSE 21**

**"And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Yahweh: at His word shall they go out, and at His word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation"** — This instruction granted Moses' request as expressed in v. 17. Joshua would be required to stand before Eleazar for the purpose of being anointed to his high office, and afterwards, he (and others who later assumed a similar position) would have access to Yahweh through the ministry of the High Priest. For examples of this, see Josh. 9:14; Jud. 1:1; 20:18,23; 1 Sam. 22:10; 23:2-4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 5:19,23. The statement, "at His word", relates to Yahweh. Joshua would be the channel through whom the will of Yahweh would be made known to the people, in matters not dealt with in the Law, and for which a decision was required. The word rendered "word" is better translated *mouth*. Directions for the conquest of the Land and the settlement of the people would issue from Yahweh through the priest to Joshua, whose responsibility it would be to carry them out.

**VERSE 22**

**"And Moses did as Yahweh commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set**



**Mt. Nebo, one of the heights of the Abarim range of mountains, on the east side of the Dead Sea. The Abarim mountain ranges are 600 ft (183m) above the plateau of Moab, and overlook the Dead Sea, 4000 ft (1219m) below. From the top of Nebo, Moses could view the Land of Promise though he was not permitted to enter. His death marked the end of the wilderness wandering.**

**him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation**” — Moses faithfully carried out the requirements of Yahweh, motivated by both faith and patriotism. By faith, because he performed what was required of him; and by patriotism because without demur he appointed Joshua to the high position as his successor. A lesser man may have sought to obtain the of-

fice for one of his sons, but Moses recognised that the appointment was of Yahweh, and not according to the flesh.

#### VERSE 23

**“And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses”** — See notes vv. 18,19.

## CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

### RE-INSTRUCTION CONCERNING OFFERINGS

*The instructions commenced in this chapter continue into the next. They repeat, with certain additions, much of that which is contained in the Book of Leviticus. Why should re-instruction concerning sacrificial offerings be now required or given? Like the rite of circumcision (Josh. 5:5), it seems that many of the daily and yearly offerings have been omitted during the desert sojourn; whilst others have never been carried out because of circumstances. For example, the offering of firstfruits (Num. 28:26), and those relating to the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39) all governed by the harvest, are inappropriate for a people in the desert. But now they are on the point of entering the Land; a new beginning is about to commence, and there is a need for re-instruction of these vital requirements. Moreover, there is required a change in their previous attitudes and worship (Deut. 12:8-9). There will be similar re-commencement and re-instruction at the coming of the Lord, prior to the resettlement of the nation (Mal. 4:4). Meanwhile, the people are not only reminded of the requirements expected of them in regard to the public sacrifices and offerings, but this instruction is unique in that it gives for each festival a specific date, and a definite quantity of each sacrifice on that date. In other books of the law there are scattered descriptions of such amounts, but now, for the first time, they are collated together. The only other list which supplies specific amounts*

for all the special days and festivals is in Ezekiel 45:18-46:15 — relating to the Age to come. So there is a foreshadowing here of some of the instruction that will be given prior to the re-establishment of worship under Messiah the King-priest. These instructions show that Yahweh is interested in the way in which He is worshipped. He is not to be approached lightly or casually. He is God, Who made all life, and sustains it in being. In addition, Israel stand in a unique position, having been called out to enjoy a personal relationship with Him. All those whom both natural and spiritual, God has thus invited (Acts 15:14), are expected to pay the same high regard to the terms and forms of worship set down for them to follow:

#### The Daily Offerings — vv. 1-8

Each day priests were required to replenish the oil lamps of the seven-branched lampstand; to offer incense before the veil morning and evening; and to offer a lamb every morning and evening with meal offerings. This is the only grain offering that is to be completely burned (Lev. 6:23).

#### VERSE 1

“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying” — Introducing a new section of the book.

#### VERSE 2

“My offering, and My bread, for My sacrifices made by fire” — The reference is to the burnt offerings. The conjunction “and” being in italics indicates that there is no comparable word in Hebrew. It is better rendered as *even*. The use of “and” would suggest that the offerings and the bread were two separate things. In fact, they were one. The sacrifices consumed by fire are treated as “the bread” or food of Yahweh (Lev. 3:11; Mal. 1:7) consumed by Him when offered upon the altar. The word offering is *korban* as in Num. 6:14. See note.

“For a sweet savour unto Me” — The Hebrew word is from the same root as the word Noah. The margin renders the statement: “A savour of My rest”. Yahweh finds pleasure in such an offering as is described, particularly when the offerer conforms to the significance of it in his zealous dedication of himself to God’s will. See notes on Gen. 8:25; Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; Num. 15:2, 7. Through obedience to the require-

ments of the Gospel, believers become “a sweet savour of Christ” (2 Cor. 2:15; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 4:18). Regenerated Israel, in the age to come, also will become “a sweet savour” unto Yahweh, for the nation will be converted unto Him through Christ (Ezek. 20:41).

“Shall ye observe to offer unto Me in their due season” — There were appointed times for specific offerings to be made, and as Leviticus 23 reveals, these foreshadow the appointed times that Yahweh has reserved in His power (Acts 1:6). The present comprises the “times of the Gentiles”, then those who accept Christ can render such an offering unto Yahweh as to constitute “a savour of rest”. When “the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”, Israel and the world at large will render their national and personal offerings unto Him (Mal. 1:11).

#### VERSE 3

“And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto Yahweh” — An offering made by fire first required the putting to death of the flesh in the slaying of the animal, then the presentation of the blood unto Yahweh, representing a dedicated life, and finally, the burning of the carcass on the altar. The first represents the denial of the flesh, the second the giving of one’s life to Yahweh, and the third a zeal begotten by the Word that consumes the whole being. The fire on the altar was divine, having been sent from heaven (Lev. 9:24). It was strictly commanded the priests that



it should always be burning, it must never go out (Lev. 6:13). True Israelites will be fired by the Word, and will never let it be quenched (see 1 Thess. 5:19).

**"Two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering"** — The margin renders "day by day" as "*in a day*". One lamb was offered in the morning, and the other in the evening (v. 4; Exod. 29:39). A similar offering is commanded to be made in the House of Prayer for all nations to be erected in Jerusalem in the Age to come (Ezek. 46:13-15). It was a continual burnt offering, because it was to be offered day by day, and left to smoulder on the altar all day and night.

#### VERSE 4

**"The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even"** — The Hebrew renders the latter phrase as *between the evenings*, which is reckoned to be between about 3 and 6 p.m. For notes on this see Exod. 29:39.

#### VERSE 5

**"And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil"** — See notes at Exod. 16:36; Num. 15:4. Associated with the animal sacrifice, which symbolised the giving of one's being, was this offering of flour and oil. Produced by the labour of the worshipper, it pointed to their work of service as devoted to Yahweh. Flour is a symbol of the strength of life; oil is a symbol of joyful truth. Ten is a figurative number representing the whole; and four is the number of Israel. The sacrifice as a whole represented a complete Israel, so consumed by the word, that the flesh (which normally leads one astray) ascends to Yahweh in an acceptable form, providing an acceptable sacrifice in which the strength of life is joyfully given to witnessing to the Truth. For the significance of the various measures, see the notes at Exod. 16:36; 29:40; Lev. 23:14; Num. 15:4.

#### VERSE 6

**"It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto Yahweh"** — See note at Exod. 29:42. Though ordained as a "continual burnt offering", the lambs were not offered during

the wilderness wanderings (Amos 5:25); and, to the shame of Israel, not always when they were in the Land (Psa. 50:8). However, they will be maintained in the House of Prayer for all nations during the Age to come (Ezek. 46:14).

#### VERSE 7

**"And the drink offering thereof shall be the fourth part of an hin for the one lamb"** — The "hin" was an Egyptian measure, of approximately 6 pints; a reminder of their previous servitude. See note Exod. 29:40.

**"In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto Yahweh for a drink offering"** — By the "holy place" is probably meant the court in front of the Tabernacle where the priests ate the sin-offering. The whole area of the Tabernacle and its court was considered holy. In Num. 18:10 it is described as the Most Holy. Priests in the Tabernacle were not permitted to drink wine (Lev. 10:9), so, most likely, the drink offering was poured out upon the sacrifice giving pleasure to Yahweh (see Jud. 9:13). The Hebrew word here rendered *strong wine* is *shekar* in Hebrew, and denotes an alcoholic drink, not necessarily wine, though doubtless wine would have been used in the Tabernacle. The best wine was produced by careful attention to both the growing of the grapes and maturing of the juice. In Scripture it is noted for joy (Isa. 24:7). Therefore, as a symbol, wine in the Tabernacle denoted the joyful labour of a dedicated life given unto Yahweh.

#### VERSE 8

**"And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat offering of the morning and as the drink offering thereof, thou shalt offer it, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh"** — Both morning and evening, the same sacrifice was offered, incense was offered, and at the same times, the devout in Israel offered their personal prayers unto Yahweh (Psa. 141:2).

#### The Sabbath Offerings — vv. 9-10

*On the Sabbath, two additional lambs are offered both morning and evening with their meal offerings. This requirement is now commanded for the first time.*

#### VERSE 9

**"And on the sabbath day"** — The sabbath day rest was first inaugurated before the Law was given, as the children of Is-

rael were moving towards Sinai, and, for the first time, manna was supplied to relieve their hunger (Exod. 16:23-26). The institution of the sabbath, therefore, like that of the Passover, preceded the giving of the Law at Sinai, because of the circumstances and the timing involved. For the calendar was changed when Israel left Egypt, to provide for both a religious and a civil year; the beginning of a new national life in separation from the land of bondage (Exod. 12:2; 13:3-5). In spite of the pretensions of Seventh Day Adventists, the sabbath was given by Moses (Neh. 9:14), and not inherited from the fathers — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The patriarchs knew of a seven days' division into weeks, but not of a peculiar observance of the seventh day as a day of rest. The sabbath rest had a spiritual lesson to teach, specifically relating to the deliverance from Egypt (see Deut. 5:15). Yahweh, through Ezekiel declared: "Moreover also I gave them My sabbaths, to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am Yahweh that sanctify them" (Ezek. 20:12). The rest taught the need for a true worshipper to "rest from his own works", to cease labouring to satisfy the flesh, and devote the time exclusively to Yahweh (Psa. 92:1-4; Isa. 58:13; Heb. 4:10). As a parable, the sabbath pointed to the Millennial rest of Christ's thousand years' reign on earth (Heb. 4:9; 2 Pet. 3:8-9; Rev. 20:6).

**"Two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof"** — The work of the priests was increased on the Sabbath days. That led Christ to comment: "On the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless" (Matt. 12:5). As their lives were completely devoted to the work of God, one day in seven made no difference to them; or, rather, their work was increased on that day. So it will be for the redeemed in the Millennium: their labours for God will be increased. There was, therefore, a class in Israel that was exempt from the sabbath law: a fact to which the Seventh Day Adventists should give some consideration. For as Christ's followers are designated priests (1 Pet. 2:9) it is expected of them that their sabbath, their resting from the works of sin, should be of daily endeavour, and not merely one day in seven! Moreover, the Law could not provide a complete rest from the works of flesh, or

of sin, because it made a man more conscious of the reality of sin (Rom. 7:7). It emphasised the impossibility of flesh unaided to keep God's law (Rom. 7:7-10; 8:3). This led to the invitation of Christ: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). In Christ, the true sabbath rest is enjoyed, in that sins are forgiven.

#### VERSE 10

**"This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering"** — These words are literally rendered: "*the sabbath burnt offering for its sabbath*". They relate to the two lambs and their additional offerings which were "beside the continual burnt offering", that is the normal lambs offered each morning and evening. This means that on the sabbath, three lambs were offered in the morning, or an additional lamb was offered each morning and evening; but those details are not specified. In the Temple of the Age to come, six lambs will be offered in the sabbath days (Ezek. 46:5-6).

#### The Monthly Offerings — vv. 11-15

*At the beginning of each month an additional seven lambs, two young bullocks, one ram, and one kid of the goats were offered, and trumpets were sounded to announce this new commencement.*

#### VERSE 11

**"And in the beginnings of your months"** — This new-moon offering is here enjoined for the first time, the festival itself having only been incidentally mentioned in Num. 10:10. The new moon commenced a new circle of beginning, and trumpets were sounded as a memorial (Num. 10:10). The day was treated as a sabbath (Amos 8:5), and many assembled before the prophets or public teachers to hear the Word expounded (2 Kings 4:23). From Ezekiel 45:17; 46:6, we learn that this ordinance will be re-introduced in the Age to come.

**"Ye shall offer a burnt offering unto Yahweh; two young bullocks, and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot"** — These multiple sacrifices, like all sacrifices under the Law, pointed forward to the "one great sacrifice" (Heb. 10:10-14). As we have noted in our comments on Leviticus, the bullocks represent human labour; the ram, human strength; the

seven lambs, the complete sacrifice of innocence. The slaughter of these animals taught that labour, strength, and innocence should be sacrificed unto God in total dedication. All were to be "without spot". And whilst it is true that the Lord alone manifested complete obedience to his Father, saints in him can attain unto a state of "faultlessness" by the forgiveness of their sin; and so too, become "without spot".

#### VERSE 12

**"And three tenth deals of flour for a meal offering, mingled with oil for one bullock"** — Three is frequently used as a symbol for completeness, or resurrection unto life. It was on the third day that life first appeared upon the earth, so that such an offering is appropriate for this new beginning.

**"And two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, for one ram"** — Two speaks of the division between the two great families of humanity: Israel and the Gentiles, both of which can have a part and a lot in the true sacrifice. For the symbolism of the meal offerings, see notes above, or at Num. 15:4-12.

#### VERSE 13

**"And a several tenth deal of flour mingled with oil for a meat offering unto one lamb"** — The Hebrew has for "a several tenth deal", a *tenth*, a *tenth deal*, that is "a tenth" to each of the seven lambs offered.

**"For a burnt offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto Yahweh"** — A sacrifice so defined signifies one accepted by Yahweh and consumed by Him upon the altar. The priests, as His representatives, would inspect the offerings and receive them as acceptable. Christ's offering was as a "sweet savour" unto Yahweh (Matt. 3:17), as ours, when presented through him, can be likewise.

#### VERSE 14

**"And their drink offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third part of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth part of an hin unto a lamb: this is the burnt offering of every month throughout the months of the year"** — In this verse, the word for "wine" is *yaivin* from a root signifying to *effervesce*. It relates to wine as fermented, and therefore an intoxicant. In regard to the measure called "an hin" see note on v. 7. The ani-

mals referred to have drink offerings appropriate to their size and importance.

#### VERSE 15

**"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering unto Yahweh shall be offered, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering"** — A kid of the goats symbolised the self-assertiveness of the flesh. See Lev. 23:16-18; Num. 7:16. As such it represented sin's flesh, which must be figuratively put to death in order to render obedience to Yahweh. Flesh of itself cannot attain unto that which pleases God, and therefore a sacrifice is necessary through whom forgiveness of sins can be obtained (Rom. 8:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:19-21). Christ's followers are called upon to "mortify (put to death) the flesh" (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5), which is what the sin-offering exhorted true Israelites to do.

#### The Passover Offering — vv. 16-25

*During the Passover week, the daily offering was the same as the monthly, but offered for seven days. This is appropriate, for the Passover, like the new moon celebrations, commemorated a new beginning.*

#### VERSE 16

**"And in the fourteenth day of the first month is the Passover of Yahweh"** — The first month was named *Abib* which signifies *Green ears (of corn)*. Being the month of Spring (hence the name) it witnessed to the resurrection, or to newness of life. It was appropriate, therefore, that the deliverance of Israel which was the induction of the nation into a new life, should have been at springtime, when all nature heralded the power of Yahweh to raise from the dead both politically and literally (see Isa. 61:11).

The requirements of the Passover celebration are outlined in Exod. 12 (see also Deut. 16:1). The prophecy of Ezekiel reveals that the festival will be re-instituted in the worship of the Age to come (Ezek. 45:21); but as the deliverance from Egypt will fade into insignificance in the light of future events, so the formula (repeated at Passover time), "Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt," will be changed to "*Yahweh liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them*" (Jer. 16:15).

We direct attention to our notes on Exodus 12. However, the word *Passover*

is significant, but is frequently misunderstood. And as the celebration of the Lord's passover (see 1 Cor. 5:7) is a vital feature of the life in him, we repeat here what we have stated there:

At the time of the Lord, the Jews reclined at the table to eat the Passover instead of standing and eating it in haste as enjoined originally. The reason for this, as explained in the Jewish Haggadah is to show that they celebrated it as free men, and not as those under bondage. It declares: "All Israel are equal, all Israel are free men, and all Israel should recline at the table as free men do." This statement is significant in view of the claim of the Jews to the Lord that they were "free" (John 8:32-33). They did not understand that they were still in bondage to sin, and needed deliverance from such, and that such could only be obtained through the true Lamb of God, and the Passover he would institute.

Since the dispersion, the Jews no longer slay a lamb, but, instead, place a bone on the Passover tray. In the *Haggadah* the following explanation is given for this: "On the right-hand of the tray is placed portion of the shankbone of the lamb, roasted. This is intended to commemorate the actual Paschal lamb which was sacrificed in the Temple at the Passover: originally the essential feature of the observance, but now no more than a symbolical relic."

On this custom, Brother Thomas comments as follows in *Elpis Israel*:

"I am informed by a Jew that when they eat the passover they eat no lamb, but have a dry bone of one on a dish; and that all who celebrate take hold of the lip of the dish, and unitedly offer a petition. This is remarkable. They have slain the true Lamb, which believers of the gospel feed upon: while only a dry bone remains to them, strikingly illustrative of themselves. Faith in the Lamb of God supplies the absence of the lamb in the Lord's Supper" (pg. 297).

The word "passover" in the Hebrew is *pesach*. It occurs in the Old Testament fifty-six times, forty-nine of which relate to the festival or offering of the Passover, and therefore provides no indication of the proper significance of the word. It is generally thought that it signifies the action of the angel of death in *passing over* the houses of the Israelites with their blood spattered door-posts and lintels. Therefore, it is usually related to the next

verse where Yahweh states: "For I will *pass through* the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn." But the Hebrew verb of that verse bears no relationship to the noun before us. Its root is derived from the verb *pasach* rendered *pass over* in v. 13, but actually having the meaning of *to spare*. It is rendered in the Septuagint as *protect* in the sense of overshadowing. The use of the word elsewhere in Scripture indicates that its true meaning is to *hover over, stay over, protect, abide over*. Therefore instead of "pass over", it would be more correct to render as "remain over". In 1 Kings 18:21 the word is rendered *halt* and in v. 26 as *leaped*. The references are to the people of Israel who *halted, wavered, or hovered* between two opinions, and to the priests of Baal who *hovered* anxiously over their altar, not "leaped upon" it as rendered in the A.V. The word occurs again in 2 Sam. 4:4 which records how that Mephibosheth fell, "and became lame." In fact, he began to limp, and the swaying motion that followed his fall suggested the wavering of a bird over its young. Hence the use of *pasach* in this place.

In Isaiah 31:5 the word occurs again, and in a most interesting and significant way. The prophet declared: "As birds flying, so will Yahweh of hosts defend



The Passover Plate as traditionally set out. The "3 Mazzot" relate to the three pieces of unleavened bread, each of which has a symbolic meaning to the participant. Note the provision for the Shankbone, and compare the extract from "Elpis Israel" quoted in the text of our commentary.

Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and *passing over* He will preserve it." But, in fact, Yahweh did not pass over Jerusalem; He *hovered over* it and so protected it, thus justifying the use of the word *protect* by the Septuagint in Exod 12:13.

The use of the term by Isaiah is significant in view of the statement of the Lord on the eve of the Passover, recorded in Matt. 23:37-39: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem..... how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The anxious hovering of the mother bird over her chickens is illustrative of the protection afforded by the first Passover.

If we use the term, *hover over to protect* in place of "pass over," the real idea will become apparent. Thus:

"When I see the blood, I will *hover over to protect you*, and the plague shall not be upon you" (Exod. 12:13).

"When He seeth the blood . . . Yahweh will *hover over* the door to protect you, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses" (Exod. 12:23).

"Yahweh *hovered over to protect* the houses of the children of Israel" (Exod. 12:27).

The angel did not pass over the houses of the Israelites when he saw the blood, but *hovered over* to protect them. He remained there with them, whilst the angel of death passed over to destroy the firstborn of Egypt. A. H. Broughton describes it as the Feast of the Hover-over, or Abiding Presence, and writes: "That is a true translation: the 'Feast of the *Passover*' is not. When God saw the blood on the doorposts He did not, as the English Bibles say, pass over the door, He *hovered over* it. The feast itself is not that of a Pass-over but that of a Hover-over."

The Passover as a festival, therefore, celebrated the invisible but real presence of Yahweh, hovering over His people at a time of extreme peril. It witnessed to the Abiding Presence of Yahweh as provided in the lamb and all that it signifies. It does so also in the provision of our Passover Lamb each Sunday Morning. The Abiding Presence of Yahweh and His son hovers

over the celebration of it, and though unseen their presence is nevertheless real and powerful to save.

#### VERSE 17

"**And in the fifteenth day of this month is the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten**" — See notes Exod. 12:18; Lev. 23:6.

#### VERSE 18

"**In the first day shall be an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work therein**" — A "holy convocation" is a meeting of the people for divine worship (see Exod. 12:16; Lev. 23:7). The following occasions were to be held as convocations: the *Sabbaths* (Lev. 23:2,3); the *Passover*, the first and the last days (Exod. 12:16; Lev. 23:7,8); the *Pentecost* or *Feast of Weeks* (Lev. 23:21; Num. 28:26); the *Feast of Trumpets* (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1); the *Feast of Tabernacles*, first and last days (Lev. 23:35-36; Num. 29:12); the one great *Fast*, the annual *Day of Atonement* (Lev. 23:27; Num. 29:7).

One great feature of the convocation was that no *servile* work was to be done upon those days, that is, work other than what was necessary for the preparation of food. On the Sabbath even this was prohibited (Exod. 35:2-3).

#### VERSE 19

"**But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire for a burnt offering unto Yahweh**" — This is additional to the original Passover offering, though it is incorporated in the instructions given in Deut. 16:2.

"**Two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish**" — These offerings are identical to those offered at the beginnings of the months (see v. 11). They were to be "without blemish" for they pointed forward to the other great offering to be provided by Yahweh: he who was "without blemish" (1 Pet. 1:19). The priests destroyed this type when, in the days of Malachi, they offered blemished offerings and manifested indifference to the things of Yahweh (Mal. 1:7-8,13-14). They did this on the ground that adversity did not permit them to give of the best of their flocks and herds. But in so acting, they robbed Yahweh of His due. The prophet warned them that their adversity stemmed from the poverty of their worship. Have the faith to give God His due,

he exhorted, and you will lack for nothing! See Mal. 3:8-12.

**VERSE 20**

**"And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil: three tenth deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth deals for a ram"** — See v. 12.

**VERSE 21**

**"A several tenth deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs"** — A repetition of the requirements of the festival of the new moon. See v. 19.

**VERSE 22**

**"And one goat for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you"** — See v. 15.

**VERSE 23**

**"Ye shall offer these beside the burnt offering in the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering"** — The "continual burnt offering" was the lamb offered every morning and evening. So every day, the Lamb of God was brought into prominence before the people. Then it was the type; we can mentally view the reality.

**VERSE 24**

**"After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh; it shall be offered beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering"** — The repetition of these instructions emphasises the importance of strictly adhering to the letter of what Yahweh requires, as well as manifesting in action the spiritual lessons drawn therefrom. In condemning the Pharisees for their meticulous attention to the formal requirements of the Law whilst neglecting its spiritual demands, the Lord declared: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes and mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matt. 23:23). Yahweh requires worshippers to adhere to both the forms of religion as well as manifesting its spiritual principles.

**VERSE 25**

**"And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile**

**work"** — See v. 18, and compare with Exod. 12:16; 13:6; Lev. 23:8.

**Harvest Offerings — vv. 26-31**

*In the wilderness, of necessity, the gathering in of harvests are conspicuous by their absence, but that will not be the case in the Land. Hence the need for re-instruction on the offering of firstfruits. They foreshadow "Christ the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20), as well as "those that are Christ's at his coming" (James 1:18; Rev. 14:4).*

**VERSE 26**

**"Also in the day of the firstfruits, when ye bring a new meat offering unto Yahweh after your weeks be out"** — The reference is to the *Feast of Weeks*, or Day of Pentecost. See notes on Lev. 23:15-21. The Festival was called the *Feast of Weeks*, because Israel was told to number seven weeks from the waving of the first sheaf, when two loaves representing the firstfruits of the harvest were brought before Yahweh. The sheaf of barley offered first (Lev. 23:10), pointed forward to Christ the firstfruits; the two loaves of leaven meal related to those "in Christ". It is significant that the Lord rose from the dead the very day appointed for the waving of the barley sheaf, and that on the Day of Pentecost the Gospel was first publicly proclaimed in the name of Christ, and the first three thousand were baptised (Acts 2). There are precision and purpose in all Yahweh's appointments.

**"Ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work"** — See notes above. Because the "day of the firstfruits" was fifty days after the counting commenced, and the sheaf of the wave offering had been presented (Lev. 23:15-16), it is called the Day of *Pentecost* (meaning *fifty*) in the N.T. But the Jews styled it the *Day of Restraint* or of *Shutting up*, for the joy of the full harvest was still restrained until the full ingathering at the Feast of Tabernacles.

**VERSE 27**

**"But ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savour unto Yahweh: two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year"** — The festal sacrifices here prescribed are exactly the same as those appointed for the festival of the beginnings of the months, or the new moons. It is different to that prescribed for the same day in Lev. 23:18-19. The question is whether

## THE PENTECOST OFFERINGS

*Combining the accounts of Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28, the following sacrifices would seem to have been offered on the day that the Gospel was first publicly preached in the name of the risen Christ Jesus.*

**THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING: A LAMB WITHOUT BLEMISH** — The Lamb of God for the sin of the world.

**TWO LEAVEN LOAVES TO BE WAVED** — Jews and Gentiles though sinners called to activity before Yahweh.

**SEVEN LAMBS** — The efficacy of the “one lamb” extended to do service for the multiplicity of believers based upon the covenant of Yahweh.

**ONE BULLOCK** — Their united labour and service to be devoted to Yahweh.

**TWO RAMS** — All strength of those called out from the two great families of humanity to be given unto Yahweh. The word *ayil*, signifies “strength” or “chief ones”.

**ONE GOAT FOR A SIN OFFERING** — The mortifying of sin in the flesh.

**TWO LAMBS FOR A PEACE OFFERING** — Worshippers from out of the two great families of humanity brought together in fellowship with God.

### In the Evening (?)

**TWO YOUNG BULLOCKS** — United labour in serving Yahweh.

**ONE RAM** — The Protector of the flock strengthening those with him.

**SEVEN LAMBS OF THE FIRST YEAR** — Confirming the covenant.

**MEAL OFFERINGS MINGLED WITH OIL** — The joy of true witness.

**ONE KID OF THE GOATS** — A final reminder of sin before swallowed up of life.

**THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING OF A LAMB** — Demonstrating that all is due to the Lamb of God.

It was a day of bloodshedding and sacrifice. Blood represented life, and when given in sacrifice, it pointed to a life given in devotion to Yahweh. The shedding of blood was the ritual recognition and declaration by the worshipper that the flesh profits nothing, and must be figuratively put to death (Gal. 5:24) before he can render acceptable service unto God. Even Christ had to submit to this, for his sacrifice was an element in his own salvation (Hebrews 13:20).

these regulations replaced those of Leviticus, or were in addition to them. Brother W. F. Barling in *Law and Grace* suggests that they were in addition to those already laid down, but were to be offered at the close of the day: "To conclude the day's special ritual, a slightly different festal offering was finally offered in addition (Num. 28:26-30)." The offerings here outlined were different inasmuch as two bullocks were offered instead of one, and one ram was offered instead of two. Perhaps, then, this second offering at the close of the day takes us in type to the conclusion of the "times of the Gentiles" when the calling of the "firstfruits" will be completed. The balance of the "harvest" awaits the end of the Millennium.

Therefore two offerings were appropriate for the Day of Pentecost: the first series of animals, those prescribed in Lev. 23:17-19 having particular relation to Pentecost after "counting the days"; whereas these now commanded concerned the offering of the "firstfruits". It will be noted that whereas the instructions in Leviticus included two leaven loaves to be waved, those in the verse before us are silent regarding such action. At Christ's return, when the "firstfruits" are brought

to completion, the leaven of mortality and sin will no longer apply.

**VERSE 28**

**"And their meat offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals unto one bullock, two tenth deals unto one ram" —** See v. 20.

**VERSE 29**

**"A several tenth deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs" —** See note v. 13.

**VERSE 30**

**"And one kid of the goats to make an atonement for you" —** Foreshadowing the work of Christ in that particular. See Rom. 6:10; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18.

**VERSE 31**

**"Ye shall offer them beside the continual burnt offering, and his meat offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish) and their drink offering" —** The Lamb of God was constantly brought to mind, in the "continual burnt offering".

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### THE SEVENTH MONTH OFFERINGS

*This chapter continues instructing Israel regarding Yahweh's will in sacrifice and service. Requirements are laid down for Israel, as the people are about to enter the land, that are not given elsewhere. This chapter outlines what the Seventh month Offerings are necessary for. Special services were conducted this month bringing the general worship of Israelites to a climax.*

**New Year Offerings — vv. 1-6**

*The seventh month of the Israelite religious year was the first month of the civil year. It therefore commenced a new beginning. The numbers seven and one suggest the covenant and a new beginning; suggesting that the New Year should be lived with the Covenant ever in view.*

**VERSE 1**

**"And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation" —** At the time of the first Passover, the year was changed so that Abib became "the beginning of months" (Exod. 12:2): that is, the commencement of the religious year in conjunction to the



civil year, of which it was the fifth month. Five being the number of grace, and the Passover speaking of a new beginning, the principle of a new beginning through the grace of God is suggested. On the other hand, the first month of the civil year was the seventh month of the religious year, and on this occasion the new beginning was associated with the number of the seven, the number of the covenant. This "seventh" month, called Ethanim was specially set apart above all other months for special sacrifices (Lev. 23:23-44).

**"Ye shall do no servile work: it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you"** — See comments at Lev. 23:24. On this day, both the shofar trumpet and the silver trumpets were heard. In fact, the silver trumpets were sounded at all such times, and over all the offerings. The purpose of so doing was "that they may be to you for a memorial before your God" (Num. 10:10). The silver trumpets, therefore were as the voice of prayer. In addition, on the first day of the seventh month there was "a memorial of blowing of trumpets", or the sounding of the shofar trumpets. These represented the voice of God calling the people together to the "holy convocation". See Psa. 81:3; 89:15. Prophetically, the sounding of the trumpet heralds the restoration of Israel (Isa. 27:13; Zech. 9:14), the resurrection of dead saints and gathering together of the living (1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16), and the massing of the nations for the judgment of Armageddon (Rev. 11:15, 18). The *Apocalypse* represents the trumpets as already sounding; and the preliminary regathering of Israel, and massing of Gentile powers is already taking place. We await the climax of the Lord's return and the resurrection. Meanwhile the New Year was a very solemn occasion for Israel, quite unlike the Gentile celebration of the New Year. One Jewish writer has commented:

"The sounding of the shofar, consisting, as handed down by tradition, of three distinctive shofar-notes (*tekiah, shevarim, teruah*), has been looked upon from time immemorial as a call to contrition and repentance, as a reminder of the shofar sound of Sinai; and the Day of Memorial, the beginning of the ten days of Repentance, which culminates in the Day of Atonement, as a time of self-examination and humble petition for forgiveness. The Scriptural injunction of the shofar for the New Year's Day has a profound meaning. It says, 'Awake, ye sleepers, and ponder

over your deeds, remember your Creator and go back to Him in penitence. Be not of those who miss realities in their pursuit of shadows and waste their years in seeking after vain things which cannot profit or deliver. Look well to your souls and consider your acts; forsake each of you his evil ways and thoughts, and return to God so that He may have mercy upon you."

*Thy servant - behold some cruel cruelty &*  
**VERSE 2**

**"And ye shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet savour unto Yahweh; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year without blemish"** — See notes on Lev. 23 for the spiritual significance of such offerings. However, the specific offerings for this day had not been set down previously. Leviticus 23 only makes the general statement: "Ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto Yahweh" (Lev. 23:25). Now, for the first time, the offerings are detailed. The bullock was a beast of *labour*; the ram typified *strength* as its name indicates; the seven lambs relate to the covenant which one would accept in *meekness*, that being a characteristic of the Lamb. The blood of these animals being offered unto Yahweh on the altar provided the ideal that the worshippers should aim to emulate.

### VERSE 3

**"And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil"** — Flour or bread is the staff of life; oil represents the gladness of the spirit (Heb. 1:9). To mingle the staff or substance of life with the joy derived from the Truth is pleasing to Yahweh, and in symbol formed part of the sacrifice of the New Year. The "good resolution" of Israelites was to build such principles into their lives.

**"Three tenth deals for a bullock and two tenth deals for a ram"** — See note Num. 28:20.

**"And one tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs"** — See Ch. 28:29.

### VERSE 5

**"And one kid of the goats for a sin offering, to make an atonement for you"** — See on Num. 28:15, 22, 30.

### VERSE 6

**"Beside the burnt offering of the month, and his meat offering, and the daily burnt offering, and his meat offer-**

**ing, and their drink offerings according unto their manner, for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto Yahweh**” —

This requires that there be offered in addition to the animals and meal offerings detailed above, the normal daily Lambs, one morning and one evening (Num. 28:3), the two bullocks, one ram, seven lambs with their meal offerings offered at every new moon (Num. 28:11) “unto their manner”, or as already prescribed.

### **The Atonement Offering — vv. 7-11**

*The great day of atonement was the most solemn and sacred day in the calendar of Israel. On that day, everyone was required to afflict his soul in humble recognition of his low estate before Yahweh. The days preceding it were treated as days of contrition, culminating in the great Atonement offering.*

### **VERSE 7**

**“And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation”**

— Further details are supplied in Lev. 16:29-31; 23:27, and our notes at those places. See below.

**“And ye shall afflict your souls”** — The word “afflict” is *‘anah*, from a root signifying to eye, and so to *look down in humility*.

A Hebrew would be afflicted, or humbled by calling into remembrance his past, recognising his shortcomings, and acknowledging his need of forgiveness. This law, therefore, ordered Israelites to make mental preparation before seeking their God on the day of atonement. It was a cause of: “Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel” (Amos 4:12). Unfortunately, the people pretended to afflict their souls whilst remaining stubborn and indifferent to the divine requirements: “Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?” they enquired.

The prophet outlined the hypocrisy of their actions (Isa. 58:3-5). There is a *Day of Affliction* coming for Israel, when they shall “Look upon Me Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son” (Zech. 12:10). Thus humbled, Israel will be nationally cleansed (Zech. 13:11), and re-established as the Kingdom of God on earth, on the basis of the new covenant. As Israelites were required to afflict their souls, or make mental preparation to appear before God, so saints should do so in preparation to partake of the Memorials, and in anticipation of the impending Judgment

Seat. Those who mourn now, will then be blessed (Matt. 5:4). See also Paul’s comments in 2 Cor. 7:9-11. Affliction and mourning are good for the soul that seeks its God.

**“Ye shall not do any work therein”** — **On that day all work must cease. This is in comparison with the other feast days, when only “servile work” ceased.** This day was a day of fasting, and therefore no provision is made for preparing food.

### **VERSE 8**

**“But ye shall offer a burnt offering unto Yahweh for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be without blemish”**

— The total dedication of these animals in sacrifice reminded the people of Israel of the ideal set before them, but which they failed to attain unto. This failure then became a means whereby they could “afflict their souls” (v. 7). In similar manner, Christ’s disciples are humbled as they partake of the Memorials, and remind themselves of the ideal set them in the example of the Lord. Such become “chastened of the Lord” (1 Cor. 11:32).

### **VERSE 9**

**“And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram”**

— See notes Num. 15:3-12.

### **VERSE 10**

**“A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs”** — See note, Ch. 28:13.

### **VERSE 11**

**“One kid of the goats for a sin offering; beside the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings”** —

The sin offering of atonement relates to the “two kids of the goats for a sin offering” one of which was slain, and the other let go as “the scapegoat” (see Lev. 16:5-10). The offerings listed here are in addition to those listed in Leviticus 16.



without whose aid the production would be well nigh impossible.

We also appreciate the encouragement of readers. Many have been kind enough to express their appreciation of the material contained in *The Expositor*. To all such, however, we warn to carefully check the comments we make so as to confirm them in their acceptance or otherwise of them. That is a responsibility resting upon all readers of any books issued as helps to the Bible.

We suggest that our subscribers save their copies, and arrange for them to be bound in book form. We can do this for them if they desire it. We arrange for the page numbers to follow consecutively without any break between volumes. The only break we make in the numbering of the pages is when we commence a new book of the Bible. The idea is for the exposition to be bound in book form. Therefore, if readers have lost copies, we may be able to replace them so as to complete the series.

We hope, shortly, to have some bound copies of Leviticus, but, unfortunately, we cannot supply complete numbers of Genesis or Exodus.

In this section, we continue our study of Numbers. The prophecies of Balaam are exciting and interesting. On the other hand, the repetition of parts of the Law may seem dull reading.

As we have slowly and with prayerful thought perused these verses, of Numbers, we have been impressed with the wisdom of Yahweh in setting down His purpose in such a wonderful way. The Law not only taught Israelites what they should do to make their worship acceptable unto Yahweh, but also foreshadowed the divine purpose to be revealed in Christ. A man like Moses, studying the principles of the Law delivered unto him, must have turned back in thought to the redeemer promised (Gen. 3:15), and considered how its requirements would be fulfilled in the one yet to be manifested in Israel.

## OUR NEW VOLUME

This issue commences our new volume. During the course of it, God willing, we will finish our exposition of *The Book of Numbers*, and move on to the wonderful discourse of Moses, given on the eve of entering the land, which we know as *The Book of Deuteronomy*. This means, of course, that your subscription is due for the new volume, and the rates are shown on the back cover.

*If you have not already remitted your subscription* — and a number have done so — please do it immediately so as to ensure the continuity of the copies. We are currently making up new mailing lists, and would not like to miss sending yours!

The help of readers has contributed greatly to the production of *The Christadelphian Expositor* and has enabled us to produce expositions in depth of the first four books of the Bible. The issuance of numbers has been painfully slow, we admit, and we have developed a fellow-feeling for the proverbial tortoise in producing the copies. But *The Expositor* has had to take its place with other work of the Truth, and the research necessary to produce what we have to date has been both exhausting and pleasurable!

And to show we have not been lazy, we have almost produced a further book in the series covering James to Jude. It is now almost ready for printing, and we hope to announce its appearance shortly.

Meanwhile, please understand, your material and spiritual encouragement have contributed greatly in the production of this quarterly part-publication periodical, and we trust that it will continue through the next year if the Lord does not return to call us to cease our labours! The exhausting labour will then cease, whilst, we hope, the pleasure will remain!

## EUREKA VOLUME 2

Meanwhile, we have also produced Volume 2 of *Eureka*. It is in a matching binding with Volume 1, and we are sure that subscribers will be pleased with it.

## THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: A SUMMARY

- On the first day of the seventh month of the religious year (suggesting the covenant), but the first month of the civil year (suggesting a new political beginning), there was a memorial of the blowing of trumpets, so gathering the people together (Lev. 23:24).

- This was followed by days of contrition, in which true Israelites mentally prepared to meet their God, by meditating on their past conduct.

- On the Tenth Day of the month, the Day of Atonement was commemorated.

- The morning lamb was offered as usual, to smoulder all day (Lev. 8:13).

- There was a special offering (Lev. 23:27; Num. 29:7-11) comprising a bullock (labour), a ram (strength), seven lambs (covenant), and a goat (waywardness) for a sin offering. The bullock, ram and lambs were offered as burnt offerings with their meal offerings (the results of personal labour). The burnt offering represented the offerer's complete dedication of self in relation to those things indicated by the offerings.

- The goat as a sin offering was a recognition of the waywardness of flesh, and the need to deny it in order to render fit worship to Yahweh.

### Special Services

- (1) Aaron was to completely wash (cp. John 15:3; Eph. 5:26; Psa. 51:7), representing a cleansing, accomplished by the Word (Lev. 16:4).

- (2) He was to clothe himself in special linen garments representing righteousness (Rev. 19:8). See Lev. 16:4.

- (3) He was to present his bullock and ram (Lev. 16:3).

- (4) He was to present the two goats as one sin offering (Lev. 16:7).

- (5) Lots were to be taken to determine what goat should be sacrificed, and what goat should be sent into the wilderness (Lev. 16:8-10). Christ's perfect life made him a perfect sacrifice, and assured his resurrection to life eternal.

- (6) Aaron was to kill the bullock for himself and his house (Lev. 16:11).

- (7) He was to proceed into the Most Holy with the censer of incense (Lev. 16:12).

- (8) He was then to take the blood of the bullock and sprinkle the Mercy Seat and the way thereunto, seven times (Lev. 16:14).

- (9) He was to kill the goat and do likewise with his blood (Lev. 16:15).

(10) He was to make an atonement for the Most Holy, the Holy and the brazen Altar (Lev. 16:15-19).

(11) He was to confess the sins of the nation over the live goat, and despatch it into the wilderness under the care of a man of opportunity (Lev. 16:20-22)

(12) He was to wash thoroughly, change into his special High Priestly garments for glory and for beauty, and offer the burnt offering for himself and for the people (Lev. 16:23-25).

(13) The attendant of the scapegoat was to cleanse himself (Lev. 16:26).

(14) The remaining portion of the bullock and goat were to be burned without the camp after which the man so doing shall wash his clothes and bathe his flesh (Lev. 16:27-28).

### Evening Ceremony

The normal evening ceremony of offering a lamb, replenishing the lamps in the Holy Place, and offering incense therein was to follow.

Under the Law, many sacrifices were offered continuously day by day, and year by year, but all found their substance, their antitype, in the one offering of Christ.

### The Antitypical Atonement

The Day of Atonement was called *Yom Kippurim*, or *Day of Coverings*. It foreshadowed the work of Christ in providing forgiveness of sins. The Epistle to the Hebrews is built around this festival of the Law, and the following are some of the antitypical lessons adduced.

- Christ provides for the covering of his people — Heb. 2:17.

- He passed through the "heavens" to the Most Holy — Heb. 4:14-16.

- He is competent to help the ignorant and the erring — Heb. 5:1-2.

- His appointment is of Yahweh — Heb. 5:5.

- He is High Priest after the order of Melchizedek — Heb. 6:20.

- His "one" offering was complete in itself — Heb. 7:11-28.

- He entered the Most Holy through his own blood — Heb. 9:1-28.

- His atonement completely removes sin — Heb. 10:1-39.

- His offering accomplished this by going beyond the scope of Law into the realm of grace — Heb. 13:11-15.

- Through his own offering he gained redemption — Heb. 9:12.

• Through him both priest and priesthood were cleansed — Heb. 13:20-21.

The Day of Atonement in the Age to come will be extended to include “the people” — Heb. 9:28; Rev. 15:8; Ezek. 45:20.



#### The Feast Of Tabernacles — vv. 12-40

*In greater detail than ever before, the requirements of the Festival of Tabernacles, denoting the ingathering of the harvest (see Lev. 23:39), are now set down. More offerings are made than on any previous occasion. One writer has dramatically expressed his view in the following terms: “Suddenly, as if after the hush of expectancy on the Day of Atonement the outburst of praise can no longer be restrained, the lambs are doubled, the rams also, and the bullocks mount to thirteen!” It is the exultant outburst of millennial joy typified by the Festival of Tabernacles — but this settles down as daily they are reduced until on the seventh they are back to seven. Then, on the eighth day, they return to the number of the Day of Atonement, foreshadowing the final judgment at the end of the Millennium.*

*The First Day — vv. 13-16*

#### VERSE 12

“And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto Yahweh seven days” — See note, Lev. 23:34.

#### VERSE 13

“And ye shall offer a burnt offering, a

sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh” — See these instructions followed (Ezra 3:4). Previously (see Lev. 23:34), the offerings had been referred to only in general terms, and not specifically prescribed as now. That was because the Festival, was associated with the harvest ingathering and foreshadowed the Millennium. The instruction of Lev. 23:39 ordered that the Festival be kept “when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land”. This was not possible until the Israelitish wanderings had ceased, and they had inhabited the land.

“Thirteen young bullocks” — The bullock represented strength in labour, as is implied by the Hebrew word for the animal: *par*. Perhaps it should be noted that whereas the modern use of the term *bullock* relates to a castrated animal, that was not so in previous times. The animals offered Yahweh in sacrifice were not to be mutilated or deformed in any way (see Mal. 1:8). They had to be complete as foreshadowing the perfection of Christ’s offering. Why were thirteen bullocks offered? It is suggested (see Bullinger) that thirteen signifies *rebellion* (Gen. 14:4). It is relevant, perhaps, that the Hebrew word for “bullock” comes from a root signifying to *break out*, and so could relate to rebellion. Such an attitude, however, is to be sacrificed to the will of Yahweh. The introduction of the Millennium will see

the end of widespread rebellion for a thousand years.

**“Two rams”** — The ram is considered the protector of the flock. The Hebrew word is from the same root as *El*, “strength”, frequently rendered *God*. The number two denotes the two great families of mankind out of whom are drawn those who are to be combined as one in the flock of God (John 10:16). All strength needs to be sacrificed to Yahweh.

**“And fourteen lambs of the first year”** — The lamb is the symbol of meekness and inoffensiveness. Such qualities of character are expected of those whom Yahweh claims as His own. The number fourteen combines two lots of seven, the number of the covenant. The number is doubled because the covenant is extended to include Gentiles as well as Jews.

**“They shall be without blemish”** — The animals were to be complete in every particular, pointing to the unblemished character of the Lord, and setting the ideal for those who would worship the Father acceptably. Note the comment on “bullocks” above.

#### VERSE 14

**“And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil”** — Flour represents human co-operation with Yahweh in that which He provides, for it is the result of selecting, cleaning, preparing and grinding the grain. Oil types the gladness of the spirit word (Heb. 1:9). This part of the sacrifice, therefore, represents the joy of human co-operation with Yahweh as guided by the Word.

**“Three tenths deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks”** — See note, Num. 28:20.

**“Two tenth deals to each ram of the two rams”** — See note, Num. 28:20.

#### VERSE 15

**“And a several tenth deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs”** — The term “several” signifies one tenth deal to each lamb. The verse has been rendered: “A tenth for each of the fourteen lambs”. A tenth is a tithe, and as such represents Yahweh’s portion of food. See note Lev. 23:18.

#### VERSE 16

**“And one kid of the goats for a sin offering”** — The goat represents self-assertiveness, all of which is to be sacrificed to

Yahweh. Sin is the result of self-assertiveness of the flesh (see Mark 7:20-23), so that a goat forms an appropriate sin offering.

**“Beside the continual burnt offering, his meat offering, and his drink offering”** — For details and comments see Num. 28:3-8. Reference to the “continual burnt offering” points to the continuity of sacrifice and worship that should be offered by those who desire to please Yahweh. Both continual and consistent obedience is required. See John 8:31; Acts 13:43; Rom. 2:7; Gal. 2:5; 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:13; Heb. 3:14; 10:39; 13:15.

#### *The Second Day — vv. 17-19*

#### VERSE 17

**“And on the second day ye shall offer twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without spot”** — One less bullock was offered the second day. The diminution of animals could emphasise that it was not animal sacrifice merely that was required, but the presentation of the worshippers themselves as living sacrifices. In the absence of such personal involvement, animal offerings were of no use to Yahweh. See Psa. 40:6; 50:8-9; 51:16-17; Isa. 1:11; Jer. 7:22-23; Hos. 6:6; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 8:13; 9:3-14. In addition to that thought, twelve is the number of government, and human rule should be subject to the will of Yahweh.

#### VERSE 18

**“And their meat offering and their drink offerings for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, shall be according to their number, after the manner”** — This latter clause signifies, *as already prescribed*.

#### VERSE 19

For this verse see notes on v. 16.

#### *The Third Day — vv. 20-22*

#### VERSE 20

**“And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish”** — On this day eleven bullocks were offered. According to Bullinger, eleven signifies *imperfection*. Imperfections are removed by sacrifice, so that one is presented blameless before the throne of grace (Jude 24).



**VERSES 21,22**

These verses are a repetition of vv. 18,19.

*The Fourth Day — vv. 23-25*

**VERSE 23**

**“And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish”** — Ten is the number of completeness which the Millennium shall reveal. Jewish commentators claim that the daily diminution of sacrifices point forward to the gradual lessening of independent nations until all are brought under the government of the Messiah. The ten toes of the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream (Dan. 2) represent the completeness of the nations in the confederacy pictured by it, and does not necessarily require exactly ten individual powers. For the use of the numeral ten as representative of a large unspecified but complete number, see 1 Sam. 29:5; Song 5:10; Psa. 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:15; 14:19.

**VERSES 24,25**

For this repetition, see notes above.

*The Fifth Day — vv. 26-28*

**VERSE 26**

**“And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without spot”** — Bullinger gives nine as marking the end (being the last of the digits), and therefore signifying the *conclusion* of a matter. One should aim at bringing worship to a satisfactory conclusion.

**VERSES 27,28**

See notes above.

*The Sixth Day — vv. 29-31.*

**VERSE 29**

**“And on the sixth day eight bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish”** — Eight is the number of perfection, and speaks of the conquest of flesh. On the eighth day circumcision was performed, and at the eighth millennium, mortality will cease.

**VERSE 30,31**

See notes above.

*The Seventh Day — vv. 32-34*

**VERSE 32**

**“And on the seventh day seven bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year without blemish”** — Seven is the number of an oath that finalises a promise or a covenant. The Abrahamic or Davidic covenants were confirmed with divine oaths (Gen. 22:16; Psa. 89:2-4; Heb. 6:16-18). The Hebrew expressions for *oath* and *seven* are the same.

**VERSES 33-34**

See notes above.

*The Eighth Day — vv. 35-40*

**VERSE 35**

**“On the eighth day”** — The eighth day terminated the Festival of Tabernacles. It pointed forward to the epoch beyond the Millennium when all sacrifice will be brought to completion and both sin and death eradicated (Rev. 21:4). A perfected world will be given up to Yahweh, that He might be “all and in all” (1 Cor. 15:23-28). Then all humanity will be united in one (John 17:21), and the covenant of perfection will be completed in Christ. On this great day of the Festival, therefore, the sacrifices are limited to one bullock with seven lambs expressive of the perfect covenant completed in Christ.

**“Ye shall have a solemn assembly”** — See note, Lev. 23:36. This was called, *A Day of Restraint*, the closing festival, bringing to conclusion the celebrations of that time, and fittingly pointing to the termination of things at the conclusion of the Millennium.

**“Ye shall do no servile work therein”** — All normal labour, such as might remind them of servitude to the flesh, was interdicted on that day.

**VERSE 36**

**“But ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto Yahweh: one bullock, one ram, seven lambs of the first year without blemish”** — A computation of the previous sacrifices will reveal that during the seven days of the festival seventy bullocks were offered, answering to the seventy Israelitish families that went down into Egypt (Gen. 46:26), and the seventy nations into which mankind was divided as listed in Gen. 10. As those seventy nations

included both the two great families of humanity, Jew and Gentile, and they have been related to two covenants — of law and of grace — so fourteen lambs were offered typifying the perfect sacrifice doubled. As all this finally ended in a normal offering on the eighth day when at this new beginning sacrifice ceased for a time, so it will be then. The full ingathering of the harvest, symbolised by the Festival of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:39; Deut. 16:13-15) will be complete.

In regard to the seventy bullocks offered, it is significant, that when the Lord sent forth his disciples, other than the Apostles, so foreshadowing the work of preaching in all the world, he did so by appointing "other seventy also", and sent them into the cities. In doing so, he tied this action in with the Festival of Tabernacles, for he declared unto them: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest" (Luke 10:1-2).

If, in addition to the seventy bullocks, the evening and morning sacrifices are added to the other offerings, they total 215. This is an appropriate number, for it totals the years Israel was in Egypt (see Exod. 12:40 which is rendered as 215 by some versions. See our notes).

### VERSE 39

"These things ye shall do unto Yahweh in your set feasts" — This statement recalls the Lord's words in relation to his offering: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The term "set feasts" denotes *appointed times*. The expression is derived from a root signifying an appointed time of meeting with Yahweh. See Lev. 23:2.

"Besides your vows and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings, and for

**your meat offerings, and for your drink offerings, and for your peace offerings" —** See Lev. 22:18-33 etc. According to R. Winterbotham: "All the offerings commanded in these chapters amounted to 1071 lambs, 113 bullocks, 37 rams, 30 goats in the lunar year, together with 112 bushels of flour, more than 370 gallons of oil, and about 340 gallons if wine, supposing that the drink offerings were proportionate throughout." From this it can be seen that the Israelites did not receive their religion cheap. Assess the value of those offerings today, and a tidy sum was expended on sacrifice. Yet all that did not equal the real price paid for redemption (see 1 Pet. 1:18-19)! Nevertheless, it did serve to emphasise the statement of the Psalmist: "The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever" (Psa. 49:8). Through Christ, a person's soul may live throughout eternity by a resurrection from the dead. Do we seek to cheapen our religion today? What price are we prepared to pay for eternal life? The preciousness of redemption was impressed upon Israel by the value of the offerings they were compelled to make. Let us give willingly unto Yahweh of our substance as well as our strength.

### VERSE 40

"And Moses told the children of Israel according to all that Yahweh commanded Moses" — In performing this duty, Moses instructed Israel in the principles of personal sacrifice, as the Apostles were deputed to instruct believers in the principles of the Christ-sacrifice (Matt. 28:20; Acts 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:3).

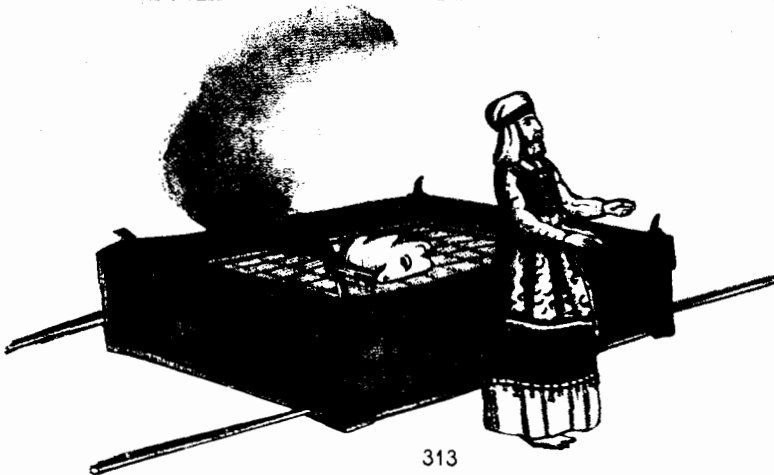
### Summary of Offerings

*The complicated offerings listed in this chapter are simplified by the following chart.*



The wilderness

<i>Feast</i>	<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lambs</i>	<i>Rams</i>	<i>Bulls</i>	<i>Goats</i>
Daily offerings	28:3-8	Each day	2			
Sabbath offerings	28:9-10	Each seventh day	2			
New Moon offering	28:11-15	First day of month	7	1	2	1
Passover	28:16		none listed			
Unleavened bread	28:17-25	Fifteenth to twenty-first days of first month (Each day)	7	1	2	1
Feast of Weeks	28:26-31		7	1	2	1
Feast of Trumpets	29:1-6	First day, seventh month	7	1	1	1
Day of Atonement	29:7-11	Tenth day of seventh month	7	1	1	1
Feast of Booths	29:12-38	Fifteenth to twenty-second days of seventh month				
Day 1			14	2	13	1
Day 2			14	2	12	1
Day 3			14	2	11	1
Day 4			14	2	10	1
Day 5			14	2	9	1
Day 6			14	2	8	1
Day 7			14	2	7	1
Day 8			7	1	1	1



## CHAPTER THIRTY

### LAWS OF VOWS

*This chapter re-emphasises the sacredness of Vows. First stating when a vow must stand unaltered (vv. 1-2), it then grants permission for a male to annul a daughter's vow (vv. 3-5), or a wife's vow (vv. 6-8). But all other vows must be scrupulously honoured (vv. 9-16). In its antitypical significance, the chapter reveals that our vows are subject unto Yahweh our Father, and to Christ our Husband. If their word does not specifically prohibit the vows we make, they must stand, and must be fulfilled. Other related subjects including the Nazarite Vow (Num. 6), the Rash Vow (Lev. 5:4-5), the redemption of persons and property that have been vowed (Lev. 27), and the solemn importance of keeping vows (Deut. 23:21-23), are treated elsewhere.*

*Why should the Law re-introduce the sacredness of vows at this point? Because a new start is about to be made with the Israelites entering the Land of Promise. Israel vowed at Sinai (Exod. 24:7), but a generation has perished because the vow has been broken. As an express reminder of the solemnity and the binding nature of the national oath, a special regulation is now issued governing all vows (v. 2). A permitted vow must stand, it demands fulfilment. But vows of daughters or wives are subject to the permission of the father or husband as the case might be. Fathers and husbands stand in relation to daughters or wives as Yahweh and Christ do in relation to the Ecclesia.*

#### **A Man's Vow Must Stand — vv. 1-2**

*It is religious vows that are discussed in this chapter, since they are "unto Yahweh" (v. 2). Two Hebrew words are used. "Nadar" is the broad term and can include all kinds of vows, but especially means positive vows to do something. "Issar" is the vow of abstinence, promising to abstain from something, often for a limited time. Either, when made by a male, had to be meticulously observed.*

#### **VERSE 1**

**"And Moses spake unto the heads of**

**the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which Yahweh hath commanded"** — The necessity to keep vows has been laid down already, but is again reiterated for the reason stated in our introduction to this chapter: a new start is to be made on entering the Land of Promise.

#### **VERSE 2**

**"If a man vow a vow unto Yahweh"** — Here the word *nadar* is used. It is the general term for a vow, and because it is one to which Yahweh's name is attached, it re-

lates to a religious promise. Vows could involve:

1. A binding oath to afflict the soul (v. 13), and therefore a vow of abstinence or humiliation.

2. A Nazarite vow (Num. 6:3).

3. The devoting of certain things or offerings of sacrifices to Yahweh (Lev. 7:16).

4. General vows including such things as alms to the poor.

Among the things that could be vowed were persons and property. However, such could be redeemed by the payment of a set sum (Lev. 27).

**"Or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond"** — The word "bond" is *'issar*, and is from a root signifying to *yoke*, or *fasten*, and therefore to *restrict*. It relates to a vow of abstinence or restriction.

**"He shall not break his word"** — The margin gives "break" as *profane*. A person has a solemn responsibility to keep to his word, especially when such has been given "unto Yahweh". To do otherwise, is to profane it.

**"He shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth"** — The rigidity of this law guarded against the proclamation of rash vows. There was no obligation to make a vow, but when made, the voluntary vow became compulsory — it had to be kept. Strict instructions are laid down for the carrying out of such. See Ps. 50:14; 66:13-14; Ecc. 5:4-5. Consider Christ's promise and vow: Ps. 22:25; 116:14,18; Luke 22:18.

#### **A Father Can Annul A Daughter's Vow — vv. 3-5**

*An unmarried daughter's vow is subject to the will of her father. If he disallows it, it shall not stand. This aspect of the Law is designed to endorse the status of the father as head of the household. As such, he occupies a similar position of authority over his family as Yahweh does over His.*

#### **VERSE 3**

**"If a woman also vow a vow unto Yahweh, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth"** — The reference is to a young unmarried woman.

#### **VERSE 4**

**"And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her;**

**then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand"** — The two words for "vows" are here used. The verse teaches that anything in the nature of a vow of performance or abstinence made by a young unmarried woman was subject to the permission or otherwise of her father. If her father objected on the day he heard of it, the vow was cancelled. In a typical sense this legislation taught that anything that believers undertake to do is subject to the will of Yahweh as expressed in His Word. If it does not conform therewith it shall not stand, no matter how solemnly it was pronounced, nor how binding were the expressions used.

#### **VERSE 5**

**"But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand; and Yahweh shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her"** — In endorsing the law of the father, Yahweh confirmed His own standing in His family. It is obvious that the daughter should have conferred with her father before making her vow. Because she did not do so she is accounted as having sinned, but under the circumstances, because her motive was sound, her sin is forgiven.

#### **A Husband Can Annul A Wife's Vow — vv. 6-8**

*As with the unmarried daughter, the vow of a wife is binding only if it is agreed to by her husband.*

#### **VERSE 6**

**"And if she had at all an husband"** — In making a vow, a married woman was subject to her husband (Gen. 3:16; 1 Cor. 7:4,14,34; Eph. 5:22-24). However, if she was betrothed, but not completely married, she was subject to both her father and her future husband. This is also the case with the Bride of Christ, who is subject both to her espoused husband, and her heavenly Father (Eph. 5:30-32).

**"When she vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul"** — The expression *uttered ought* is from the Hebrew *miba'* from a root signifying to *babble*. Accordingly, the RSV renders it as a *thoughtless utterance*. It is common for believers to be motivated by mere emotion, and hence to make rash promises that later cause them sorrow. Such

"thoughtless utterances" are to be avoided. See the warning of Ecc. 5:2. All vows and restrictions need to be governed by the Word, or endorsed by both Husband and Father.

#### VERSE 7

**"And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand"** — See on v. 4.

#### VERSE 8

**"But if her husband disallowed her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect: and Yahweh shall forgive her."** — The Law maintained the authority of the husband, bearing in mind the Husband at present in heaven. See also 1 Cor. 11:3-7; 1 Tim. 2:9-15.

#### All Other Vows Shall Stand — vv. 9-16

*Vows must not be made heedlessly, for Yahweh will demand payment in full.*

#### VERSE 9

**"But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her"** — The conjunction "but" introduces a note of contrast. Therefore this verse is parenthetical. It teaches that unless a vow is authoritatively forbidden it must be performed.

#### VERSE 10

**"And if she vowed in her husband's house"** — As v. 9 should be in parenthesis, this verse should flow on after v. 8. Reference is now made to the woman whose marriage is complete, in contrast to the previous verses that included an espoused woman awaiting the final nuptials. In this chapter, therefore, four categories are listed:

1. An unattached woman (v. 3).
2. A betrothed woman (v. 6).
3. An independent woman (v. 9).
4. A fully married woman (v. 10).

**"Or bound her soul by a bond with an oath"** — Compare with v. 6.

#### VERSE 11

**"And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then**

**all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand"**

— The fully married woman was subject to her husband who assumed greater authority over her than her father. The principle is expressed in Ps. 45:10-11: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy lord."

#### VERSE 12

**"But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and Yahweh shall forgive her"** — In this ordinance, Yahweh recognised the authority and right of the husband as occupying in the household the position that He holds in His house. He did so to establish the proper lordship of the man over the woman, and to keep peace in the home. See 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 3:6; 1 Cor. 7:15. However, in breaking her vow, the wife was accounted as having sinned, for, in fact, she should have conferred with her husband before vowing. But because of the circumstances, this sin was forgiven.

#### VERSE 13

**"Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul"** — An "oath to afflict the soul" would relate to fasting or similar forms of abstinence such as is indicated in 1 Cor. 7:5. The Day of Atonement was considered such a day of abstinence (Num. 29:7).

**"Her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void"** — In such ordinances as this, Yahweh treated the home as a unit, conferring varying degrees of authority on the parents. His legislation was not divisive of the home, but designed for its greater unity. To that end, a supreme, unifying authority was vested in the head of the house: the husband.

#### VERSE 14

**"But if her husband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day"** — The husband had to be decisive in his attitude. Objection to the vow or oath of abstinence had to be voiced on the day the vow was made. He could not wait to think the matter over, and come to a decision later; but

had to do so immediately. The rabbis claim that a son under 12 was also under the complete jurisdiction of his father in this way.

**“Then he establisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which are upon her; he confirmeth them, because he held his peace in the day that he heard them”** — A vow differed from a bond in that it was a positive promise to do something, whereas a bond was a negative restriction.

**VERSE 15**

**“But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity”** — If the husband failed to prohibit the vow on the day

it was made, and yet interfered with the performance of it, he was held as guilty of breaking the vow, and was punished accordingly.

**VERSE 16**

**“These are the statutes which Yahweh commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, being yet in her youth in her father’s house”** — The priorities thus laid down also involved the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, who were treated in Scripture as Husband and wife (Isa. 54:5). Israel, as the wife, proclaimed her vow at Sinai, and it was heard by her Husband Who endorsed it. Therefore it had to stand.

**CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE****YAHWEH’S VENGEANCE ON MIDIAN**

*Balaam predicts that a sceptre will arise to destroy “all the sons of tumult” (Num. 24:17). As a token of this, Moses is now ordered to wage war against the Midianitish men of strife. He does so thus foreshadowing the coming day of vengeance (Isa. 26:9; 61:2; 63:4; Rev. 11:18). This fulfils the instructions earlier given him to “vex the Midianites and smite them; for they vex you with their wiles” and have “beguiled you” (Num. 25:17-18). The Midianites, having enticed the Israelites to unfaithfulness, now must be punished. The key verse of the chapter is v. 3 with the word “avenge”. With it compare v. 49. It is significant that in the battle, not an Israelite is lost.*

**The Army Selected — vv. 1-6**

*The army is first selected. It does not include all the men of war since its purpose is not the vengeance of the people on the enemy, but to uphold the honour and holiness of Yahweh against the seduction of the Midianites. Therefore, only a token force is marshalled, because God is to give the victory. Over this host, Phinehas the priest, is chosen as captain: indicating that it is to be a battle of faith.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — Yahweh’s declaration of war had already been made (Num. 25:17-18). Now Moses is ordered to implement it.

**VERSE 2**

**“Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites”** — The Midianites only are mentioned, and not the Moabites (ct.

Num. 25:1). Evidently the former took the initiative in putting the evil counsel of Balaam into effect (see vv. 8,16). Midian was a son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25:1-6; 1 Chron. 1:32). His name signifies *Strife or Contention*.

**“Afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people”** — The avenging of Yahweh on the Midianites would complete Moses' work on the eastern side of the Jordan, leaving it to Joshua to lead the tribes into the Promised Land.

### VERSE 3

**“And Moses spake unto the people, saying, Arm some of yourselves unto the war, and let them go against the Midianites, and avenge Yahweh of Midian”** — Only a token force of a thousand men from each tribe was to be selected, for it was Yahweh's quarrel that had to be avenged, not that of the flesh. He would be the Giver of Victory, as in the case of Amalek (Exod. 17:16; Num. 25:11,13).

### VERSE 4

**“Of every tribe a thousand, throughout all the tribes of Israel, shall ye send to the war”** — Each tribe was to be represented by an equal number of men, as is the case with the enumeration of spiritual Israel in Rev. 7.

### VERSE 5

**“So there were delivered out of the thousands of Israel”** — The term *out of* speaks of a selection and separation. The army gathered together, therefore, represented the Ecclesia of the future.

**“A thousand of every tribe, twelve thousand armed for war”** — This number is the measure of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:16), the Lamb's Bride (Rev. 21:2). In Song 6:7 the beauty of the Bride is described as overwhelming in majesty, subduing and all-conquering “as an army with banners”. The type of the Ecclesia as both Bride and Army is consistent in Scripture.

### VERSE 6

**“And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest”** — Phinehas was the High Priest elect, that is, the High Priest to come. To him had been given the promise of an everlasting priesthood (Num. 25:13), so that in both status and future he foreshadowed Christ who

superceded the Aaronic priesthood. The fact that he was appointed to go with the army indicated that this was to be no ordinary war, but one that was prophetic in its significance. Such a war is foreshadowed in Rev. 19:11,14: “Behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war .... and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” Doubtless Phinehas was accompanied by Joshua, so that this army was led by two who between them represented the royal-priesthood of the Age to come.

**“To the war”** — Phinehas was appointed to lead the army. The High Priest could not do so since he must have no contact with the dead. Because of this, Christ's priesthood commenced after he had been cleansed from contact with death. For a similar reason, Eleazar, when he was High Priest elect, was commanded to handle the ritually unclean censers as it would have been defiling for Aaron to do so. As High Priest, Aaron had to keep himself separate from such defilement (Num. 16:37). Phinehas was marked out as a fitting leader and director of the campaign of faith by his vigorous and decisive action against Zimri (see Num. 25:7-13).

**“With the holy instruments”** — The word rendered “instruments” can denote armour, or weapons of war, as well as other things. The Ark was used at such times (see Num. 10:35; 14:44), establishing a precedent that the sons of Eli unlawfully claimed (1 Sam. 4:3). The march into the Promised Land was preceded by the Ark of the Covenant (Josh. 6:4-6), and so represented Yahweh in belligerent manifestation as Yahweh Sabaoth.

**“And the trumpets to blow in his hand”** — Reference to the use of the silver trumpets in time of war is recorded in Num. 10:9. When they were sounded, the promise was made that the Israelites would be “remembered before Yahweh your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies”. See notes at that place. The sounding of the silver trumpets can be likened to the voice of faith in prayer, essential to the successful prosecution of the Truth's warfare.

### **The Battle: Complete Victory For Israel — vv. 7-12**

*Normally in the prosecution of war, the Israelites are ordered to first offer the*



*enemy the choice of peace (Deut. 20:10-18). This is not done in the case of Midian because their attempt to seduce Israel from the worship of Yahweh reveals they are not worthy of such an opportunity. Complete victory is won by Israel and the army returns with the spoils of war.*

**VERSE 7**

**“And they warred against the Midianites, as Yahweh commanded Moses; and they slew all the males”** — This was in accordance with the instructions of the Law. See Deut. 20:13-14; Jud. 21:11. Saul lost the throne through failure to carry out the explicit instructions of Yahweh (1 Sam. 15:20-23). In slaying all the males, the Israelites destroyed the ability of the Midianites to propagate their kind. That presents a problem, because in Judges 6, Midian, some two centuries later, was represented as a strong nation. However, the Midianites now destroyed comprised only a fraction of the nation, a mere colony that lived in the vicinity of Moab and the Jordan. The five kings mentioned are said to be vassals of the Amorite king, Sihon (Josh. 13:21), and are described as “dwelling in the country”. Therefore, they comprised only portion of Midianitish power which later rose to dominate the Israelites. See Jud. 6:3-7.

**VERSE 8**

**“And they slew the kings of Midian, besides the rest of them that were slain”** — These kings of Midian were vassals of Sihon. The slaying of these kings comprised judicial execution and took place after the battle (See Josh. 13:21-22).

**“Namely Evi”** — His name signifies *Covetous*.

**“And Rekem”** — His name signifies *Versicolour*, suggesting that which is glamorous.

**“And Zur”** — Or *Rock*. The father of the princess slain by Phinehas (Num. 25:15), therefore providing a false foundation.

**“And Hur”** — Signifying *Whiteness or Splendour*.

**“And Reba”** — Signifying the *Fourth Part or Square*.

**“Five kings of Midian”** — They were evidently foremost in planning the seduction of Israel.

**“Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword”** — Evidently Balaam had delayed his return home to Babylonia,

and became involved in the war with Israel, and so lost his life. The death of the false prophet of Babylonia foreshadowed the conquest of the false prophet of Babylon the Great predicted in *The Apocalypse*. It was appropriate that this special army, representing the glorified saints in belligerent manifestation, should execute Balaam, the *Waster of the People*, as his name signifies.

**VERSE 9**

**“And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the spoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods”** — Normally, the Israelites were permitted to allow the women their lives (Deut. 20:13-14), but on this occasion, because of the seduction at Baal-Peor (Num. 25), it was denied them. On the return of the army, Moses explained this to the warriors and ordered the execution of those women who had proved a snare to Israel. The warfare was not merely for the purpose of conquest, but also for punishment, and as a warning to Israel. See also Josh. 6:21; 8:25; 1 Sam. 15:3; Ps. 137:8-9; Jer. 48:10.

**VERSE 10**

**“And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly castles”** — The term “goodly castles” is from the Latin Vulgate. The RSV renders it, *their encampments*, from the Hebrew *Tiyrah*, “a wall”. The term probably refers to a pastoral village situated in the country, and protected by a wall. In Josh. 13:21 the places here referred to, are described as being situate “in the country”.

**“With fire”** — The places were burned with fire not only to destroy, but to purify, for such centres were treated as defiling (see v. 23, and cp. with Josh. 6:24; Rev. 18:8).

**VERSE 11**

**“And they took all the spoil, and all the prey, both of men and of beasts”** — The “spoil” relates to goods, the “prey” to the livestock including the women and children who are distinguished as “captives” in the next verse. The term “men” (*adam*) is generic of both sexes. See Gen. 1:27.

**VERSE 12**

**“And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and unto the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the**

camp at the plains of Moab, which are by Jordan near Jericho" — As Abraham brought a share of the spoil to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:20), so Phinehas and his army did to Moses and Eleazar who typed the Lord Jesus as the Melchizedek King-priest of the future. Reference to the place of encampment is found in Num. 22:1.

#### Moses' Anger: Judicial Punishment Given — vv. 13-18

*Moses' anger is aroused as he sees that the Midianitish women have been preserved alive. As he explains in v. 16, it is these very women who enticed the Israelites into idolatry. He orders that they be executed as judicial punishment for their crime.*

#### VERSE 13

"And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp" — Moses and Eleazar went forth outside the camp to meet the victorious army, so as to preserve the holiness of the encampment (Num. 5:2). Contact with death, even in war, was accounted defiling, and required a seven days' cleansing process (Num. 19:11,16; 31:19,24). It therefore was necessary for the spoil to be inspected and purified before being brought into the camp. To do otherwise would have defiled it. The princes were there to represent the whole nation, and to see that the spoil was properly accounted for.

#### VERSE 14

"And Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle" — Reference to these "officers" is again found in v. 48. The Hebrew word is *paqad*, and its basic meaning is to *exercise oversight* in the form of *inspecting*, or of *taking action in order to improve or discipline a subordinate*. Their duty, therefore, was to overlook the conduct and actions of those under them. They were accounted responsible for the mistake the soldiers had made in preserving alive those captives who should have been put to death. Even if Moses had not specifically instructed them, they should have realised what was required, for in similar battles, all the inmates of those cities that had continued to resist Israel, had been put to death. See Deut. 2:34.

The women of Midian had been guilty of a greater sin than mere resistance, and the enormity of their conduct had to be impressed on Israel as on other nations. But the officers had overlooked this, and their mistake made Moses, the meekest of men, angry (see Num. 12:3; 16:15, and compare with Christ's anger recorded in Mark 3:5).

In the age to come, those nations guilty of seduction, like Midian, will be completely overthrown (see Dan. 7:11), as will also those that remain persistently rebellious (Isa. 60:12). The battle against the Midianites, therefore, typed the future conquest of the nations by Christ and the saints (Psalm 149:5-9).

The word "battle" is a rendition of two words in the Hebrew which in the margin are given as *host of war*. They can be rendered *battle of the war*. The Hebrew has the singular number *saba* in contrast to the plural form *sabaoth*, "host", found frequently elsewhere. Concerning, *saba*, the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* notes: "*Saba*' has to do with fighting, e.g. Israel warring against Midian (Num. 31:7). It has also a wider use in the sense of rendering service. Interestingly four uses have to do with the work of the Levites in the tent of meeting (Num. 4:23; 8:24). No doubt service for Yahweh is seen as involving total dedication and careful regimentation, and since God is Yahweh of hosts, enthroned between the cherubim housed inside the tent of meeting, work associated with the tent may be considered spiritual war. In Exod. 38:8 and 1 Sam. 2:22 a participle refers to the women who ministered at the door of the tent of meeting.

"Dhorme suggests that *saba*' may denote the length of time spent in the army. Such is its use in Job 7:1 and 14:14. In the first passage man's earthly existence is likened to hard military service. He must continually labour, endure suffering and be subject to a destiny beyond his control. In the latter passage man's tenure of abode in Sheol is described in terms of the restrictions and hardships of military service."

These definitions illustrate the form of warlike service suggested in the verse before us.

#### VERSE 15

"And Moses said unto them, Have ye saved all the women alive?" — The seductive wiles of these women had been designed to draw Israel away from the wor-

ship of Yahweh to its own destruction, so now a severe, though just retribution was required. The seriousness of their offence is recalled in Deut. 4:3; Josh. 22:17. Their execution foreshadowed the future destruction of Babylon the Great, and her associate harlots because of her seductions. See Rev. 17:5; 18:8.

#### VERSE 16

**"Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against Yahweh in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of Yahweh"** — The Hebrew *ma'al*, "trespass" is from a root signifying to *cover up*, to *act covertly*, and therefore implies some wickedness hidden away for shame. The seductions at Baal Peor were suggested by Balaam (see Num. 24:14), and were designed to lead Israelites away from the true worship. The details are outlined in Num. 25, and the lesson as applied to believers today, is set forth in 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14.

#### VERSE 17

**"Now therefore kill every male among the little ones"** — In Scripture this term denotes any under the age of 20 years. This terrible punishment was brought on by the shameless wickedness of the Midianitish women. By destroying the males, any propagation of this godless race was prevented. In like manner, we are called upon to put to death those "fleshly lusts that war against the soul" (Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:11). The flesh is prone to evil, and it is advisable to put to death its lusts before they mature to form habits that are almost impossible to conquer.

**"And kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him"** — In the age to come, in the warfare of faith, "Jezebel and her daughters", the Roman apostasy, will likewise be "put to the sword" (Rev. 2:20-23), and those only will be saved alive who are prepared to submit to the King of Israel and worship at his footstool (Zech. 14:16; Psa. 110:1).

#### VERSE 18

**"But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves"** — See the note on "little ones" at v. 16 above. The provision of this law was not designed for concubinage, but for slavery (Lev. 25:44). If an Israelite desired to marry any female cap-

tive, he could do so on conditions (see Deut. 20:14; 21:10-14). Similarly, in the age to come, it will be made possible for captive nations to submit to Israel, and be incorporated as subjects in the Kingdom (Isa. 14:32; Mic. 4:8).

#### Ceremonial Purification Of The Army — vv. 19-20

*Even though the warfare is specifically ordered by Yahweh, the victorious warriors are treated as defiled. As death is a negation of the Divine purpose in creation, and is in the world because of sin, it is treated in that way. Contact with it has made the warriors ceremonially unclean, and therefore a seven days cleansing rite is ordered. In like manner, in his warfare with the devil (Heb. 2:14), Christ came in mortality, and had to be physically cleansed therefrom in order to continue to effectively war against it.*

#### VERSE 19

**"And do ye abide without the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify both yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day"** — The process of cleansing from defilement through contact with death is revealed in the parable of the red heifer. See Num. 19:12,13,20, and our notes on the significance of the numerals *three* and *seven* in association therewith. The captives were those referred to in v. 18. In addition to their ceremonial cleansing they had to be clothed with a change of raiment, such as was honouring to Yahweh (Deut. 21:10-13). See the condemnation of Zephaniah on those who imitated the dress of the Gentiles by wearing "strange apparel" (Zeph. 1:8). Believers put on a change of raiment, when they "put on Christ" in baptism (Gal. 3:27).

#### VERSE 20

**"And purify all your raiment, and all that is made of skins, and all work of goats' hair, and all things made of wood"** — To purify their raiment required a change of clothes on the part of the warriors, and a cleansing of the defiled garments by washing. Such garments were laid aside until the evening when the next day commenced (Gen. 35:2; Lev. 11:32; 15:17). So the thought of a future new day was ever kept in mind.

**Ceremonial Purification Of Spoil Taken In Battle — vv. 21-24**

*Israel, as a holy nation, is required to purify for their use any spoil taken from the Gentiles in battle.*

**VERSE 21**

**“And Eleazar the priest said unto the men of war which went to the battle. This is the ordinance of the law which Yahweh commanded Moses”** — Even though Moses was present, the instructions were issued by Eleazar, for it is the duty of the priest to be the mouthpiece of the Law (see Exod. 4:14-16; Mal. 2:7).

**VERSE 22**

**“Only the gold, and the silver, the brass, the iron, the tin, and the lead”** — All these metals of varying values pointed forward to the qualities of work it is possible to build upon the foundation in Christ. See 1 Cor. 3:12. The word “brass” is most commonly rendered *copper* outside the A.V., even though brass was known in those days. It is significant, perhaps, that six metals are mentioned, for six is the number of flesh.

**VERSE 23**

**“Everything that may abide the fire, ye shall make it go through the fire, and it shall be clean”** — The spoil was purified by fire, representing the spirit of Yahweh Who is described as a “consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). But then it also had to go through the water, which represented the cleansing action of the Word (John 15:3; Eph. 5:2). Fire and water were also used in the parable of the heifer, the sacrifice designed for cleansing from the defilement of death (Num. 19:9; Lev. 11:32; 15:17). The spoil that Yahweh is today “taking out from the Gentiles” (Acts 15:14), must likewise be purified by fire and water (the spirit word), so as to perfect it for the Kingdom. The fire of affliction will also be used to humble and purify Israel after the flesh (Isa. 43:2; Zech. 13:9), in preparation for the restoration of the nation through a covenant of grace. See the purging power of the Gospel (1 Pet. 1:7), the purpose of trial (1 Pet. 4:12-14), and the advice of Christ to “purchase gold tried in the fire” (Rev. 3:18).

**“Nevertheless it shall be purified with the water of separation”** — Water represents the cleansing influence of the Word (Tit. 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:21). The Midian spoil

required purification, not only because it had been tainted with death, but also because it was originally heathen property.

**“And all that abideth not the fire ye shall make go through the water”** — The articles listed in v. 20 are here referred to.

**VERSE 24**

**“And ye shall wash your clothes on the seventh day, and ye shall be clean, and afterward ye shall come into the camp”** — The seventh day cleansing types the cleansing of saints at the Millennium (see notes Lev. 11:25; Rev. 3:4; 7:14). Until properly cleansed the warriors were excluded from entrance into the camp, for the reason expressed in Num. 5:2; 12:15. It should be clearly noted that those warriors were accounted unclean by their contact with death, even though they fought at the command and will of Yahweh. So with Christ. To conquer sin and death, he came in sin’s flesh, and required redemption therefrom as much as those he came to save (Heb. 13:20). So also with saints. They need to recognise the weakness of flesh, and their own need of spiritual and physical cleansing. Christ, of course, only required the latter.

**Distributing The Prey — vv. 25-27**

*The instructions for disposing the prey are important. The soldiers who are ordered into the battle go as representatives of the whole of the twelve tribes (vv. 3-6), and carry out the commandments of Yahweh on behalf of the whole nation. Therefore they are not permitted to selfishly keep for themselves all the booty they have taken. It must be equally shared with those who remain. This, later, is made law by the command of David (1 Sam. 30:21-25). He recognised the spoil as “that which Yahweh hath given us”.*

**VERSE 25**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — This additional law related to the disposing of the spoil.

**VERSE 26**

**“Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation”** — No notice is taken here of the spoil (see v. 11), but only the captured children and the cattle.

**VERSE 27**

**“And divide the prey into two parts”** —

The prey was divided into two parts to be distributed between the members of the army, and the rest of Israel. This meant that those who bore the burden and risk of war, because fewer in number than those who remained at home, received a greater reward. The same principle will apply also in the age to come (cp. Luke 19:16-19). To divide the spoil of war with those who remained at home subsequently became a principle of Israelitish warfare (Josh. 22:8), and was endorsed as such by David (1 Sam. 30:24).

**"Between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle"** — There were 12,000 warriors who did this.

**"And between all the congregation"** — The rest of the congregation numbered 591,500 civilians.

#### VERSE 28

**"And levy a tribute unto Yahweh of the men of war which went out to battle"** — The command of this verse followed the example of Abraham in voluntarily giving tithes to Melchizedek of the spoil taken from the army of Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:20). Yahweh should always be "honoured with the substance of increase" (Prov. 3:9). See Josh. 6:19,24; 2 Sam. 8:11-12; 1 Chron. 26:26-27; Matt. 22:2. The Hebrew word rendered "tribute" signifies "an assessment, a tax".

**"One soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep"** — See vv. 30-41,47.

#### VERSE 29

**"Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for a heave offering of Yahweh"** — By the payment of this tribute, the warriors acknowledged that their victory was of God, not of flesh. For the significance of the term *heave offering*, see notes on Num. 18:8. The Hebrew *terumah* is derived from the verb *ruwm* which in v. 28 is rendered *levy*. It will be noted that the soldier's "heave offering" was considered more honourable than that of the people's, for it was given unto Eleazar as representative of Yahweh, whilst their's was given to the Levites (v. 30). It should be borne in mind that those "in Christ" are accounted "soldiers", and as such need to set themselves to "please him" who hath appointed them to that service (2 Tim. 2:4).

#### VERSE 30

**"And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts"** — See vv. 42-47.

**"And give them unto the Levites"** — See note v. 29 and cp. with Num. 18:24-28.

**"Which keep the charge of the tabernacle of Yahweh"** — The "warfare" of the Levites in keeping the Tabernacle of Yahweh is reflected in the duty of believers today to "fight the good fight of faith". See Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 1:18; Heb. 13:17. There is a distinction made between the Priests and the Levites in this law, which seems reflected in the relative status of Apostles in comparison with normal believers; the latter, like the Levites, occupying lesser positions than the former 1 Thess. 5:12-13. See note at v. 47.

#### VERSE 31

**"And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as Yahweh commanded Moses"** — The Lawgiver and the High Priest jointly represented Christ who combined both offices in his person.

#### VERSE 32

**"And the booty, being the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep"** — In this verse "booty" is *malqowach* "jaws" (as taking food), and represents living prey; "the rest" is rendered by Rotherham as *over and above*, whilst "prey" is from the Hebrew *baz*, "plunder". The verse can then read: "and the live prey in addition to the spoil....."

#### VERSE 33

**"And threescore and twelve thousand beeves"** — "Beeves" is old English for *oxen*.

#### VERSE 34

**"And threescore and one thousand asses"** — See the summary below.

#### VERSE 35

**"And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him"** — These women are the "captives" of v. 19, the "man" or "persons" of vv. 26,28.

#### VERSE 36-47

## A SUMMARY OF THE PREY TAKEN BY THE ISRAELITES

*We have summarised these verses as follows:*

Prey		To Whom Allocated	Tribute Taken
Sheep	675,000	Warriors . 337,500	To Yahweh ... 675
		People .... 337,500	To Levites .. 6750
Oxen	72,000	Warriors .. 36,000	To Yahweh .... 72
		People ..... 36,000	To Levites .... 720
Asses	61,000	Warriors .. 30,500	To Yahweh .... 61
		People ..... 30,500	To Levites .... 610
Persons	32,000	Warriors .. 16,000	To Yahweh .... 32
		People ..... 16,000	To Levites .... 320

Whereas the “booty” or inanimate objects such as gold, silver, etc., represent the works of righteousness purified by either water or fire, the living prey represents those living people taken captive of the Truth and incorporated into the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16). Sheep, oxen and asses are common symbols of Israel, the ass being the only unclean animal redeemed by a sacrifice, and that of a lamb (Exod. 13:13). The captives, of course, represent those virgins who are taken out of the Gentiles (Acts 15:14), and “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” (Rev. 14:4). They are incorporated into the “commonwealth of Israel” (Eph. 2:12). It may be wondered as to what purpose could be served by the captive women being allocated to the Priests or Levites. This is implied in v. 47. The verb “gave” is from the Hebrew *nathan*, “to give”. From this verb comes the word *Nethinim*, the title bestowed upon foreigners, incorporated into Israel and *given* for the menial tasks of service in connection with the Tabernacle, or (later) the Temple. See the word in 1 Chron. 9:2; Ezra 2:58; Neh. 7:60. Among them were the Gibeonites who deceived Joshua into allowing them to enter into covenant with Israel. The type as relating to Gentile believers is obvious.

### The Army's Offering To Yahweh — vv. 48-54

*The officers in gratitude for the protection afforded the warriors under them in that none were killed in their war against the Midianites, give a special thanks-offering of gold and jewellery.*

#### VERSE 48

“And the officers which were over the thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses” — See note, v. 14. In contrast to Moses' reaction as described

in that verse, he must now have been pleased by the officers voluntarily seeking him out in order to express their appreciation of Yahweh. It is the will of God that His worshippers should “in every thing give thanks” (1 Thess. 5:16).

#### VERSE 49

“And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us” — The word *charge* is from the Hebrew word for *hand*, and denotes guidance, direction or con-

trol. The army of Israel lost none in the battle. Some commentators are disposed to dismiss the whole account as being merely figurative on the grounds that this would be impossible; but in the recent battle in Lebanon, Begin of Israel was able to report that while the Israelis destroyed many of the sophisticated planes used by the Syrians, not one of their's had been lost in battle. The account before us is both literal and figurative. Christ was able to thank God that "none" of them was lost whom Yahweh had given unto him (John 17:12; 18:9). There will be no loss in the battle of faith if the warriors of Christ allow his hand to guide them (John 6:39). The report of the officers to Moses that "there lacketh not one man of us" was proof positive that Yahweh had been with them in the battle, and led to the army desiring to express its appreciation in a freewill offering. The army Phinehas led represented the army that shall follow Christ (Rev. 19:14-15).

#### VERSE 50

**"We have therefore brought an oblation for Yahweh"** — The word "oblation" is *korban*, "a gift." See Num. 18:9.

**"What every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets"** — It perhaps is significant that the things offered Yahweh were six in number, being the figurative number of flesh. By the action of these officers, that which would normally have graced the flesh was voluntarily given up unto Yahweh. The NIV renders this: "We have brought as an offering to Yahweh the gold articles each of us acquired — armlets, bracelets, signet rings, ear-rings, and necklaces". Figuratively that points forward to what is required of all. In the battle of faith believers are called upon to "present their members as weapons of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13 — Gr.). Saints can convert those things that are normally articles of vanity into objects of faith pleasing to Yahweh. That is what these warriors did. They were not without fault (see v. 14), but through faith, gave unto Yahweh that which was pleasing in His sight. Apparently, the whole of the booty of the officers, as distinct from that of the soldier, was given up as a thank offering.

**"To make an atonement for our souls before Yahweh"** — The warriors had been numbered for war, and were found to have been preserved from death. They

therefore offered the booty in return for their lives.

#### VERSE 51

**"And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels"** — Gold represents a tried faith, and being wrought into shape according to a design, suggests the beauty of characters motivated by such. These were offered unto Yahweh (cp. Mal. 3:17).

#### VERSE 52

**"And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to Yahweh, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels"** — This has been assessed as representing about 11,000 ounces of gold. At the present value of gold, this was a considerable sum to voluntarily give up.

#### VERSE 53

**"For the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself"** — This verse, in parenthesis, implies that the soldiers, as distinct from the officers (vv. 49-50), did not make any such offering from their plunder. Apparently, the officers offered on behalf of themselves as well as those under them.

#### VERSE 54

**"And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of the congregation for a memorial for the children of Israel before Yahweh"** — The memorial was laid up in the Tabernacle before Yahweh to bring Israel into favourable remembrance of Him. It also brought home to thoughtful Israelites the need to give unto Yahweh the measure of faith that is due unto Him.

Memorials were recorded to be kept continuously in mind "throughout all generations" (Psa. 135:13). They were exclusive to Israel, causing Nehemiah to reject the advances of the Samaritans on the grounds that they had "no memorial" in Jerusalem (Neh. 2:20). Things and events recorded as Memorials include:

1. The Name of Yahweh (Exod. 3:15; Hos. 12:5);
2. The Passover (Exod. 12:14);
3. The deliverance from Egypt (Exod. 13:9);
4. The destruction of Amalek (Exod. 17:14);
5. The ephod stones (Exod. 28:12);
6. The breastplate

of judgment (Exod. 28:29); 7. The redemption money (Exod. 30:16); 8. The blowing of trumpets (Lev. 23:24); 9. The frankincense on the shewbread (Lev. 24:7); 10. The offering of jealousy (Num. 5:15,18, 24); 11. The silver trumpets (Num. 10:10); 12. The brazen censers (Num. 16:40); 13. The booty of war taken from the Midianites (Num. 31:54); 14. The stones of Jordan (Josh. 4:7); 15. The crowns of the righteous in the future temple (Zech. 6:14); 16. Greatest of all, the tokens of Christ's offering (1 Cor. 11:24).

The "Memorial" of the golden jewels now offered emphasised the value of faith. It was appropriate that warriors should offer it because, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Added emphasis was given to

this lesson inasmuch as Balaam was destroyed during the war. He had sought "the wages of unrighteousness" and received them, for the "wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). On the other hand, those who encompassed the defeat of his allies, and so ministered the judgment of Yahweh against him personally, gained the booty of faith, which, in turn they offered up to Yahweh. One further thought on this chapter. We learn that of the prey some 61,000 asses were taken. It would be an appropriate sequel if Balaam's ass was found among such! If so, as it had witnessed against the false prophet, it now found its way into the tribute of Israel offered Yahweh. So type and shadow find their places in the warring of the Children of Israel on this occasion.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### CONQUERED TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY THE TWO AND A HALF TRIBES

*The tribes of Reuben and Gad and one-half tribe of Manasseh seek permission to settle east of the Jordan River. Moses is deeply concerned at their request believing that it is divisive of the unity of the nation. Up until now they have travelled and fought together, and he does not want that unity to cease. He advances several warnings from past history, and exhorts them to preserve the national unity. He is reassured by the representatives of the tribes that their warriors will move over the Jordan with those of the other tribes to jointly do battle for the Promised Land. On that basis he agrees to the request. The half-tribe of Manasseh join with the other two as King for an inheritance east of the Jordan and that also is agreed to. The other tribes are notified of the decision, after which the conquered territory on the east of the Jordan is allocated to the tribes concerned.*

#### **The Request of The Two Tribes — vv. 1-5**

*The time is close when the Israelites will cross Jordan and enter Canaan. But two of the tribes, Reuben and Gad, observing that the land on the East is outstanding cattle-grazing country in which they specialise,*

*make request to Moses that they be permitted to settle in there.*

#### **VERSE 1**

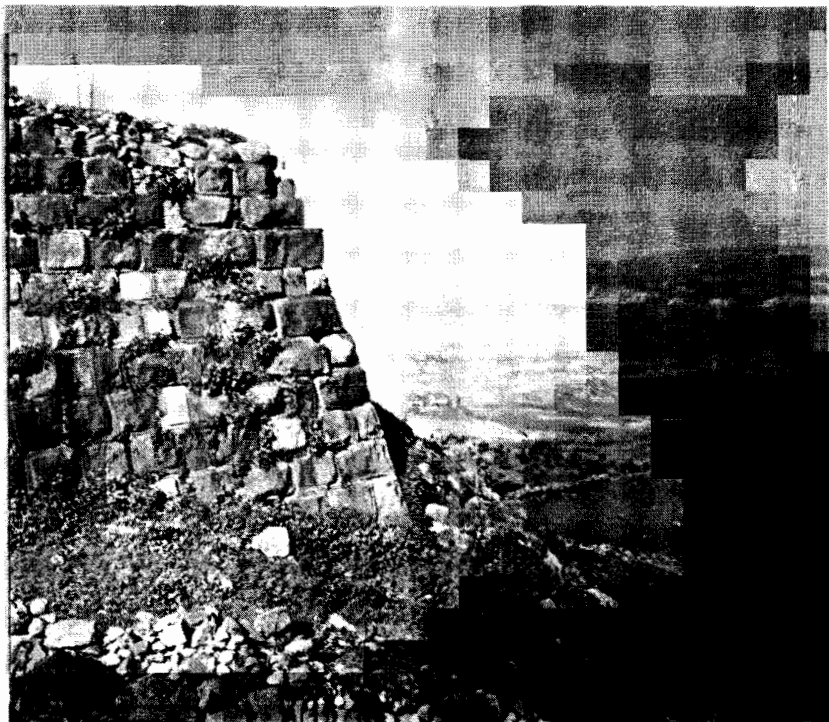
*"Now the children of Reuben and the*



**children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle**" — Reuben and Gad were closely associated together on the southern side of the Tabernacle, and, in addition, had common interests in that both tribes were noted for their cattle-raising. They had large herds. Where did they come from after forty years of wandering in the wilderness? It is obvious that a nucleus of flocks and herds taken out of Egypt was retained during the wanderings. For example, in the *second* year Moses asked: "Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them?" (Num. 11:22). This was after the first year when they had kept the Passover and had slain whatever sheep or goats were required for that purpose. But sufficient were retained to provide a basis to build up large herds and flocks in the Land. Moreover, a spoil of 675,000 sheep and 72,000 beeves (oxen) had been taken from the Midianites (Num. 31). This prey was added to the animals acquired after the conquest of Gilead

and Bashan, for Moses stated: "Only the cattle we took for a prey to ourselves" (Deut. 2:35; 3:7). The spoil of the Midianites was divided among all the tribes, but evidently there was nothing to hinder the Reubenites and Gadites from purchasing the share of the others; and with their evident preference for pastoral occupation, this is exactly what they were likely to do.

**"And when they saw the land of Jazer"** — The name Jazer signifies *Helpful*. It was close to Gilead, and was previously occupied by the Amorites, but was taken from them in battle (Josh. 21:39; 1 Chron. 26:31). It was sufficiently important as a centre to give its name to a district and dependent towns (Josh. 21:39). Its setting in the narrative before us, placing it between Diban and Nimran, would suggest that its location was on the elevated territory north of Heshbon (see also Isa. 16:8-9; Jer. 48:32). It is identified with Khirbet Jazzir, south of modern Salt near Ain Hezir (Unger's *Dictionary of the Bible*). It



The mountains of Gilead, on the east of the Jordan, as taken from the west bank of the river.



was given to Gad and constituted a Levitical city (Josh. 21:39; 1 Chron. 26:31).

“And the land of Gilead”—Gilead signifies *A Heap of Witness*, and was so named by Jacob after his encounter with

Laban (Gen. 31:47). It is the highland east of the Jordan.

“That, behold, the place was a place for cattle”—The area of Gilead is extremely fertile and provides excellent grazing ter-

ritory for cattle (see Mic. 7:14). Gilead is noted for its pleasant, rolling countryside, the glorious elevation of its plateaus, and its open fields ideal for grazing. The country appealed to the cattle-men of Reuben and Gad, but actually Yahweh had designed the deep declivity of the Jordan Valley as a barrier of separation for the tribes. Later, Gilead became a constant battle-ground.

### VERSE 2

**“The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying”** — Gad seems to have taken the initiative in this action, for that tribe is mentioned first in the request made to Moses, Eleazar and the Princes of the tribes.

### VERSE 3

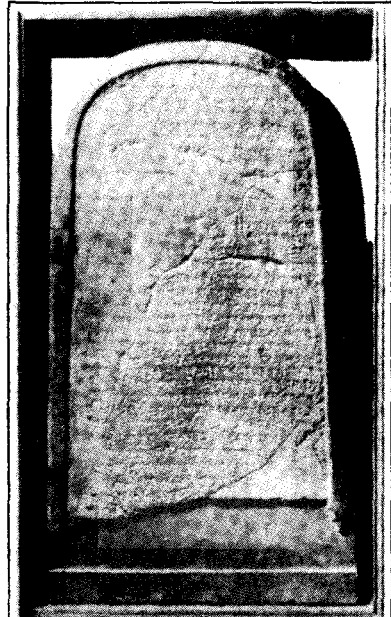
**“Ataroth”** — The word signifies *Crown* or *Diadem*. It was situated in the southern portion of Gilead, about 7 miles north of Dibon.

**“And Dibon”** — The word signifies *Pining*, from a root that expresses *Sorrow*. It is situated 4 miles above the Arnon. Though it is here assigned to Gad (v. 34), it was later given to Reuben (Josh. 13:17). Later still it was recovered by Moab, and became a Moabitish stronghold (Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:18,22). The important archaeological find, known as the *Moabite Stone*, was found there.

**“And Jazer”** — This place was evidently the name of a district as well as of a town. See note v. 1.

**“And Nimrah”** — In v. 36, this is given as Beth-nimrah, *House of the Leopardess*. It was situated about 10 miles north, north east of the mouth of the Jordan.

**“And Heshbon”** — Heshbon denotes *Intelligence, Reason*. Here it is assigned to Reuben (v. 37), but in Josh. 21:39; 1 Chron. 6:81 it is assigned to Gad. Perhaps the temporary settlements of the two tribes were mixed. Later it fell into the hands of Moab, together with Elealeh, Kirjathaim, Nebo, Baal-meon and Sibmah (Isa. 15:4; 16:8; Jer. 48:2,34). Heshbon was an important city dominating a strategic portion of the land. It was the capital of Sihon (Num. 21:25-26; Deut. 1:4; 2:24-30; 3:2,6; 4:46; Josh. 9:10), who is described as the King of Heshbon (see Josh. 12:5; 1 Chron. 6:81;



The Moabite Stone (pictured above) is a most important archaeological discovery unearthed at Dibon. In a remarkable way it supplements and corroborates the history of King Mesha recorded in 2 Kings 3:4-27. The language thereon is very close to Hebrew, and records the King's belief that Chemosh of Moab had triumphed over Yahweh of Israel. But where is Moab and Chemosh today? Israel, however, exists, showing the triumph of Yahweh's Name over that of His enemies (see Ezek. 36:21-23).

Neh. 9:22). It was noted for its beauty (Song 7:4), and was appointed a Levitical city (Josh. 21:39). However, with the decline of Israel, it was taken by the Moabites (Isa. 15:4; 16:8-9; Jer. 48:2,34,45; 49:3).

**“And Elealeh”** — This name signifies *God has ascended*. It was situated about a mile from Heshbon, at the present town of El-AI. It was later taken by the Moabites, and prophetic threats were uttered against it (Isa. 15:4; 17:9; Jer. 48:34).

**“And Shebam”** — This place signifies *Their hoar head*. This is the only reference to the site, unless it appears in the altered

forms of Shibmah and Sibmah.

**"And Nebo"** — The meaning of this name is given as *His prophecy* (*Dictionary of Scripture Names*), though others give it as *To Be High*. This town was assigned to Reuben (v. 38), although it does not occur in the catalogue of the towns of Reuben in the Book of Joshua (13:15-22), which may be because the Israelites gave it another name. Although rebuilt (and perhaps re-named) by the Reubenites (vv. 37-38; 33:47; 1 Chron. 5:8), it ultimately reverted to Moab as is stated on the Moabite Stone. Its site was on, or near Mt. Nebo, where Moses died.

**"And Beon"** — In v. 38 this is styled Baal-meon or *Lord of Habitation*, whereas Beon signifies *In the dwelling*. Beon was rebuilt and renamed by the Reubenites (v. 38). It is identified with Ma'in, 9 miles east of the top of the Dead Sea.

#### VERSE 4

**"Even the country which Yahweh smote before the congregation of Israel"** — This was portion of the country taken in battle from Sihon (Num. 21). It is perhaps significant that nine cities are named, for nine is the number of judgment.

**"A land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle"** — See note v. 1. The fact that these two tribes claim to have much cattle is used by critics of the Bible to be inconsistent with its record of the wanderings and hardships of the children of Israel, but such criticism is answered in our note on v. 1.

#### VERSE 5

**"Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan"** — The sight of their eyes appealed to them more than the promise of faith. That is how Moses viewed their request (vv. 6-7). It was based wholly on material factors. The land they sought had rich pastoral potential, and these tribes wanted it in order to enrich themselves. Moses interpreted their request, "Do not take us over Jordan" as a means of escape from their military responsibilities.

**Moses Expostulates With The Tribes — vv. 6-15**

*In the request of the two and half tribes, there is typically set out the choice of those*

*who do not want to sever themselves from their brethren, yet, on the other hand, are dazzled by present advantages so that they do not want to completely "go over Jordan." Moses warns that their request will expose them to greater dangers, and he is not prepared to grant their request if it means that they require to be freed from the war that will engage the other tribes west of the Jordan. He suggests that they are imitating the action of the faithless spies who discouraged the whole of Israel, and warns them that if that be the case, they will suffer a judgment comparable with that which the earlier generation experienced.*

#### VERSE 6

**"And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?"** — In view of the failure of Israel thirty-eight years earlier, Moses had just cause to feel anxious concerning the impending invasion of the land, and the effect of this request on the rest of the people. True love "seeketh not her own" but the welfare of others (see the dual exhortation of 1 Cor. 13:5; Phil. 2:4), and Moses interpreted their request to mean that they wanted to be freed from any further military responsibilities.

#### VERSE 7

**"And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which Yahweh hath given them?"** — The Hebrew word signifies *to dissuade, neutralise*, and so *discourage* the rest of the tribes in the work before them. Moses feared that if these two tribes settled in the very pleasant country east of the Promised Land, the rest of Israel might become discouraged in the arduous work ahead which included the risk and hardship of war.

#### VERSE 8

**"Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land"** — See Num. 13:3,21-23; Deut. 1:22-28. As the ten faithless spies discouraged the congregation when they returned to Kadesh-barnea from their scouting expedition into Canaan, Moses feared that the present request may result in a repetition of history.

#### VERSE 9

**"For when they went up unto the valley**

of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which Yahweh had given them" — Flesh is easily discouraged from difficult or dangerous enterprises, as Moses warned the representatives of Gad and Reuben. His reference to Eshcol was appropriate, for it was at that spot that Abram marched forth against Chedorlaomer in an outstanding act of courage and faith (Gen. 14:13); and there also, where the spies saw evidence of the great fertility of the Land, but were discouraged by the difficulties they imagined faced the nation in its conquest of it (Num. 13:23).

#### VERSE 10

"And Yahweh's anger was kindled the same time, and He swore, saying" — See Num. 14:11; Deut. 1:34; Psa. 95:11; Ezek. 20:15; Heb. 3:18-19. The tragedy of that incident and the warning of Moses is relevant to all times. There are those to this day, who are satisfied with what they see and have, and lack the faith to carry out the responsibilities of the conquest of Canaan. They become a discouragement to some, and an inducement to others, to follow their example, so making more difficult the labour of those who are motivated by faith. Paul used the occurrence as a basis for his appeal and exhortation in Hebrews 4.

#### VERSE 11

"Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upwards, shall see the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me" — See Num. 14:23; Deut. 1:35. Notice the way in which Moses described their failure: they did not "wholly follow Yahweh". God was prepared to go before them as a Shepherd (Psa. 80:1-2), but they did not possess sufficient faith to follow One they could not see.

#### VERSE 12

"Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite" — The Kenezites are listed as a Canaanitish tribe (Gen. 15:19). The Name signifies *Hunter, Smith* or *Fabricator*. Caleb, therefore, was a Gentile converted to the faith (Josh. 14:6,13) who was given a portion with Judah (Josh. 15:13), because "he wholly followed Yahweh Elohim of Israel" (Josh. 14:14). See note, Num. 14:24. The Hebrew *male'*

rendered "wholly" signifies *to fill or be full of*. Caleb filled his heart with the desire to serve Yahweh. He followed Him faithfully, wholly, fully, refusing to lower his standards, even though Israelites after the flesh opposed him. He matched his faith with his courage. Giants did not perturb him, nor was he deterred by the faithless multitude who threatened to stone him when he gave his report as a spy. At 80 years of age he asked for a mountain (Josh. 14:12), and expelled the Anakim therefrom (Jud. 1:20). He was a man of heights literally and spiritually, never content with the average or commonplace. His inheritance was fittingly called Kirjath Abar (*City of the Four*) and Hebron (*Fellowship*). See Josh. 14:15.

"And Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed Yahweh" — Joshua proved to be "an Israelite in deed" in whom there was no guile. It was fitting that he should lead the people into the promised inheritance. He represented Ephraim among the spies as Caleb did Judah (Num. 13:8). Ephraim became the principal tribe of the north, as Judah was of the south; and combined they represented the whole nation. The statement, "they wholly followed Yahweh" is repeated six times in regard to Caleb: Num. 14:24; 32:12; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:9,14.

#### VERSE 13

"And Yahweh's anger was kindled against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years" — See Num. 14:33-35; Deut. 2:14.

"Until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of Yahweh was consumed" — See Num. 26:64-65; Deut. 2:15; 1 Cor. 10:5; Heb. 3:16-19).

#### VERSE 14

"And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead" — Moses accused them of following the same course as did the previous, faithless generation, repeating the errors it manifested.

"An increase of sinful men" — Moses warned them of the tendency of the flesh. His exhortation was justified by subsequent experience. See Neh. 9:24-26; Psa. 78:17; Isa. 57:4.

"To augment yet the fierce anger of Yahweh toward Israel" — The fierce anger of Yahweh had been felt in the punishment meted out upon the previous generation, and all Israel had witnessed it.

In view of this, Moses warned that the responsibilities of the present generation to fulfil the purpose of God had increased, and if it turned from His way, clearly set out before it, it would receive severer punishment.

#### VERSE 15

**“For if ye turn away from after Him, He will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people”** — Moses warned that if they turned away from following Yahweh, their apostasy could have an adverse affect on the rest of the nation, ultimately resulting in its complete overthrow. The responsibility of setting a correct example rests upon all saints. “No man liveth unto himself,” warned Paul. The attitude and action of individuals can influence others to their good or otherwise. Therefore, the evil of turning from Yahweh is not merely that it is wrong, but that it also can cause others to do likewise. See Joshua’s similar warning Josh. 22:16,18.

#### Assurances Of The Tribes — vv. 16-19

*Confronted with Moses’ fears and warnings, the tribes are quick with assurances that they are not lacking in faith. They promise that they will play their part in the warfare against the Canaanites. After making provision for the care of their families and herds, they will join the other tribes in the conquest of the Land.*

#### VERSE 16

**“And they came near unto him, and said”** — Such a forthright speech as Moses had uttered could well have resulted in the eastern tribes replying angrily, and so widening the breach. Instead of that, and no doubt in love and respect for their aged leader, they approached him as children would a father, to express to him their intentions, and give him such assurances as might allay his concern.

**“We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones”** — The verb “build” in this context doubtless signifies “to repair” for the cities were already built, and only needed to be repaired and made ready to inhabit. With the widespread slaughter of the Midianites, there would have been many cities the Israelites could occupy, though they doubtless needed repair from the ravages of war.

#### VERSE 17

**“But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them into their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land”** — This assurance was faithfully executed. Their proposition, however, did not imply that all the men should go to the war and leave their families defenceless. There were still powerful enemies east of Jordan, and it would not have been wise to do so. Apparently, no tribe sent all its men to war. In the last census (Ch. 26) Reuben had 43,730 men; Gad had 40,500 men; and Manasseh had 52,700 men, a total of 136,930 men, but Josh. 4:13 states that 40,000 passed over Jordan, leaving 96,930 to care for those that remained. The expression “ready armed” is from the Heb. *chuwsh*, “to hurry”, “to be eager,” so that their reply can signify: “We can arm ourselves in haste”. The RV renders: “We ourselves will be ready armed to go”. They promised Moses that they would supply whatever warriors were required, and they would be provided without any hesitation. They would not delay the forward movement of Israel, but would hasten to erect the necessary buildings, and to arm themselves for war. All would be done with the greatest despatch and enthusiasm. This they did. See Josh. 4:12-13.

#### VERSE 18

**“We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance”** — This also was carried out. See Josh. 22:4.

#### VERSE 19

**“For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward”** — See v. 33; Deut. 3:11-20; Josh. 1:15-16; 12:1; 13:8; Deut. 3:11-20. By stating that their inheritance had “fallen” to them on the eastern side of Jordan, these arrangements entered into must have been confirmed by Yahweh.

#### Moses’ Final Stipulation — vv. 20-24

*Moses clearly sets out the conditions upon which alone he is prepared to accept the proposition.*

#### VERSE 20

**“And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before**

**Yahweh to war**” — See Deut. 3:18; Josh. 1:13-14. The expression of Moses is significant. Israel went out to war “before Yahweh”. The army fought His battle, in His name, and upon His conditions. It was not a war for personal aggrandisement, but one of faith.

#### VERSE 21

**“And will go all of you armed over Jordan before Yahweh, until He hath driven out His enemies from before Him”** — In this statement, the Canaanites are accounted as Yahweh’s enemies, and the victory is said to be His (See Deut. 3:20; Josh. 10:30,42; Psa. 44:1-3; 78:55). The cause of the war was the complete rejection of Yahweh’s ways and laws by the Canaanites, for by now “their iniquity was full” (Gen. 15:16). Nations cannot please themselves what they do or how they act. Even though not in covenant relationship with Yahweh, they are held accountable for their doings. At the coming of the Lord, they will be again judged as were the Canaanites when Joshua entered the Land; but this time by Christ and the immortalised saints (Dan. 7:10-14).

#### VERSE 22

**“And the land be subdued before Yahweh”** — See comments on v. 21. Israel was about to engage upon a holy war.

**“Then afterwards ye shall return, and be guiltless before Yahweh and before Israel”** — This is rendered as *free of obligation* by the RSV. Having fulfilled their contract to assist the other tribes in their warfare against the Canaanites, they would be free to return home.

**“And this land shall be your possession before Yahweh”** — See Deut. 3:12-18; Josh. 1:15. The addition of “before Yahweh” implies that He had endorsed their right to the inheritance east of Jordan.

#### VERSE 23

**“But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against Yahweh”** — The serious consequences of the tribes in question failing to fulfil their duty is accounted a sin against Yahweh, not against their fellow-Israelites. There is also a responsibility resting upon those called to be soldiers in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 2:3-4) to likewise engage the enemy in their fight of faith (2 Cor. 10:3-6; Eph. 6:10-18).

**“And be sure your sin will find you out”**

— Sins are mainly committed in secret with the hope that they will not be discovered nor punished. But see Psa. 90:8; 139:12; 140:11; Prov. 13:21. Moses’ warning words suggest that he was not sure of the real motives of the representatives of the eastern tribes. His words mean that they would not evade the consequences if, in fact, they sinned even in intent, for it would overtake them in the punishment they would receive. Frequently, the flesh fails to acknowledge sin as such until the consequences are brought home. The sin against which Moses warned, was the sin of selfishly deserting their brethren, and refusing to fight Yahweh’s battles. The cities they saw, and the land they claimed on the east of Jordan appeared attractive. They desired them as permanent settlements in contrast to the black tents and nomadic life which they had endured for so long, but those settlements ultimately proved a delusion. The curse on Reuben (Gen. 49:4) gradually began to take effect through circumstances of his own choice. His tribe settled on the frontier of Moab, where the fertility of the land promised an easy and an immediate gain. The names of the cities were changed in accordance with the Truth (v. 38). The people sought to serve Yahweh, but their attitude proved superficial. It was not long before the cities reverted to their original names and were re-conquered by Moab. In that way their sin found them out.

#### VERSE 24

**“Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth”** — The Hebrew *banah*, rendered “build” is elsewhere rendered “repair” (Jud. 21:23; 2 Chron. 33:16). The cities the eastern tribes inhabited were already built, but had need of repair, probably through the ravages of war.

#### Moses’ Condition Accepted — vv. 25-27

*Confronted with Moses’ fears and warnings, the tribes are quick to accept the conditions he imposes.*

#### VERSE 25

**“And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth”** — This was both a submissive and respectful reply, acknowledging the status of their leaders. Note how Joshua reminded them of this (Josh. 1:13-14).

**VERSE 26**

**“Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle shall be there in the cities of Gilead”** — It perhaps is significant that the leaders used the title of Gilead to describe the land granted to them. The word was coined by Jacob, and signifies *A heap of witness* (Gen. 31:47). It was also called Mizpah, or *A Beacon or Watchtower*, with the comment: “Yahweh watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another” (Gen. 31:49). Such a title was appropriate in view of the circumstances which would take the warriors from their families.

**VERSE 27**

**“But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before Yahweh to battle, as my lord saith”** — The representatives described the acceptance of the terms as being “unto Yahweh”. In like manner, believers “fight the good fight of faith” conscious that they are in His sight. See 2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:10-18; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; 4:7-8.

**The Nation Notified Of The Decision — vv. 28-30**

*The request of the tribes and the conditions upon which Moses grants it are conveyed through Eleazar and Joshua to the various representatives of the tribes. The two tribes publicly acknowledge their acceptance of conditions.*

**VERSE 28**

**“So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun”** — The religious and civil leaders; both being types of Christ.

**“And the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel”** — Pointing forward to the Apostles who will be the chiefs of the tribes of the Age to come (Matt. 19:28).

**VERSE 29**

**“And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before Yahweh, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession”** — See Ch. 34:13-15; Josh. 22:1-6.

**VERSE 30**

**“But if they will not pass over with you**

**armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan”** — The LXX has an addition at this point, reading: “armed with you for war before the Lord, and ye shall subdue the land before you, then shall ye cause to pass over their possessions and their wives and their cattle before you into the land of Canaan.” Accepting this addition, Moses ordered that should the eastern tribes fail to carry out their responsibilities, the tribes on the west should forcibly compel them to come over the Jordan, and to inherit the land. In other words, if Reuben and Gad refused to carry out their agreement civil war would follow.

**VERSE 31**

**“And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As Yahweh hath said unto thy servants, so will we do”** — They repeated the assurances previously given unto Moses, but now before representatives of all the tribes.

**VERSE 32**

**“We will pass over armed before Yahweh into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be our’s”** — Thus a clear undertaking was entered into. Reuben and Gad would gain the right of inheritance on the basis of their good conduct.

**VERSE 33**

**“And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph”** — This is the first reference made to Manasseh in this transaction. It does not appear that they originally approached Moses as did Reuben and Gad, and if men of the tribe initiated it, they must have done so now. But the reference to Manasseh as the son of Joseph is significant, for he was appointed firstborn, and given a double inheritance among the tribes, inasmuch as he is represented by Ephraim and Manasseh. This was in accordance with the Law of the Firstborn (see Deut. 21:15-17). Manasseh was the firstborn of Joseph, and accordingly, in order to keep the Law to the forefront, it was appropriate that his tribe should have two portions. So perhaps Moses suggested it. Be that as it may, Machir of the tribe of Manasseh took possession of it by the sword, and so de-



monstrated his right to the land (see vv. 39-40). See also Deut. 3:12-17; 29:8; Josh. 12:6; 13:7; 22:4).

**"The kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about"** — See v. 4; Psa. 135:10-11; 136:18-21.

#### Gad's Portion — vv. 34-36

*The tribe of Gad occupies and rebuilds eight cities within the borders of the land allotted it.*

#### VERSE 34

**"And the children of Gad built"** — As we have noted previously, the verb has been rendered *repair* as well as *to build*. The Gadites probably occupied and restored cities that they had conquered. The territory allocated to Gad was situated between Manasseh to the north, and Reuben to the south.

**"Dibon and Ataroth"** — See v. 3.

**"Aroer"** — The town was situated on the southern border between Gad and Reuben. The name signifies *Naked*.

**"And Aroer"** — This fortified town was on the N. Bank of the Arnon (Deut. 2:36; Josh. 12:2; 13:9,16) and is to be distinguished from the Aroer before Rabbath (Josh. 13:25). It was taken by the Israelites from Sihon (Deut. 2:36; 4:48) and assigned to Reuben (Deut. 3:12; cf. 1 Chron. 5:8), but fortified by Gad (Num. 32:34). Here the census of David began (2 Sam. 24:5). According to the inscription on the Moabite Stone, Mesha occupied and fortified the city, and in the time of Jeremiah it appears still to have been Moabite (Jer. 48:19). The name signifies *Naked*.

#### VERSE 35

**"Atroth, Shophan"** — These two words should be joined as Atroth-Shophan, signifying *Crowns of Treasure*. The place is unknown.

**"And Jazer"** — This place is the same as Jazer in vv. 1,2, signifying *Helpful*. It was an Amorite town on the boundary of Ammon (Num. 21:24), and assigned to Gad. It was fortified (cp. Num. 32:32), and later appointed as a Levitical city (Josh. 21:39; 1 Chr. 6:81).

**"And Jogbehah"** — This name signifies *Lofty, Elevated*. It is modern Khirbet Jubeihat north of Amman. To this place

Gideon pursued his foes (Jud. 8:11).

#### VERSE 36

**"And Beth-nimrah"** — This name signifies *House of the Leopardess*. It is called Nimrah in v. 3.

**"And Beth-haran"** — This name means *House of the Height*. It is named Beth-aram in Josh. 13:27. It was situated in the Jordan valley and is identified with modern Tell Iktanu.

**"Fenced cities: and folds for sheep"** — The towns listed were fortified against the enemy, and protection was also afforded the animals.

#### Reuben's Portion — vv. 37-38

*Reuben is given a portion south of that granted to Gad.*

#### VERSE 37

**"And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh"** — See notes v. 3.

**"And Kirjathaim"** — Kirjathaim signifies *Double city*. It is not to be confused with a city of the same name given to Naphtali as a city of Refuge (1 Chron. 6:76). Kirjathaim was a very ancient town east of Jordan, from which the powerful Emim were expelled by the Moabites (Gen. 14:5; Deut. 2:9-10). It was next held by the Amorites, from whom it was taken by the Israelites, and now assigned to Reuben. During the Assyrian exile, it was retaken by the Moabites (Jer. 48:1; Ezek. 25:9).

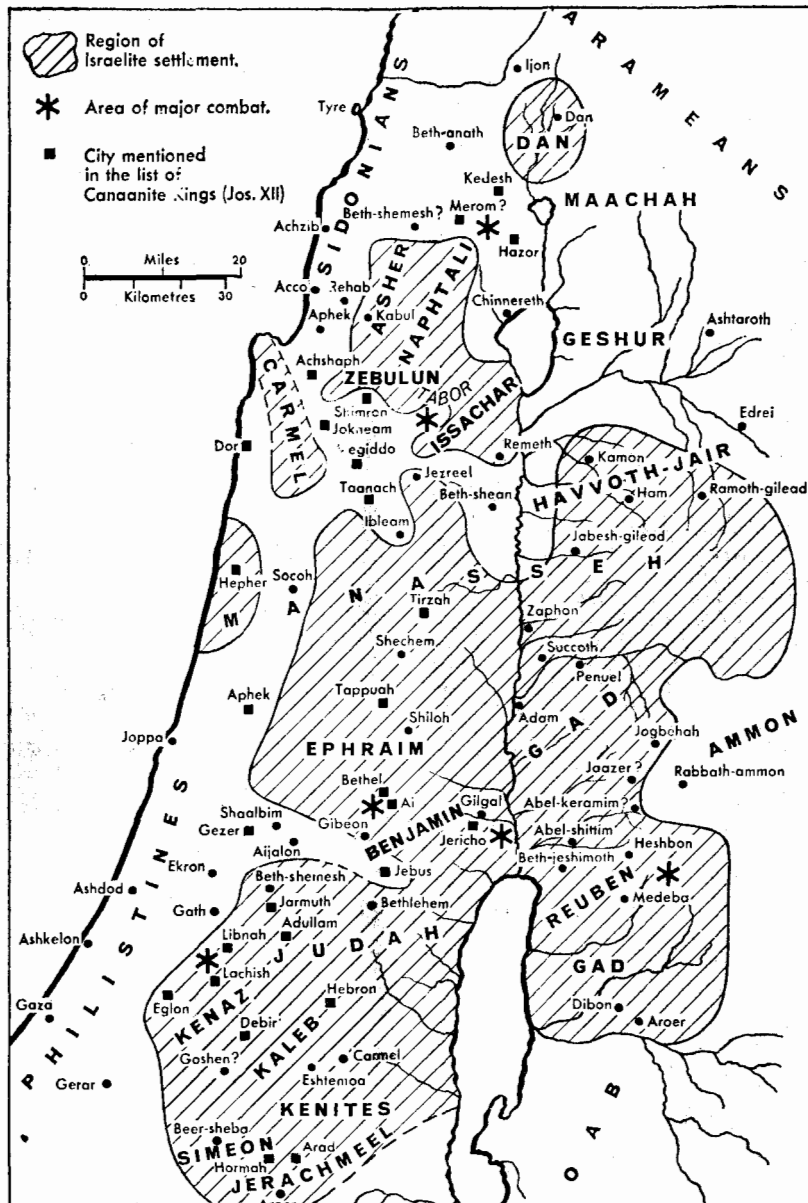
#### VERSE 38

**"And Nebo"** — See v. 3.

**"And Baalmeon"** — This name signifies *Lord of Habitation*. It was occupied by the family of Bela (1 Chron. 5:8), but is accounted as Moabitish in Ezek. 25:9. It is called Beth-baal-meon in Josh. 13:17; Beth-meon in Jer. 48:23, and Beon in Num. 32:3. It is modern Ma'in.

**"(Their names being changed)"** — This, doubtless, because the Israelites were warned against using the names of pagan gods. See Exod. 23:13 and compare with Josh. 23:7.

**"And Shibmah"** — It signifies *Coolness*. It is also spelt Sibmah, and was previously under Sihon. It is mentioned in Isaiah (16:8-9) and Jeremiah (48:32), both making reference to its vintage. The wine of Sibmah was so good that it was placed upon the table of monarchs, and so strong



The Conquest Narratives and the Regions of Early Israelite Settlement — From *The Land of The Bible* by Y. Aharoni, a most helpful historical Geography. Note that the occupation of Aroer by Gad at this point brought their territory both south and north of Reuben's.

that it quickly intoxicated. The site of the town has not been identified, though it is thought to have been close to Heshbon.

**“And gave other names unto the cities which they builded”** — The Hebrew renders this: *They called by names the names of the cities.* This does not necessarily mean that they changed the existing names, but that they used names appropriate to the circumstances.

#### **Manasseh's Portion — vv. 39-42**

*The Manassite settlements were established in Gilead. According to Num. 26:29-32, there were eight subsections of Manasseh, six of which are settled east of the Jordan. Therefore, Manasseh, the firstborn of Joseph, is given a double portion among the tribes; that being the firstborn's right (Deut. 21:17).*

#### **VERSE 39**

**“And children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead”** — Machir was the firstborn of Manasseh, and as far as the record shows, was his only son (Gen. 50:23). From him there sprang the various families of the tribes, among which was Beni-Machir of “the children of Machir”. Perhaps the name, Machir, was carried on by the firstborn in every generation. However, it is evident from their history that the *children of Machir* or Beni-Machir as the Hebrew has it, formed a family powerful enough to have a name of their own in the tribe and in Israel. See v. 40 and Jud. 5:14.

**“Went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which was in it”** — This may refer to the expedition briefly recorded in Num. 21:33. It is mentioned here out of context as a historical fact, because the inheritance of Gilead in the north was granted to Machir partly because of the conquest of it by him. It seems that the name *Gilead* is used in a general sense, for the territory actually allotted to Machir was in Bashan rather than in Gilead proper.

#### **VERSE 40**

**“And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh”** — As noted above, the term *Gilead* was used in a general sense. Actually, Gilead was also the name of Machir's son. From 1 Chron. 7:14 it appears that his mother was from Aram, the country of Laban. This, perhaps, was the reason why her son was called Gilead, for it was the name given to the border estab-

lished by agreement between Laban and Jacob. This probably explains the subsequent allotment of territory in that direction by Moses to the Machrites. See the reference to Gilead's family in Jud. 11:2.

**“And he dwelt therein”** — The family set out to establish itself permanently there.

#### **VERSE 41**

**“And Jair the son of Manasseh”** — Jair signifies *He Enlightens*. This hero of Manasseh was actually the son of Hezron of Judah who married a daughter of Machir in his old age (1 Chron. 2:21). Their son, Segub, the father of Jair, attached himself to the mother's tribe, perhaps because of the greater glory or inheritance associated therewith. Manasseh, as the firstborn of Joseph, would have inherited considerable wealth as well as prestige, and perhaps that attracted Hezron, so that, when he married Machir's daughter, he identified himself with the tribe of Manasseh instead of Judah. For similar examples of this being done, see Sheshan and Jarha (1 Chron. 2:34-35), and the Levitical descendants of those who married into the family of Barzillai (Ezra 2:63). The outstanding exploits of Jair are more fully given in Deut. 3:14. Here is the line of descent:

**Judah Pharez** First wife — Hezron

Princes of Judah Segub Jair

daughter **Joseph** Manasseh

Machir Gilead

**“Went and took the small towns thereof”** — For a more detailed account of his exploits, see Deut. 3:14. There were 23 such towns. See 1 Chron. 2:22.

**“And called them Havoth-jair”** — The name means *The villages of Jair*. He also conquered the important town of Argob (Deut. 3:14).

#### **VERSE 42**

**“And Nobah went and took Kenath and the villages thereof”** — This is the only reference in the Bible to Nobah. His name means *Barking*. It is conjectured that he was one of the companions of Jair, holding a subordinate position to him. Kenath is modern Kanawat, east of Bashan and west of the Hauran mountains. The name signifies *Possession*. It is said to overlook a vast region, and to be surrounded by a considerable number of ruined buildings.

**“And called it Nobah, after his own name”** — It soon reverted to its original name. See 1 Chron. 2:23.

## CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

### REVIEW OF THE JOURNEYINGS TO THE PROMISED LAND

*This is one of the few sections which is expressly stated as being written by the hand of Moses (v. 2). It serves as a summary of the whole journeyings during forty years from Egypt to the Jordan. Omitting the starting point in Egypt, and the final camp by the Jordan, there are forty camps listed. Quite a number are not found elsewhere in Scripture, and some today cannot be definitely located. But that is not surprising. Pilgrims and travellers do not leave the kind of remains that archaeologists can use to make specific identifications. In many cases, the names given were supplied by the Israelites themselves, being derived from some small local peculiarity or crisis in their wanderings. These names, therefore, can provide a hint as to the circumstances of the Israelites at the various points of their wanderings. The chapter divides them into four stages: Stage One: from Egypt to Sinai (vv. 1-15). Stage Two: From Sinai to Kadesh (vv. 16-17); Stage Three: Thirty-eight years of wandering from Kadesh to Kadesh (vv. 18-36). Stage Four: From Kadesh to Moab and the Jordan (vv. 37-49). The chapter concludes with the final instructions and exhortation of Moses on the Plain of Moab (vv. 50-56).*

#### **First Stage: From Egypt To Sinai — vv. 1-15**

*Moses records the stages of travel as the Israelites left Egypt and made their way to Sinai. These are the days that the people had to recount as they prepared for the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost*

#### **VERSE 1**

**“These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies”** — The children of Israel were properly organised for their withdrawal from Egypt, moving in orderly fashion as an army. See notes at Exod 12 37,51

**“Under the hand of Moses and Aaron”**

— Moses and Aaron led and cared for the people as shepherds. See Psa 77 20, Mic 6 4

#### **VERSE 2**

**“And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of Yahweh”** — This is one of the few intimations given of Moses' personal involvement in writing up the records. The journeying was by “the commandment of Yahweh”. This governed the “goings out” of the Israelites, which, therefore, were under divine direction. They followed the cloud. The divine guidance was direct, continuous, unmistakable, infallible. All plans, all routes, all

camping, all marching was thus subject to "If the Lord will" (James 4 15) To watch the guiding pillar was all that the people were required to do On that guidance they were entirely dependent, and so long as they heeded it they were absolutely safe It is a lesson for all time The eyes of the faithful must be continuously directed towards Him whose eye is constantly upon us (Psa 32 8) See also Num 9 17-23, 10 6,13 Unfortunately, the faithlessness of the people interrupted the smooth progress that otherwise would have been made

**"And these are their journeys according to their goings out"** — See Num 9 17-23, 10 6,13

### VERSE 3

**"And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month"** — For Rameses, see note Exod 1 11 The Israelites slew their lambs on the 14th day of the first month, and left on the 15th day which is Passover day (see Exod 12 37) It was the first month of the newly constituted religious year (see Exod 12 2, 13 4)

**"On the morrow after the passover"** — Rotherham renders this "On the morrow of the Passover" It was still the day of the Passover festival that commenced at 6 p m on the 14th day of Abib

**"The children of Israel went out with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians"** — It was not the withdrawal of a craven, defeated nation, but one that had triumphed over its enemies through the manifestation of Almighty Power

### VERSE 4

**"For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn"** — It was while the Egyptians were busy burying their dead that the Israelites were led forth into the wilderness After reflecting on the circumstances, Pharaoh in a rage sought his revenge upon the people he hated He heard that they had "turned back" from the wilderness and believing they were now in his power, ordered his army to attack them

**"Which Yahweh had smitten among them"** — See Exod 12 29, Psa 105 36

**"Upon their gods also Yahweh executed judgments"** — The Egyptians worshipped the Nile and various creatures found in its vicinity The plagues were an embarrassment to the worship of Egypt,

for they demonstrated how powerless were its gods See our notes on Exodus 12 12

### VERSE 5

**"And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth"** — In Succoth they erected booths under which to shelter, and as the nation represented the harvest of Yahweh, the remembrance of this was perpetuated in the Festival of Tabernacles or Booths (called *Succoth*) See Exod 12 37, Lev 23 43

### VERSE 6

**"And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness"** — See notes at Exod 13 20 Etham is said to be on the edge of the desert of Etham which stretched out for at least a three days' journey According to *The Century Bible*, the name is Egyptian and means "wall, fortification" This also is the meaning of the Hebrew word *Shur* (Exod 15 22) Probably both names refer to the fortifications which the Egyptians built along the line of what is now the Suez Canal to make some sort of defensive line against raiding nomads and nations

### VERSE 7

**"And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth"** — To "turn again" means that they retraced their steps in some way Etham on the edge of the wilderness, was east of the Gulf of Suez, and if the Israelites had continued in that direction, they would not have had to cross the Red Sea But there were Egyptian fortifications there, in addition, the lesson of baptism had to be impressed upon them, and Yahweh's Name revealed thereby (Isa 63 12) Therefore, having been given a glimpse of the wilderness that they might understand the difficulties of the way, they turned and came down the western side of the Gulf to Pi-hahiroth Pi-hahiroth signifies *The Passage Through the Mountains*, or *The Mouth Of the Gorges* (Strong) Although the situation of this place is in doubt, the name does suggest the presence of steep valleys or gorges, and of rugged mountains Now, such conditions do not exist at Suez, and therefore the claim often put forward, that the Israelites merely waded over marshy territory in that vicinity can not apply However, some 15m (20 km) south of Suez there is a ridge of harsh

mountains that terminate abruptly on the shore of the Red Sea. It is called Ras Attakah, or *Mountain of Deliverance*. One traveller has described it as having a grim and terrible aspect, rising precipitously from the pass below where mountainous heaps of sand dunes lay scattered in awful desolation. The ridge circles around to the north, from whence the enemy approached, whilst the hills to the west and south, and the sea on the east shut the Israelites in.

Some claim that the crossing was at the head of the Gulf of Suez and was caused by the action of wind and tide, enabling the Israelites to wade across marshy ground. But this would require a north-east wind, whereas the narrative speaks only of an east wind. If the sea was merely driven back, it would not account for a wall of water on either side, upon which the narrative insists.

Moreover, the Egyptians could easily have cut off the Israelites by riding around the head of the Gulf. They had swift chariots that could easily have out-distanced the slow movements of the tribes with their families.

Josephus states: "They were shut up between the mountains and the sea; mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impassable by reason of their rough-

ness, and obstructed their flight". The terrain at Ras Attakah answers to that description.

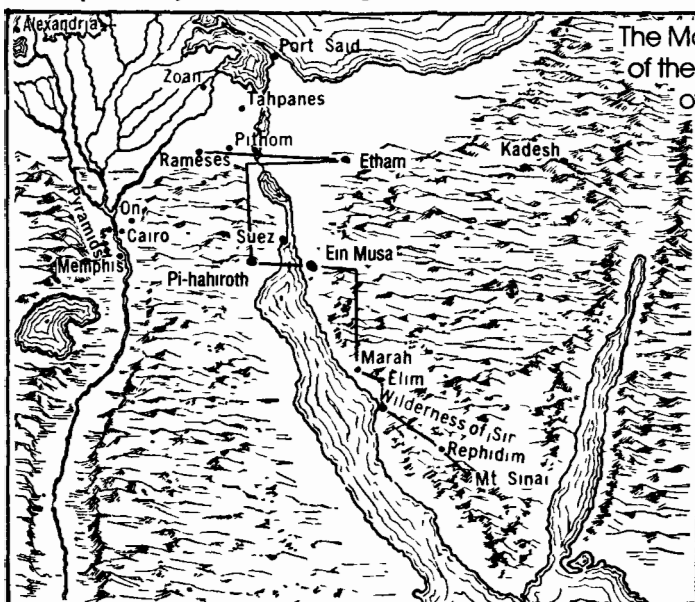
**"Which is before Baal-zephon"** — This name signifies *Baal (Lord) of the North*. See Exod. 14:2.

**"And they pitched before Migdal"** — Migdal signifies *Watchtower*. From here the Israelites viewed with fear and consternation the approaching Egyptian army. See Exod. 14:2,9.

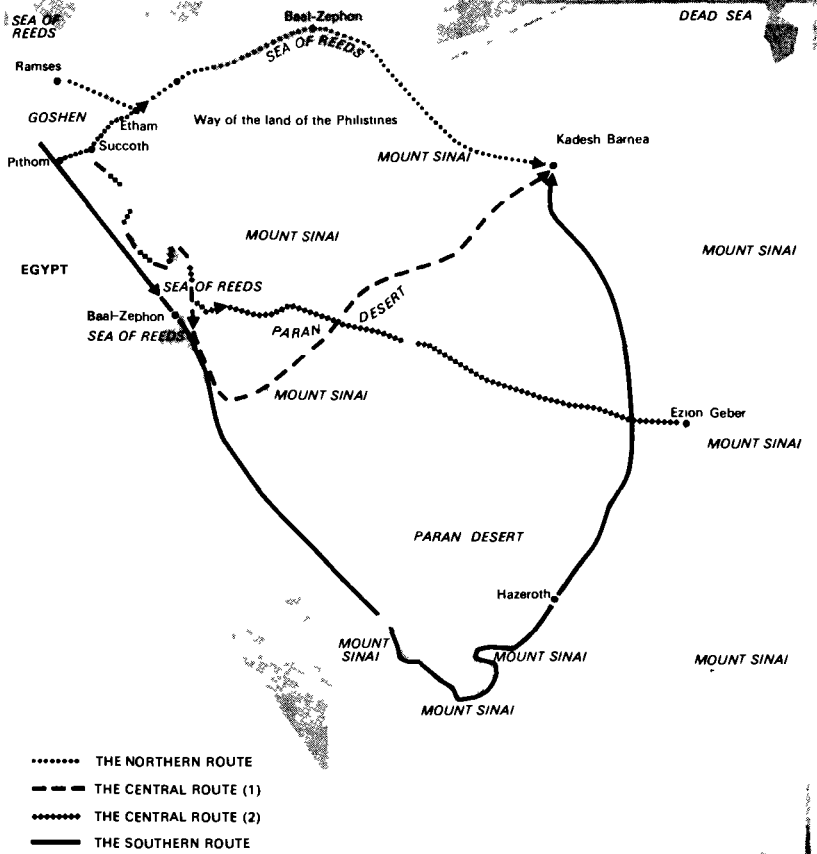
#### VERSE 8

**"And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness"** — See Exod. 14:22. They were "baptised into Moses" (1 Cor. 10:1-2).

**"And went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah"** — They returned to Etham by passing through the Red Sea towards the top of the Gulf of Suez. Three days later, they arrived at Marah which signifies *Bitterness*. They found the water bitter, and complained to Moses. Under direction of Yahweh, Moses healed the bitter water by the tree that foreshadowed the crucifixion. See Exod. 15:22-23.



The Movements  
of the Children  
of Israel.



Illustrating the various divergent theories of the Wilderness Wanderings.

**VERSE 9**

“And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim; and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there” — See Exod. 15:27. Having left Marah where the bitter waters were healed, the Israelites came to Elim (Strong Ones) where the symbolism foreshadowed the Millennium providing them with an incentive for their strivings. They discovered twelve fountains of water (the Israelitish waters of salvation) feeding seventy palm trees representing Israel after the flesh (foreshadowed by the seventy descendants of Jacob that went down to Egypt — Gen. 46:27), and the Gentiles

(foreshadowed by the division of the descendants of Noah into seventy national families — Gen. 10).

**VERSE 10**

“And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea” — This encampment, like of those of Dophkah and Alush (v. 13), is not mentioned in Exodus, and is generally ignored by most commentators in tracing the wanderings of the Children of Israel. However, the general statement of Exod. 16:1; 17:1 does leave room for such a station. Moreover, it shows that Sinai must be found in the general direction of the Red Sea so supporting the claim of Jebel Musa (the traditional

Mount Sinai) for the honour of the site. Certainly, this station does not support the direction of the wanderings that has gained favour among some, who claim that the route was along the Mediterranean, or directly across the north of the Sinai Peninsula.

The Israelites must have emerged from the maze of low hills inland, and returned to flat shore of the Gulf of Suez. They evidently moved down the Wadi Tayibeh, a deep, rugged defile, overshadowed by strangely-coloured rocks, which gives splendid grandeur to the scenery, a grandeur which is increased by the solitude of the spot. The Wadi leads to a broad plain, that forms the eastern shore of the Red Sea. Their arrival here was fitted to accomplish important exhortatory purposes, and to aid in their religious discipline and development. The scene on which they would have looked was eminently instructive. Since crossing the Red Sea, murmurings had broken out, and despondency had been experienced as the Divine goodness had been forgotten; and now the people were again brought to the Red Sea, to be reminded of the great deliverance they had so lately experienced, and to learn the lesson of unflinching trust in Yahweh. On the opposite shore loomed the mountains of Egypt, "the house of their bondage". Here it could be seen from a safe distance that the barrier between them and their enemies was for ever impassable. In that land was "lamentation, and mourning, and woe." Egyptian families were still prostrate under a double grief. They "mourned and were in bitterness for the firstborn", for as yet the embalmed dead had not been hidden away. And it was fitting to recall to Israel, as a rebuke to their murmurings, that recently the mangled corpses of their enemies had been lashed by the waters of this Gulf, or cast upon the beach a prey for the vultures and jackals of the desert. Paul calls upon Gentile converts to "remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh" were then "without Christ and strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. 2:11-13). And the same exercise was now brought home to the Israelites in preparation for the trials of the wilderness.

The Plain of Murkah is usually regarded as the Wilderness of Sin. It is a wide open plain, bounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by a lofty mountain ridge, exhibiting on a large scale the colours of the Desert. The central mountain is very

grand — a naked alp of red granite, rent by a wild and gloomy gorge, and high up on its slopes lie ridges of pure white sandstone. It is a scene of grandeur and desolation which is strangely impressive. It finally merges into the great plain of El Kaa.

#### VERSE 11

**"And they removed from the Red Sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin"** —

The wilderness of Sin is a tract of country lying along the eastern shore of the Red Sea. It is thought to be the present plain of El-Kaa, which commences at the mouth of Wady Taiyibah, and extends along the whole south-western side of the peninsula. It was the scene of the murmurings of the people, and the miracles of the quails and manna (Exod. 16:1; 17:1). It is connected also with the Plain of el-Markhah on the coast. The word is derived from the Hebrew, and according to *The English & Hebrew Bible Concordance* denotes a bush.

#### VERSE 12

**"And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin and encamped in Dophkah"** —

This station is not mentioned in the Exodus account. The word signifies *To Knock, To hit hard, or To beat*. What happened there is unknown, but the significance of the word suggests that some disciplinary action was taken by Yahweh against the Israelites perhaps for some unspecified misdemeanor.

#### VERSE 13

**"And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush"** —

Davis gives the meaning of this word as *Tumult of men*, but the *Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names* gives *I knead*, i.e. make bread. Dophkah has not been identified beyond all doubt. However, according to G. Sandie in *Horeb And Jerusalem*, it can be identified with the mountainous district of the Sinai Peninsula as one moves towards Jebel Musa (Mt. Sinai). He writes: "Accordingly, leading from this plain (The Wilderness of Sin) into the mountain district is Wadi Dugheit, or Dughadeh, or Docht, in some maps. This answers to Dophkah. The next resting-place is Alush. Now, winding up the wadis, in the direction of Sinai, there is a mountain named *Ala*. The modern name approximates to the Scripture one, and the identification is so far confirmed by two cir-





The Wadi Feiran identified by many today as the site of Rephidim.

cumstances mentioned by the Jewish chronicler, and referred to in Kitto's *Cyclopaedia*. One is, that Alush was a strong fort. This feature forbids the idea of its lo-

cation on a plain, but suits well such a locality as that on the map where it might guard the advance into the interior from the harbour of Tur. The same chronicler

adds, that the distance from Dophkah was twelve miles, which also seems to agree with our location of Mount Sinai. Moreover, at neither of these encampments are the Israelites said to have suffered from want of water. Josephus mentions that they lighted on small fountains till they came to Rephidim. Now, it is to be remarked, that there are wells up among the mountains in this very direction at the present day. In fact, the finest water is not from the plain, but from the hills and mountains. The pools and wells there are formed by the water from the upper mountains filtering its way to the plain below".

That being the case, either definition of the word Alush is appropriate. If there was a fortress there, Davis' explanation is appropriate; whilst also is that of the *Dictionary*, for the Israelites were supplied with the necessities of life (see Exod. 16:16-18).

#### VERSE 14

**"And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink"** — The circumstances are recorded in Exod. 17:1. It was probably located in Wadi Refayid or Wadi Rudhwan (known also as Feiran). The Wadi Feiran moves steeply ever upwards, along a valley which underfoot is stony and difficult to walk on. There are signs of ample water there, for palms and other plants flourish, but it is underground. Hence, whilst the word signifies *Places of Rest*, the Israelites found no rest! In fact, they murmured at the lack of water, and when that was supplied out of the Rock, they were attacked by the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8-16).

#### VERSE 15

**"And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai"** — See Exodus 19:1. They encamped in the wadis leading to Mount Horeb, a twin peak with that of Sinai on a high plateau. Here the nation entered into covenant with Yahweh.

#### Second Stage: From Sinai to Kadesh — vv. 16-17

*The second stage in the wanderings of the children of Israel brings them to Kadesh Barnea. Taberah (Num. 11:3, Deut. 9:22) is omitted, and Kadesh Barnea is given its original name of Rithmah.*

#### VERSE 16

**"And they removed from the desert of Sinai"** — The Israelites remained in the vicinity of Sinai for just over a year

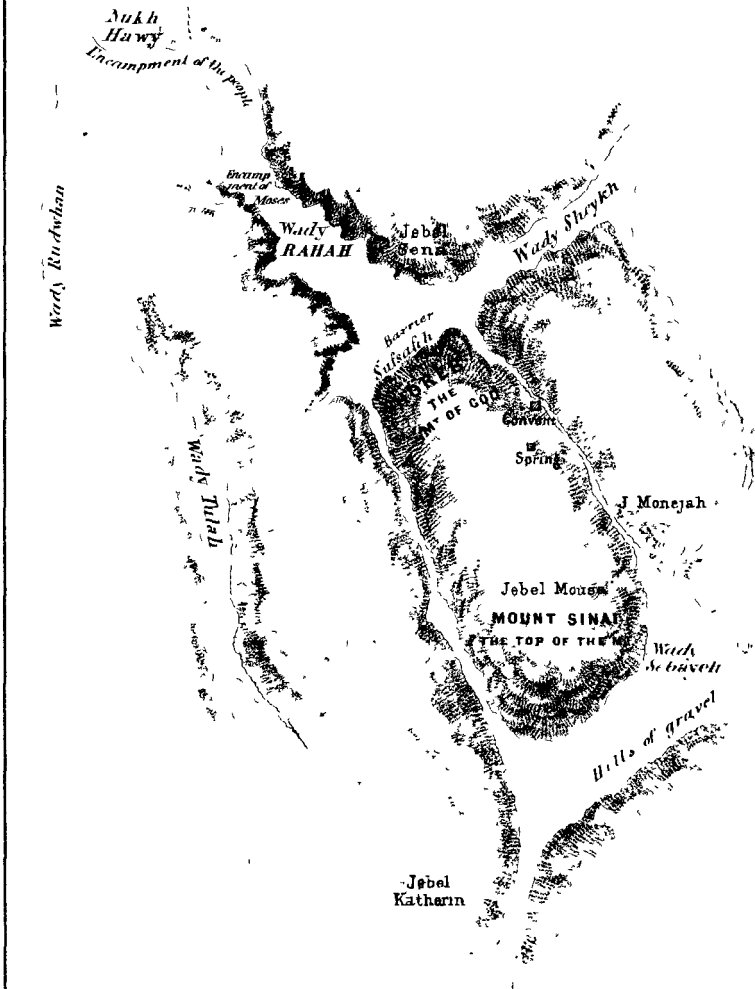
**"And pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah"** — The name signifies *The Graves of Lust*, and was noted for the smiting down of those who greedily consumed the quails sent them of Yahweh without first acknowledging His goodness. See Num. 11:34.

**"And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth"** — Hazeroth signifies *The Place Where She Was Separated*. Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses, and in consequence Miriam was punished being afflicted with leprosy. When Moses pleaded her cause, Yahweh decreed that she be "shut out from the camp seven days" (Num. 11:35; 12:14-15). So it was called Hazeroth. The place is identified with Ein Hudra, a small plain in the Wadi Sa'al north west of Mt. Sinai. There is an oasis there today, and some ancient inscriptions that travellers have cut into the cliffs adjacent to the large plain, indicating that it has been a stopping place for travellers from ancient times.

#### VERSE 18

**"And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah"** — Rithmah is said to be unidentified. But *The Companion Bible* identifies it with Kadesh-Barnea, and there appears to be strong support for the idea. The word elsewhere is rendered *Juniper* (a specie of broom) whose roots afforded the food of extreme poverty (Job 30:4), and as a plant is used to symbolise bitter words (Psa. 120:4). The most bitter words were spoken at Kadesh-Barnea, for there the spies came back with their faithless report, and the people in anger turned on Moses. If Rithmah is not Kadesh-Barnea, that important station, the most significant one of all the stopping places, does not receive mention in this section of the wanderings. On the other hand, Rithmah is not mentioned elsewhere. And if Rithmah is not Kadesh, the thirty-eight years of wanderings are not properly accounted for. If Rithmah were the original name, it was probably changed to Kadesh-Barnea in consequence of the sojourning of the Israelites at that point. Kadesh-Barnea signifies *The Sanctuary of the Wandering Son*, or *Fugitive*. It is identified with Ein

# HOREB AND SINAI.



Kadeis about 70m. (appr. 100km) south of Hebron. It was given the name of Kadesh (*Sanctuary*) because the Tabernacle rested there. For thirty-eight years, the children of Israel wandered in the vicinity of Kadesh-Barnea, whilst the worship of Yahweh was largely abandoned.

In support of the claim that Rithmah is another name for Kadesh, given to commemorate the bitter voices of the people consequent upon the report of the spies, it is also worthy of note that it was likewise named En-Mishpat, or *The Well of Judgment* (Gen. 14:7), and Meribah or *Strife* (Num. 20:13).

### Third Stage: Thirty-Eight Years of Wandering Adjacent to Kadesh — vv. 19-36

*If Rithmah is identified with Kadesh, the children of Israel again assembled there at the close of the thirty-eight years wandering. This represented a period of aimless, purposeless wandering in the wilderness, whilst the old generation died off one by one.*

#### VERSE 19

**“And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez”** — Rimmon-parez signifies *The Pomegranate of the Breach*. The Hebrew word for pomegranate, *Rummon*, is from a root signifying *To exalt oneself*. Possibly the people exalted themselves at this place in such a manner as to widen the existing breach between them and Yahweh. Rimmon-parez is identified by some with Wadi Ramon south of Avdat in the Negev. It is surmised that Ramon is a corruption of the ancient name Rimmon-Perez here mentioned. The land drops away dramatically at this point into what is known as the Ramon Crater a precipitous descent of some 300m. The landscape is lonely, wild and barren. The present road runs south traversing the deep Crater on to the Wadi Paran.

#### VERSE 20

**“And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah”** — *Libnah* signifies *Whiteness*. But whiteness is used in the Bible for two conflicting principles: leprosy and purity; and leprosy stands for sin. The name Laban, Jacob's father-in-law, is from the same Hebrew root.

#### VERSE 21

**“And they removed from Libnah, and**

**pitched at Rissah”** — Rissah denotes *Dripping to Ruin*, a name appropriate to a doomed generation. Unidentified.

#### VERSE 22

**“And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah”** — The name signifies *An Assembly, a Convocation*. In other words, a gathering of the people together perhaps to expostulate, a complain.

#### VERSE 23

**“And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher”** — Shapher signifies *Beauty, Elegance*. It is unidentified, but evidently provided a contrast to the harsh, monotonous desert region.

#### VERSE 24

**“And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah”** — Haradah signifies *Terror*. Perhaps the Israelites were attacked by the dwellers of Mount Shapher, and driven to Haradah! Whatever the cause, they experienced fear and terror.

#### VERSE 25

**“And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth”** — The word denotes *Congregations, or Assemblies for worship*. Has fear driven them to seek Yahweh? If so it was in vain; they soon reverted to their previous ways.

#### VERSE 26

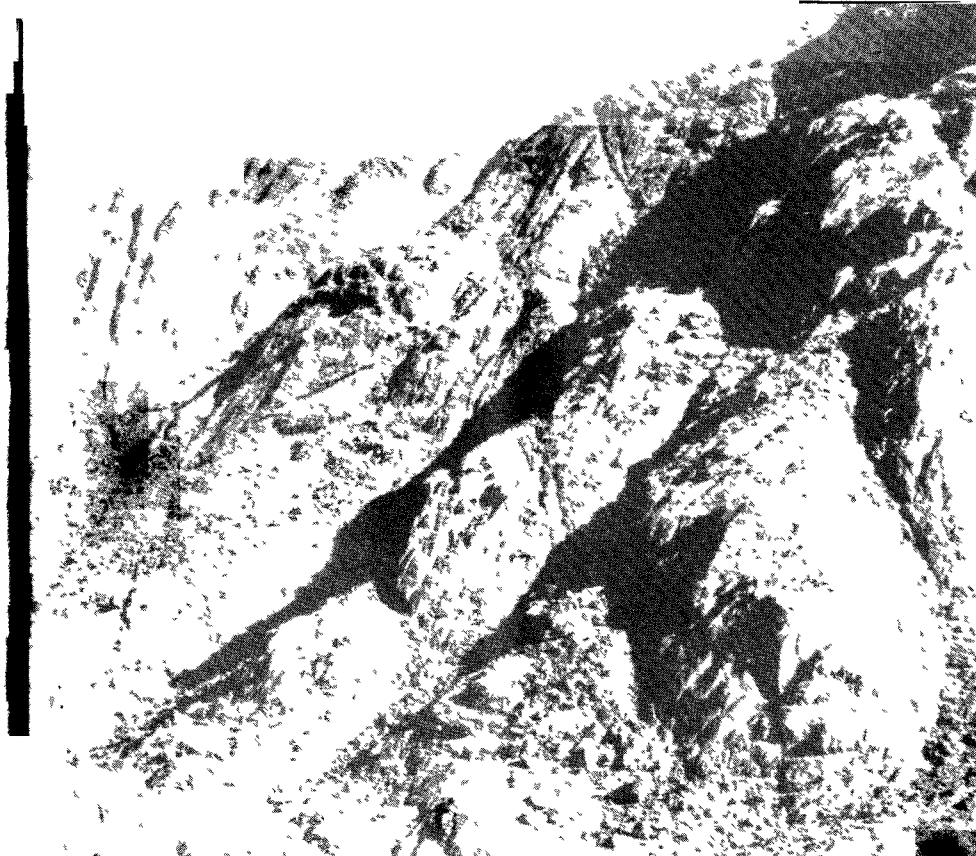
**“And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath”** — This word is from a root signifying *To humble*. If the Israelites were brought into a state of fear at Haradah which caused them to assemble for worship at Makheloth, it may have resulted in them being humbled, which is recalled by the name *Tahath*.

#### VERSE 27

**“And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah”** — The significance of this word is in doubt. Davis gives it as *Wild goat*, speaking of *Waywardness*; others give it as *Thou mayest breathe* suggesting a narrow escape.

#### VERSE 28

**“And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah”** — Mithcar signifies *Sweetness*, suggesting a measure of relief from the trouble that possibly afflicted



Vast masses of granite rock devoid of growth thrust their huge bulk over 7000 feet (2300m) above sea level at Mt. Sinai.

them from Haradah onwards.

#### VERSE 29

**“And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah”** — The name signifies, *Place of Fertility*. It is identified with various places based on the locality of Mt. Hor, but, in fact, is not unidentified beyond doubt.

#### VERSE 30

**“And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth”** — Moseroth signifies *Bonds* or *Fetters*. It was adjacent to Mt. Hor (Deut. 10:6), where Aaron died. See note Num. 20:22-29. Mt. Hor is adjacent to Kadesh Barnea.

#### VERSE 31

**“And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan”** — This name signifies *The Sons of Jaakan*. In

Deut. 10:6 it is called Beeroth Bene-Jaakan, or *The Wells of the Sons of Jaakan*. Jaakan is said to signify *Tortuous* or *Twisting*. However, if the Sons of Jaakan were the same as the Horite family of Jakan mentioned in Gen. 36:27, *The Wells of Jaakan* would have to be sought for on the mountains that bound the Arabah (see Unger's *Dictionary*). That would mean that the children of Israel were moving in a tortuous manner towards the south.

#### VERSE 32

**“And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad”** — The meaning of this name is given by some as *The Mountain* or *Cavern of Thunder*. However, Unger identified it with Gudgodah, signifying a *Cutting* or *Cleft*. At this stage the children of Israel had moved towards the Arabah, close to where the

Jordanian border is today, and were proceeding directly south.

### VERSE 33

**“And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah”** — Jotbathah signifies *Goodness*, or *Pleasant*. In Deut. 10:7 it is called Jotbath, and is described as “a land of rivers of waters”. It is identified with Yotvata about 50km (30m) from Eilat. It is a place of pleasantness and goodness, noted alike for its scenery and its plenteous supply of water. Today there

is a kibbutz established there, with large dairy herds. The plenteous springs of water still gush forth abundantly, and are the main source of Eilat’s water supply. Remains of a Solomonic fortress have been discovered here on the top of a hill near the ancient spring. It guarded the access to some of the most important copper and iron mines at nearby Timna, which were intensively exploited by King Solomon, and it commanded the main highway on the west side of the Arabah rift to and from its chief seaport, Ezion-geber: Eilat, on the Red Sea.



An ancient inscription carved by a wanderer in the desert of Ain Hudra, identified as the Biblical Hazereth (Num. 11:35).

**VERSE 34**

**“And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah”** — Ebronah signifies *passage*. It is identified with *Ka'a en-Nakb*, a pass that cuts east and west of the road south, a short distance north of the Aqaba branch of the Red Sea, near Ezion-geber and Eilat.

**VERSE 35**

**“And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-geber”** — Ezion-geber or Ezion-geber signifies the *Backbone of a Mighty Man*. It is close to Eilat at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. Solomon used it as the port for his merchant fleet (1 Kings 9:26; 2 Chron. 8:17), and later Jehoshaphat experienced misfortune when he attempted the same thing (1 Kg. 22:48; 2 Chron. 20:36). Solomon established his copper refinery at Ezion-geber, and its remains have been found.

**VERSE 36**

**“And they removed from Ezion-geber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin which is Kadesh”** — It is obvious from the position of such places as have been identified, such as Jotbathah and Ebronah, that the children of Israel had been moving south towards Ezion-geber. But now they moved north again to Kadesh. It seems clear, therefore, that they first made their way to Kadesh from whence the spies were sent out, and when the old generation was condemned to wander in the wilderness for thirty-eight years, they did so stopping at many of the places listed in this chapter, wending their way south until they again came to Ezion-geber. From here they moved back to Kadesh, doubtless expecting to enter the Land of Promise at the same place as the spies had been sent forth thirty-eight years earlier. They therefore returned back to where they started. But as it is the 40th year, they would be in expectation of entering the Promised Land at that point. Miriam died at Kadesh (Num. 20:1), and a few months later, at Mount Hor adjacent to Kadesh, Aaron died and was buried.

**“In the edge of the land of Edom”** — The territory of Edom, at that time, extended west almost to Kadesh (Num. 20:14). Mount Hor was found in that area (see note Num. 20:22), not adjacent to Petra as is often claimed. The Israelites could have entered the Land of Promise by moving north, or directly east across

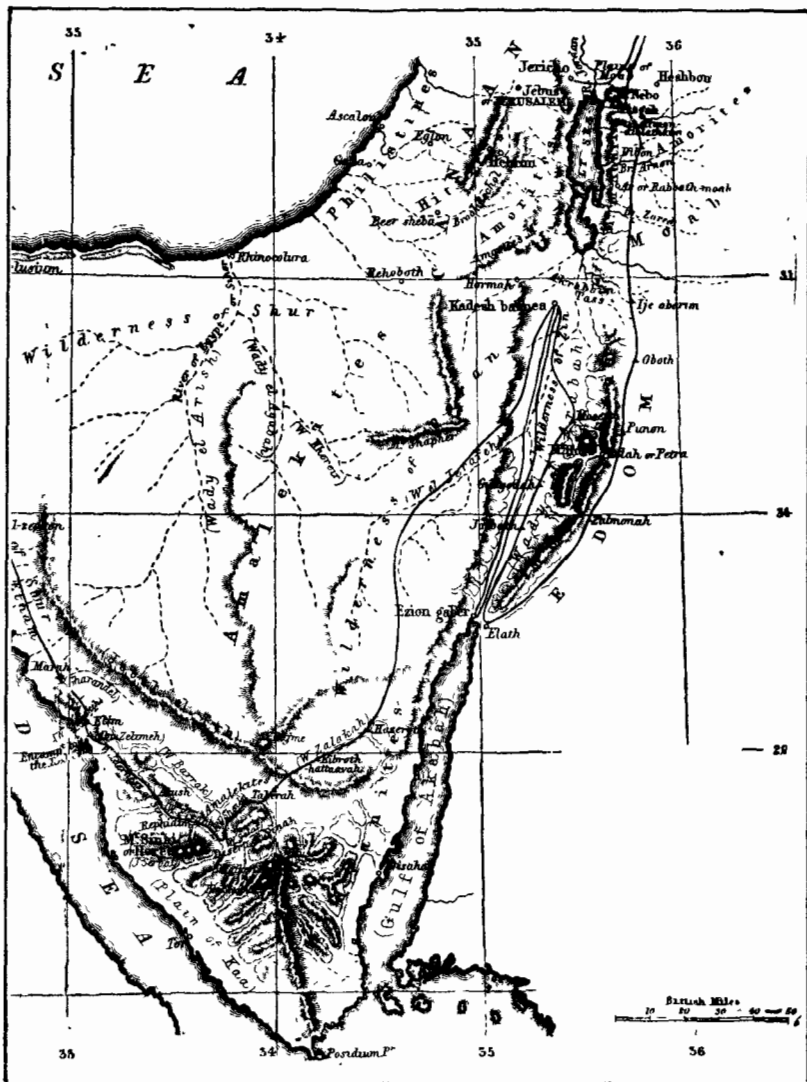
the Arabah, and so on to the Jordan, but in the north the hostile King of Arad barred their way, and on the east the Edomites refused them access. This ultimately forced them to retrace their steps south to Ezion-geber, and move around the pass that cuts through the Edomite mountains at the top of the Gulf. They therefore skirted the border of Edom west, south and east.

**Fourth Stage:****From Kadesh to Moab — vv. 37-49**

*The thirty-eight years of wandering are passed over in almost complete silence, merely recording the places visited (Num. 33:19-36). However, the following facts should be noted: 1. Yahweh did not wholly abandon the rebellious people; He continued to communicate with them through Moses (Num. 15:1, 17, 35 etc). He supplied manna and water, provided raiment and shoes (Deut. 8:2-6; 29:5-6). 2. The rite of circumcision and celebration of the Passover were discontinued, for the people were without hope. When these were restored by Jericho (Josh. 5:4-8) it provided new hope for the people. 3. The Law was ignored, the sabbaths profaned, idolatry practised (Ezek. 20:10-26; Amos 5:25-26). The evidence suggests that for the most part, the old generation remained adjacent to Kadesh where the Tabernacle was permanently stationed; hence the name given to it. At the conclusion of that time, however, most of the old generation had died, and only few remained. So, on this occasion, it was mostly the new generation, the one promised entrance into the land, that left Kadesh. The last of the old generation died that year at the Brook Zered on the border of Moab (Deut. 2:13-14). A harder, more spiritually-minded generation of Israelites finally encamped on the eastern side of the Land of Promise opposite Jericho awaiting the command to move over the River and take possession of the Land.*

**VERSE 37**

**“And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor”** — The Israelites moved from Kadesh to Mount Hor because the time had come for Aaron to die, and that was the place appointed for his burial. See notes Num. 20:22. They reached Mount Hor via Bene-Jaakan and Moseroth.



Wandering of the Children of Israel in the desert for thirty-eight years. Note that they made their way to Kadesh twice: at the beginning and end of the wanderings.

**VERSE 38**

“And Aaron the priest went up into Mount Hor at the commandment of Yahweh, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of

the fifth month” — See notes Num. 20:25-28. The death of Aaron terminated this section of the wanderings.

**VERSE 39**

“And Aaron was an hundred and



**twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor** — He was three years older than his brother, Moses (Exod. 7:7).

#### VERSE 40

**“And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel”** — He was to the north west of Kadesh and Mount Hor, but he commanded his army to attack the Israelites, so closing entrance into the land from that quarter, forcing them to move south.

#### VERSE 41

**“And they departed from the mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah”** — The place signifies *Shades*. According to Unger, it lay southeast of Edom, “perhaps it is the wadi el-Amram, which runs into the Wadi Ithm, close to where Elath anciently stood”. That means that the children of Israel had returned to the area of the head of the Gulf of Aqaba, and now moved east and north along the eastern border of Edom.

#### VERSE 42

**“And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon”** — Punon signifies *Perplexity*. It is identified with modern Feinan, a little north of Petra.

#### VERSE 43

**“And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth”** — See note Num. 21:10. A little further north, at the brook Zered, the last of the old generation died (Deut. 2:13-14), which may account for the name of this place signifying *Perplexity*.

#### VERSE 44

**“And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ijeabarim”** — According to Y. Aharoni in *The Land of the Bible, Ijeabarim was by the brook Zered*. See cp. Num. 21:11.

**“Which is on the border of Moab”** — The Israelites were commanded not to molest Edom and Moab and therefore skirted their borders. They moved up north along the eastern borders of those two countries.

#### VERSE 45

**“And they departed from Iim”** — Iim signifies *Heaps*. It is a contracted form of *Ijeabarim*.

**“And pitched in Dibon-gad”** — Dibon signifies *Wasting or Pining*. Joined to Gad it denotes *The Destruction of Gad (or Fortune)*. This probably referred to a pagan god, for in Isa. 65:11, the Israelites are represented as worshipping the god of Fortune. It lay east of the Dead Sea, and the north of the Arnon. At that time the territory north of the Arnon had been captured from Moab by Sihon (Num. 21:26). In obedience to the command of Yahweh, the Israelites skirted the eastern border of Moab, but moved west along the course of the river Arnon which formed the border between the territory of Sihon and the remnant of Moab. Scaling the steep banks of the river, Moses defeated the forces of Sihon and took the cities of the plateau. Dibon was rebuilt by the Gadites (Num. 32:34), whose original territory extended south to the Arnon (for Aroer was also rebuilt by them), but later it was allotted to Reuben (Josh. 13:17). The Moabite Stone was found at Dibon.

#### VERSE 46

**“And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim”** — It is identified with a place called Khirbet Deleilat esh-Sherqiyah north of Diban. It is probably the same as Beth-diblathaim of Jer. 48:22. The same signifies *The Hiding Place of Fig Cakes*.

#### VERSE 47

**“And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim before Nebo”** — Abarim signifies *The Regions Beyond*. It denotes the hill country of Moab which Sihon had then conquered, overlooking the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley. Nebo (see Num. 32:38) was both a town and a peak.

#### VERSE 48

**“And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho”** — See notes Ch. 22:1.

#### VERSE 49

**“And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth”** — The name signifies *House of the Wastes, or Deserts*. It is identified by some with Tell Kefrein in the highlands east of the Jordan, about 8km from the river, south east of Jericho.

**“Even unto Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab”** — Abel-shittim signifies *The*

*Meadow of Acacias.* It is also called Shittim (Josh. 3:1), and here the Israelites sinned with Moabite women (Num 25:1)

Also from here the spies were sent to Jericho (Josh. 2:1) It was the westernmost point of the encampment.

## SYNCHRONISING THE STOPPING-PLACES OF THE ISRAELITES From Egypt to Moab

	<b>Exodus 12-19</b>	<b>Numbers 33</b>
From Rameses .....	12:37 .....	v. 5
1. Succoth .....	12:37 .....	v. 5
2. Etham .....	13:20 .....	v. 6
3. Pi-hahiroth .....	14:2 .....	v. 7
4. Passage of Red Sea .....	15:22 .....	v. 8
5. Wilderness of Shur .....	15:22 .....	Wilderness of Etham v. 8
6. Marah .....	15:23 .....	v. 8
7. Elim .....	15:27 .....	v. 9
8. Red Sea .....		v. 10
9. Desert of Sin .....	16:1 .....	v. 11
10. Dophkah .....		v. 12
11. Alush .....		v. 13
12. Rephidim .....	17:1 .....	v. 14
13. Sinai .....	19:1 .....	v. 15

### From Sinai to Kadesh

	<b>Numbers 10-14</b>	<b>Numbers 33</b>
14. Taberah .....	11:3 (Deut. 9:22)	
15. Kibroth-hattaavah .....	11:34 .....	v. 16
16. Hazeroth .....	11:35 .....	v. 17
17. Kadesh .....	12:16 Rithmah .....	v. 18
Turned back, they wander in the wilderness 38 years: Num. 14:25		

### From Kadesh to Kadesh

(Only in Numbers 33)

1. Rimmon-parez. 2. Libnah. 3. Rissah. 4. Kehelathah. 5. Mount Shapher. 6. Haradah. 7. Makheloth. 8. Tahath. 9. Tarah. 10. Mithcah. 11. Hashmonah. 12. Moseroth. 13. Bene-jaakan. 14. Hor-hagidgad. 15. Jotbathah. 16. Ebronah. 17. Ezion-geber. 18. Wilderness of Zin and Kadesh.

### From Kadesh to Moab

1. Beeroth Bene Jaakan (Deut. 10:6). 2. Mosera (Deut. 10:6). 3. Mt. Hor (Num. 20:22; 33:37). 4. Gudgodah (Deut. 10:7). 5. Jotbath (Deut. 10:7). 6. Red Sea (Num. 21:4). 7. Elath (Deut. 2:8). 8. Zalmonah (Num. 33:41). 9. Punon (Num. 33:42). 10. Oboth (Num. 21:10; 33:43). 11. Ijeabarim (Num. 21:11; 33:44-45). 12. Brook Zered (Num. 21:12; Deut. 2:13-14). 13. Arnon (Num. 21:13; Deut. 2:24). 14. Dibon-Gad (Num. 33:45). 15. Almon-Diblathaim (Num. 33:46). 16. Pisgah (Abarim) (Num. 21:20; 33:47). 17. Plains Moab (Num. 22:1; 33:48).

**Final Instructions and Warnings — vv. 49-56**

*At this crucial moment, with the new generation of Israelites poised ready to invade the land, and Moses recognising that the time of his departure is near at hand, he is solemnly instructed to warn the people regarding their conduct once they pass over. The extent of their borders depends upon their good conduct, and can extend far beyond what they ultimately obtained (Gen. 15 18, Exod. 23 31). They are about to enter the Land under probation and law, with sword in hand and with the condition that if they prove faithful to Yahweh's covenant, He will extend their borders (Exod. 34 24, Deut. 12 20). History reveals their failure to make good their title to it. Meanwhile, with anxious care Moses exhorts the people*

**VERSE 50**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying”** — See Ch 22 1

**VERSE 51**

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan”** — See Deut 7 1, 9 1, Josh 3 17

**VERSE 52**

**“Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you”** — The expulsion of the Canaanites had been clearly enjoined (Num 32.21) The reason for this wholesale slaughter is implied in Gen. 15.16: “the iniquity of the Amorites was full”

**“And destroy all their pictures”** — By “pictures” is meant their sculptured images, perhaps carved figures in stone (see Lev 26 1) The word “pictures” is rendered “image” in Lev. 26:1, and therefore had relation to religious objects

**“And destroy all their molten images”** — See the constant reiteration of this command (Exod 23 24,33, 34 13, Deut 7:2,5; 12:3 Cp Josh. 11:12, Jud. 2:2). Israel was required to purify the land before possessing it

**“And quite pluck down all their high places”** — The reference is to shrines built upon elevated sites. It is perhaps significant that the Roman Catholic Church always selects the most elevated positions for the building of their churches

**VERSE 53**

**“And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein”** — The Hebrew word is the same as that rendered *drive out* in v. 52. The word has the meaning of *clearing out* a place, and in that way applied equally to the land as to the people. The people were to be destroyed, and the land cleansed of all forms of pollution

**“For I have given you the land to possess it”** — As a holy people, the land had to be cleansed. Yahweh had the right to do what He commanded and offered the people. See Psa 24 1-2; Jer 27 5-6

**VERSE 54**

**“And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance”** — See notes Num 26 53-56

**“Every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit”** — The inheritance was divinely directed. Accordingly, the faithful Israelite's inheritance or “lot” was more important to him in spiritual significance than in material value. For that reason, Naboth resisted the demand of Ahab to give up his family inheritance in exchange for one that the king alleged was superior in value (1 Kings 21.3) For the allocation of the land, see Josh 15:6; 16:1, 17 1, 18 11; 19:1

**VERSE 55**

**“But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell”** — The warning was most relevant, because the danger was now near at hand. Indeed, the sin of Baal-peor, in the matter of the Midianitish women, had revealed how easily flesh can be seduced. Pricks in the eyes would blind the vision of the people, whilst giving extreme pain, thorns in the sides would be irritating and hurtful. See Josh 23 13; Jud 2:3 where the warning is reiterated in slightly different terms. Unfortunately, the succeeding generation failed in this very matter, and it experienced the very fate of which Moses warned. See Psa. 106:34,36. The Canaanites, as a type, represented to the Israelites what habitual sins of the flesh do believers in Christ.

## VERSE 56

**“Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them”** — Unfortunately, the Israelites failed to extirpate the Canaanites with the

result that they, themselves, suffered. The evil practises of the inhabitants of the land were followed by the people of the Covenant, and as a result, they were ultimately driven from the land.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### THE BORDERS OF THE LAND

*This section describes the borders of the land of Canaan which Yahweh is about to make available to the Israelites for their possession. However, the area defined was never fully occupied by Israel, simply because the tribes never fulfilled the conditions imposed. The Book of Joshua records that though Joshua’s victories made it possible for each of the tribes to obtain its inheritance, they lacked the faith and courage to completely do it. After his death, the people compromised with the remaining Canaanites, and so ruined their opportunity of inheriting the land promised. However, the last chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecy shows that in the Kingdom of the future the borders of the land promised to Abraham will be occupied by the regenerated tribes. Meanwhile, Moses allotted the land among the nine and one-half tribes which are to inherit west of the Jordan. The chapter is divided into six sections: 1. South border, vv. 1-5; 2. West border, v.6; 3. North border, vv. 7-9; 4. East border, vv. 10-13; 5. Transjordan area, vv. 14-15; 6. The Leaders appointed to divide the land by lot, vv. 16-29.*

#### The South Border — vv. 1-5

*The area defined takes in a section of the northern Negev.*

## VERSE 1

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying”** — This introduces a new sub-section of *Numbers*.

## VERSE 2

**“Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof;”** — The word “coasts” in this context has no regard to an ocean, and is better rendered *boundaries* as it is in the NIV.

## VERSE 3

**“Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin”** — The Wilderness of Zin was located south of Kadesh, extending west and east of that locality. See note Num. 13:21.

**“Along by the coast of Edom”** — At that time, the territory of Edom extended as far west as Kadesh (Num. 20:16) and Mount Hor (Num. 20:23). This now formed part of the south border of the land to be inherited.

**“And your south border shall be the utmost coast of the salt see eastward”** — The southern border of the land extended eastward to the southern portion of the Salt Sea.

We have tried to make it an even more helpful volume to students by illustrating it here and there, by the addition of a few footnotes to explain references to obscure Sects or Movements mentioned by Bro. Thomas, and the inclusion of an Index. We believe that the Reader will find these additions, together with the very readable type, a great help to the study of this Christadelphian classic. Cost of the Second Volume is \$8 plus postage, and supplies are available from Ecclesial Librarians or Logos agents. We are pressing on with the third volume, and we hope to produce this in quicker time than the last.

So, you see, though you may have thought there has been some little delay in the production of the Quarterly *Expositor*, we have not been idle. *Eureka* has to be proof-read at least three times before it is printed.

You can assist in this work, by immediately forwarding your subscription for *Christadelphian Expositor*. To receive the money early relieves us of the drudgery of book-work, and frees us from such chores to give attention to the exposition of the Word. We thank you in advance for your thoughtful help.



## **NEW BOOK RELEASE** **Hope Beyond The Holocaust**

This book of nearly 200pp. is attractively produced in large, readable type, on good quality paper, and is illustrated throughout. Price (please add postage) is as follows:

Australia — \$3.00; USA — \$4.00; N.Z. — \$4.00; U.K. — £2.; Sth. Africa — R.4; Can. \$4.50.

Apply for your copies to: Logos Publications, 9 West Beach Rd., West Beach, South Australia 5024, or to any Logos agent (see inside front cover), Ecclesial Librarians, or Detroit Christadelphian Library, 14676 Berwick, Livonia, Mich. 48154, USA.

## VERSE 4

**“And your border shall turn from the south to the Ascent of Akrabbim”** — The Ascent of Akrabbim (in Heb *ma’ale-akrabbim*) signifies *the Ascent of the Scorpions*. It is the name given to a steep, winding Pass that ascends almost vertically some 400 metres (1200 ft) from the Arabah, that deep depression south of Sodom and the Dead Sea, to the undulating plateau above. It leads upwards from the arid valley through white, salt-encrusted hills, void of vegetation, and

carved into the strangest shapes by the action of erosion. A stark, harsh, panoramic view spreads out from a vantage point at the top — a dramatic, modern scene of curse that devastated the land following the ancient overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was this barren, desolate wilderness that Lot received when he abandoned Abraham! Today, the road moves westward then veers to the south, leading to Beersheba and Kadesh-Barnea. See also Josh 15:3.

**“And pass on to Zin”** — see note verse 3



A view of the arid Arabah from The Ascent of The Scorpions

**“And the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-Barnea”** — Kadesh is in the wilderness of Zin, the northern section of the Negev.

**“And shall go on to Hazor-addar”** — Hazor-addar signifies *The Village of Plenty*.

**“And pass on to Azmon”** — Azmon signifies *Bonelike*. Moving west towards the Mediterranean, the southern border evidently made a detour to include Kadesh-Barnea.

#### VERSE 5

**“And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt”** —

This river of Egypt should not be confused with the expression in Gen. 15:18. The words are different in the Hebrew. In Genesis it is *nahar* and denotes a large permanently running river; here it is *nachalah*, and defines a watercourse that is dry in the summer. Here the reference is to the great wadi el-Arish which forms a barrier in southern Palestine, and then divided off the Egyptian sphere of influence.

**“And the goings out of it shall be at the sea”** — By “the sea” is meant the Mediterranean. Y. Aharoni in his work *The Land*

*of the Bible* writes: “In the vicinity of Ain el-Qudeirat there are three additional wells. Taking the order of these border stations from east to west, the following identifications are probable; Ain Qedeis — Hazor-addar; Ain Qeseimeh-Karkaaa (see Josh. 15:3) — Ain Muweilih-Azmon. Above Ain Qedeis a fort from the tenth century B.C. was discovered. Possibly it can be identified with Hazor-addar.”

**West Border — v. 6**

#### VERSE 6

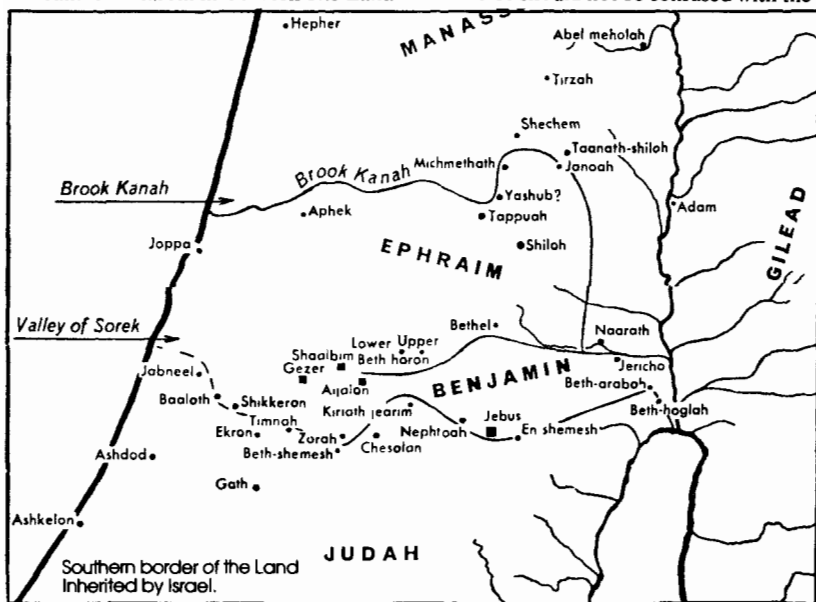
**“And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border; this shall be your west border”** — The western border was clearly defined being the shores of the Mediterranean.

#### North Border — vv. 7-9

*Israel's northern border was appointed to reach to Hamath in Syria. However the people lacked faith and courage necessary to conquer the territory, and therefore never fully possessed it.*

#### VERSE 7

**“And this shall be your north border; from the great sea ye shall point out for you Mount Hor”** — The Mount Hor of this verse should not be confused with the



place where Aaron was buried. That Mount Hor was in the South, whereas this one is to the North. The word *Hor* is a common name for *mountain*, and therefore the expression "Mount Hor" can signify *Great Mountain*. It doubtless defines the whole Lebanese range of mountains some 80 or more miles (129 km) in length, commencing east of Zidon, and terminating at the point immediately above the entrance of Hamath.

## VERSE 8

**"From Mt. Hor ye shall point out your border to the entrance of Hamath"** — Hamath signifies *Fortress*. It was the capital of upper Syria in the valley of the Orontes at the foot of Lebanon.

Israel's real border never reached that far, except possibly in the days of Solomon (2 Chron. 8:4) and of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:28). There was a kingdom of Hamath as well as a city, so that the northern border was further than the modern site of Hamath. The *Entrance of Hamath* is identified with a pass through which the river Orontes breaks out of its upper valley between the Lebanon and anti-Lebanese ranges some 60 miles (96km) north of Damascus. However, there is another *Entrance*, to the south, opening out into the valley of Bekaa, close to Mount Hermon, and this is sometimes identified as the spot. However, the reference to Zedad in v. 9, would suggest the more northerly site.

**"And the goings forth of the borders shall be to Zedad"** — Zedad signifies *A siding*. It is identified with Sadad, S.E. of Homs on the road from Riblah to Palmyra. If this is accepted, the *Entrance to Hamath* would be in the north. Reference to these places is made in Ezek. 47:15 relating to the borders of the Promised Land in the Age to come.

## VERSE 9

**"And the border shall go out to Ziphron"** — Ziphron signifies *Fragrant*. It is identified in the ruins of Zifran, north east of Damascus, near the road from Palmyra.

**"And the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan"** — Reference to this place is found in Ezek. 47:17. The name signifies *The Village of Fountains*. It is unidentified, but probably was north-east of Damascus.

**"This shall be your north border"** — As

noted above, the Israelites never extended their conquests to these points. Faithlessness limited their vision and their borders.

**The Eastern Border — vv. 10-13**

*The first two sites mentioned are unknown. However the eastern border is more clearly defined once the Sea of Galilee is reached. It follows the Jordan river to the Dead Sea, and so returns to its original starting point*

## VERSE 10

**"And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham"** — The word "Shepham" signifies *bare spot*. Its location is not known with any certainty. Unger places it on the north-east near Riblah.

## VERSE 11

**"And the coast shall go down from Shephar to Riblah"** — "Riblah" signifies *Fertility*. The site is unknown today. It is not to be confused with Riblah of Hamath referred to in 2 Kings 23:33 and Jer. 39:5-6 where Zedekiah received his punishment.

**"On the east side of Ain"** — The word "side" is better rendered *shoulder*. Y. Aharoni identifies Ain, or *Spring*, with modern Khirbetan Ayyun 3 miles east of the Sea of Galilee, north of the River Yarmuk. It is in hilly territory, and therefore appropriately designated as *shoulder land*.

**"And the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth"** — The margin renders "side" as *shoulder*, again referring to the hilly country east of the Sea of Chinnereth. The word "Chinnereth" signifies *Harp-shaped*, and is another name for the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is shaped like a harp, hence the title given it.

## VERSE 12

**"And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about"** — It is significant that in this designation of the borders of the Promised Land, Trans-Jordan is excluded. Hence the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of Jordan, were outside its proper borders.

## VERSE 13

**"And Moses commanded the children**



of Israel, saying, **This is the land which ye shall inherit by lot, which Yahweh commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe**” — See note v. 2, Josh. 14:1-2. These borders related to the nine and a half tribes, as the land allocated the two and a half tribes had already been defined.

**The Trans-Jordanian Tribes — vv. 14-15**  
*These verses explain why the borders defined exclude the territory already granted the two and a half tribes on the east.*

#### VERSE 14

**“And the tribe of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to their fathers, have received their inheritance; and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance”** — For details of this see Ch. 32:33; Deut. 3:12-17; Josh. 14:2-3.

#### VERSE 15

**“The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan near Jericho eastward, towards the sunrise”** — The tribes referred to inherited the dominions of Sihon and Og which extended from the Arnon to Mount Hermon. Reuben received the south-west bounded by the Arnon south and Jordan west. Gad extended to the Arnon on the east of Reuben, but lay more to the north with the Kingdom of the Amorites, and the desert of Arabia on the east. The territory of the half tribe of Manasseh was north of Gad bounded by part of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee on the west, Hermon and Lebanon on the north, and the mountains of Trachonitis on the east. **Map. see pg. 336**

#### **The Leaders To Divide The Land By Lot — vv. 16-29**

*A national committee is selected by Yahweh for the task of dividing the land among the tribes. Eleazar and Joshua are to be in charge. Caleb, because of his faithfulness at Kadesh-Barnea is to represent the tribe of Judah. The other tribes are represented by princes selected for that purpose.*

#### VERSE 16

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses saying”** — What follows is a command of Yahweh and must not be varied.

#### VERSE 17

**“These are the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun”** — They represented the priestly and civil administration, and as such, jointly typed the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall apportion the inheritance of the future. Their names are significant, particularly in view of the task now given them. Eleazar signifies *El hath helped*, Joshua signifies *Yah will save* combined, the two names proclaim the message: As El (God's strength) has helped, He as Yahweh (*He who will be*) will save. The divine title *El* emphasizes the strength of Deity, whilst Yahweh, as His covenant Name proclaims His future purpose. It is through His strength that His covenant will be established.

#### VERSE 18

**“And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance”** — As explained in Num. 26:54, the distribution is to be by lot. The lot established Yahweh's appointment as such, and was not subject to chance or caprice. It is typically significant that Eleazar and Joshua should supervise this with the help of 10 princes of Israel (making 12 men in all). As noted above, these two men typified the Lord Jesus Christ in his dual roles of Priest and King. In that capacity, He, assisted by the Apostles as comprising a royal priesthood, will supervise the distribution of the inheritance in the land in the age to come. To the 12 apostles the Lord promised: “In the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28). This wonderful destiny of supervising and administering the land in the age to come promised the 12 Apostles was foreshadowed by the work now appointed Eleazar and Joshua and the 10 selected Princes of Israel.

#### VERSE 19

**“And the names of the men are these”** — The Tribes are reenumerated in the order in which they inherited the land. Judah and Simeon, both sons of Leah, dwelt together. Benjamin, the son of Rachel, and Dan the son of Rachel's maid, dwelt next in the east and west of the land. Manasseh and Ephraim, sons of Joseph, had the next place to the north. Zebulun and Issachar, who dwelt to-

## THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO DIVIDE THE LAND (Numbers 34:20-28)

The Tribes	The Representatives	Their Fathers
* Judah ( <i>Praise</i> ) .....	Caleb ( <i>Wholehearted</i> or <i>Dog</i> ) .....	Jephunneh ( <i>It will be prepared</i> )
* Simeon ( <i>Hear</i> ) .....	Shemuel ( <i>Name of El</i> ) .....	Ammihud ( <i>Kinsman of Praise</i> or <i>Worthiness</i> )
* Benjamin ( <i>Son of my right hand</i> ) .....	Elidad ( <i>El hath loved</i> ) .....	Chislon ( <i>Trust, hope</i> )
* Dan ( <i>Judgment</i> ) .....	Bukki ( <i>Devastation sent by Yah</i> ) .....	Jogli ( <i>Led into exile</i> )
* Joseph ( <i>Increasing</i> ) .....		
* Manasseh ( <i>Forgetting</i> ) .....	Hanniel ( <i>Grace of El</i> ) .....	Ephod ( <i>A covering</i> )
* Ephraim ( <i>Double fruit</i> ) .....	Kemuel ( <i>Congregation of El</i> ) .....	Shiptan ( <i>Judicial</i> )
* Zebulun ( <i>Dwelling</i> ) .....	Elizaphan ( <i>El hath concealed</i> ) .....	Parnach ( <i>The bullock we smote</i> )
* Issachar ( <i>Reward</i> ) .....	Paltiel ( <i>Deliverance by El</i> ) .....	Azzan ( <i>Strong</i> )
* Asher ( <i>Blessing</i> ) .....	Ahitud ( <i>Brother of Praiseworthiness</i> ) .....	Shelomi ( <i>Peaceful</i> )
* Naphtali ( <i>Wrestling</i> ) .....	Pedahel ( <i>El hath saved</i> ) .....	Ammihud ( <i>Kinsman of</i> <i>Praiseworthiness</i> )
* Eleazar ( <i>El hath helped</i> ) represented Levi ( <i>Joined</i> )		
* Joshua ( <i>Yah will save</i> ) represented the whole nation.		

Twelve men in all excluding representatives of the tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan.

The various names when linked together form sentences expressive of the purpose of Yahweh in the earth. For example: The tribes combine to create the following message: *Praise* awaits those who *hear* the *Son of His right hand*. At the *Judgment* the *increase* will be for those who *forgetting* the past have manifested *double fruit*. They will be *rewarded* with a *blessing* after such *wrestling*. Consider each tribe in conjunction with its representative: **Judah:** *Praise* awaiteth the *wholehearted* for whom *it will be prepared*. **Simeon:** Those who *hear* the *name of El* will be acknowledged as *Kinsmen of Worthiness*. **Dan:** At the *Judgment* the unrighteous will be *devastated by El* and *led into exile*.

All the names can be similarly treated.

gether, were sons of Leah. The last were Asher of Leah's maid, and Naphtali, of Rachel's maid. Thus there were a fraternal association in the apportionment of the land, of such a nature as to cause the tribes to dwell together in unity (Psa. 133:1). We have enumerated the tribes and the committee below.

### VERSE 20

"These are they whom Yahweh commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan."  
— In so doing, these twelve princes foreshadowed the work of Christ and the Apostles in the Age to come.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

### APPOINTMENT OF LEVITICAL CITIES AND CITIES OF REFUGE

*No land is allotted the tribe of Levi. Yahweh therefore provides that the rest of the tribes shall provide cities for the Levites to dwell in. In all, 48 such cities are provided. They are to continue as the possession of the Children of Israel, but are to be made available to the Levites as dwelling places, whilst some are appointed as Cities of Refuge, where justice and mercy may be administered in the case of murder or man-slaughter.*

**Cities for the Levites — vv. 1-3**

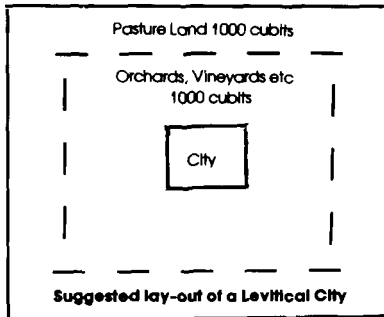
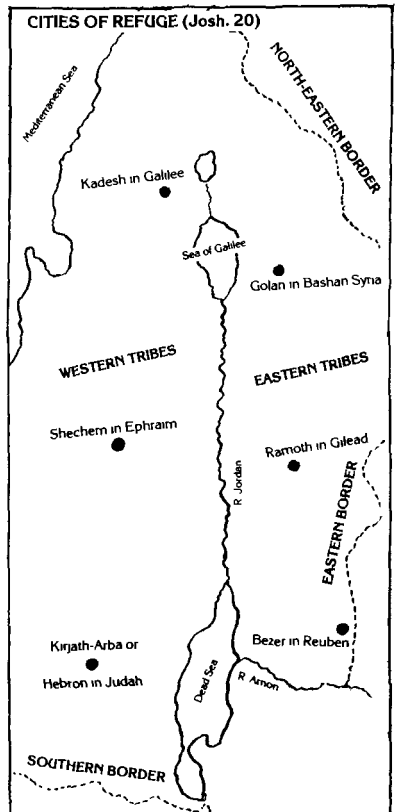
*The Levites, as religious leaders, are required to educate the people. For that purpose their cities are scattered throughout the tribes where they can do the most good.*

**VERSE 1**

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho, saying”** — These important instructions are given as Israel encamped on the plains of Moab awaiting the command to advance. See ch. 22:1; 26:63; 31:12; 33:50; 36:13; Deut. 1:1.

**VERSE 2**

**“Command the Children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in”** — As Yahweh had given the people their



inheritance, now the people in turn are ordered to give portion to the Levites. The sites selected were scattered throughout the land in order that the object lesson of the Levites, who gave their lives entirely to the work of Yahweh, should be brought home to all the people. See Lev. 25; 32-33; Josh. 14:3-4; 21:2. In the allocation of land among the tribes in the Age to come, a section will be divided off for use of the Prince, that is the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be called the Holy Oblation, and in it a portion will be given to the Levites. Ezek. 45:1-5; 48:8-14. But, in addition, the glorified saints, as immortal Levites, will minister throughout the earth (cp. Luke 19:17-19) at prayer-centres of worship (Mal. 1:11).

Details concerning the allocation of the cities at the time of Joshua, are contained in Josh. 21. The Levites were separated from the other tribes, and so emphasised the principle of separateness that Israel should maintain in its relations with the other nations. This separateness was manifest in all the arrangements in regard to them. They were kept apart from the national census (Num. 1:49), and now excluded from the tribal inheritance (Num. 18:20).

**“And ye shall give also unto the Levites, suburbs for the cities round about them”** — The Hebrew word rendered “suburbs” is *migrashah* and denotes *open pasture country*. It is derived from a root word *Garash*, signifying to *drive out or separate*. The word is rendered “pasture lands” in the RSV. It relates to a section of land that surrounded the towns in which the people dwelt. It was separated for cropping, or to pasture animals. The basis of life in Israel was of a rural character.

### VERSE 3

**“And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts”** — Reference to the suburbs is found in Lev. 25:34, and Ezek. 45:2. In the Ezekiel reference, the land relates to separated territory that shall divide the sanctuary from other sections of the land, thus making it a holy or separated place for worship.

### The Cities described — vv. 4-5

*The Law requires that the cities separated for the Levites shall be surrounded by land given over to crops and grazing, thus*

*preserving the rural conditions of life under the Law.*

### VERSE 4

**“And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach unto the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about”** — The Septuagint version renders this as two thousand cubits, instead of a thousand cubits, thus agreeing with v. 5. However, the Hebrew is as the A.V., and does not necessarily contradict the statement of the following verse. If it is accepted, the first thousand cubits would be land reserved for pasture, and the second thousand cubits land given over to orchards, and vineyards. The city proper would be in the centre, surrounded by a thousand cubits of pastureland, and then a further thousand cubits of crops, orchards, or vineyards. From Lev. 25:32-34 we learn that these suburbs could not be sold at all, in contradistinction to a house in the city.

### VERSE 5

**“And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst; this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities”** — This arrangement was a wise provision. A town surrounded entirely by land used for that purpose would restrict its size. Under those conditions, growth of cities into vast sprawling suburbs swallowing up the land on all sides would be impossible. The rural conditions of life as established by the Mosaic Law were thus presented.

### Cities of Refuge — vv. 6-8

*Cities of Refuge are appointed for the protection of such as had slain a person involuntarily. Such cities are necessary, because the requirements of a Law going back to Noah's day (Gen. 9:6), called upon the nearest of kin to avenge the death of his relation by slaying the murderer. But as many rash executions of this Law might take place, from the very nature of the thing, it is deemed necessary to qualify its claims, and prevent injustice. The Cities of Refuge are appointed for that purpose.*

### VERSE 6

**“And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities of refuge, which ye shall appoint for**

**the manslayer, that he may flee thither"**

— The Law commanded that murder be punished by death (Exod. 21:12-14) at the hands of the "avenger of Blood" (Num. 35:19-23) without a formal investigation. However, to prevent any miscarriage of justice in the event of accidental death, Cities of Refuge are to be appointed at strategic points throughout the land where the manslayer can flee and have his case thoroughly investigated. If the death proved to be accidental, he is to be acquitted, though, as part of the penalty for being associated with such a death, he is required to remain in the City of Refuge until the death of the High Priest that is in his day. In the case of flagrant murder, the murderer is to be taken away and executed. Such criminals are to be removed for that purpose from the very Tabernacle altar (Exod. 21:12-14). A case in point is the execution of Joab who was removed from the refuge of Yahweh's altar, and put to death by order of Solomon (1 Kings 2:29-34). Three of the six cities appointed were located on the east of the Jordan and three on the west. Details of these are recorded in Josh. 20.

In the appointment of these Cities of Refuge, the work of redemption in Christ Jesus was typed. The devil, or sin in the flesh, is described as a murderer (John 8:44). As such, it is under condemnation, and death is its lot. However, as Cities of Refuge were provided where the accused could have his case tried, to see if his crime was deliberate or accidental, so in Christ Jesus, a City of Refuge has been provided to which believers are advised to flee, to have their case ultimately judged. If, on investigation, their sins prove to be deliberate sinners they will be given over to death, but if the inquest proves that they were inadvertent sinners they will be acquitted, and released through the death of the High Priest — the Lord Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 18:10 gives the name of Yahweh as City of Refuge: "The righteous runneth into it is safe". In Heb. 6:18, Paul directly draws upon the provision of the Cities of Refuge, to illustrate the work of redemption in Christ. He describes those who have embraced the truth in Christ as having "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them". In the terms of his statement, the Lord Jesus Christ is our City of Refuge. Recognising that we are under condemnation of death through sin, we make our way to him, to have our case properly judged to determine whether the

sins committed are deliberate and defiant of Yahweh, or whether they are accidental through the weakness of the flesh. See Joshua 20 for further details concerning this provision of the Law and the type of redemption it provides.

**"And to them ye shall add forty and two cities"** — With the six cities of refuge, the Levitical cities numbered 48 (see Josh. 21:41). Forty-eight is divisible by six and eight, significant numbers, for six represents the flesh and eight represents perfection. In spiritual numerics, therefore, forty-eight represents flesh reaching perfection. If divided by four, the number of Israel, it provides  $4 \times 12$  — Israel governed by sound authority.

**VERSE 7**

**"So all the cities which ye shall give the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs"** — See Josh. 21:41 for the granting of these cities and suburbs.

**VERSE 8**

**"And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel"** — The words "shall be" are given in italics indicates that there are no comparable words in the Hebrew. As the statement appears in the A. V. it would suggest that the Cities of Refuge are to be given to the children of Israel. In actual fact, these cities were taken from those already granted the various tribes. The two words, therefore, are better excluded, as they are in the R. V. We then read "the cities which ye shall give of the possession of the children of Israel." Cities were taken from the children of Israel, and given to the Levites for their use.

**"From them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: everyone shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth"** — This verse relates to the forty-eight cities given to the Levites, not to the six cities taken from those forty-eight, and allocated as Cities of Refuge. Of the forty-eight cities thus taken, nine were selected from the combined large territory of Judah and Simeon, but the rest of the tribes, great and small, gave four each, except Naphtali (last on the list), who gave only three. See Josh. 21.

### The Purpose of the Cities of Refuge — vv. 9-15

*Moses lays down regulations governing the immunity that Cities of Refuge are to provide for manslaughter. The accidental slayer is enabled to escape execution at the hands of the Avenger of Blood by taking refuge in one of these cities. However, before he can avail himself of shelter, he must undergo a solemn trial and prove to the congregation that the killing is accidental. If acquitted of intentional killing, he must remain within the city or its suburbs until the death of the High Priest. If found outside its limits he can be put to death by the Avenger of Blood. Even accidental killing is treated as a crime.*

#### VERSE 9

**“And Yahweh spake unto Moses, saying”** — This commences the instruction regarding the purpose of the cities of refuge.

#### VERSE 10

**“Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan”** — Because of the importance of these instructions, they are repeated in Deut. 19:2-4, and Josh. 20:2-6.

#### VERSE 11

**“Then ye shall appoint you cities to be Cities of Refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares”** — The Hebrew word rendered “unawares”, signifies by *error*. The word defines a manslayer in contrast to a murderer. The Cities of Refuge were designed for such. They were to be easily accessible (vv. 6-14; Deut. 4:41-43; Josh. 20:7-8), and therefore to be situated on both sides of the Jordan (v. 14). If necessary, the number could be increased to nine (Deut. 19:8-9). Special roads were to be built to converge on them (Deut. 19:3), so that every means of safety and accessibility were provided for the accidental manslayer.

According to Jewish tradition, in order to aid the fugitive, it was the business of the Sanhedrin to keep the roads leading to the Cities of Refuge in the best possible repair. Cuttings had to be made through hills, every river bridged, and the roads leading to them were to be broad highways. At every turn, guide posts were to be erected bearing the word *refuge*; two students of the law were appointed to ac-

company the fleeing man, and to pacify, if possible, the Avenger, should he overtake the fugitive.

All these provisions are important when the type is considered, for these Cities of Refuge foreshadowed the redemption obtainable in Christ Jesus.

#### VERSE 12

**“And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger”** — The word in the Hebrew for “Avenger” is *Gael*, elsewhere rendered *next of kin*, and *redeemer* (e.g. Job 19:25). The work of such an Avenger is dramatically described in 2 Sam. 14:6-7. It is thought-provoking that the *Gael* was both Avenger and Redeemer, because Yahweh, through the Lord Jesus Christ, acts in that dual capacity. He is both Redeemer, and Avenger (Rom. 12:19). When Job declared; “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” he recognised in the title *Gael*, there rendered *Redeemer*, both his Avenger and Deliverer.

But how can Yahweh be the *Gael* of believers on earth, seeing that the word denotes a next of kin, and it is the duty of such to avenge, or deliver, their close relations who suffer? The answer expresses one of the most beautiful principles of the title of Yahweh as Redeemer, or Next of Kin, to Israel. Yahweh became Next of Kin to Israel by manifesting Himself in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). In doing so, He identified Himself with the members of that family He desired to save. Jesus Christ, as an Israelite, is Next of Kin to Israelites. He acts as Redeemer and Avenger of only such. It is vital, therefore, for Gentiles and Jews to be baptised into His Name, if they would be saved. They then become members of the Israel of God (Gal. 6:16) of which he is the chief (Col. 1:12-14, 18-22). His duty, under the O.T. requirements of the head of the family is to overshadow it for its good, and act as Protector and Redeemer of its members. His work in that particular was foreshadowed into the provision of the Cities of Refuge.

**“That the manslayer die not”** — The manslayer was one who accidentally killed a man. The Law rightly discriminated between the deliberate murderer, and the one who might inadvertently, through accident, destroy a man. Christ will discriminate between the deliberate, persistent sinner, and the one who accidentally, through weakness of the flesh, is led astray.

**“Until he stand before the congregation in judgment”** — The killer seeking refuge, in a city of refuge had to justify his right of entrance into the city to which he had fled, by satisfying a deputation of its elders that he had a case for acquittal (Josh. 20:4-6). Temporary immunity was then granted until his full case was heard by the judges (Josh. 20:4-6). If, on investigation, it was found that he was guilty of murder, and not accidental homicide, he was delivered up into the hands of the Avenger (Deut. 19:12), whose duty it was to put him to death. If innocent, he had to remain in the City of Refuge until the death of the High Priest (Num. 35:25). This Law regarding the avenging of blood, goes back to the days of Noah (Gen. 9:5-6).

This preliminary investigation types the Ecclesial examination to which applicants for baptism are subjected before immersion (see 2 Tim. 6:12-13).

#### VERSE 13

**“And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge”** — This is a repetition of v. 6. The number six is the number of flesh, which is appropriate for such provision.

#### VERSE 14

**“Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge”** — The cities were strategically placed, situated on both sides of the river Jordan, so as to provide the greatest convenience for the manslayer. So also with the refuge provided in the Gospel. Yahweh, through His Son, has provided every need for easy access to those who recognise their need, and seek His help. So important was this provision of the Law, that Moses personally attended to the arrangements before his death. See Deut. 4:41-43; Josh. 20:7-9.

#### VERSE 15

**“These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them”** — In the Cities of Refuge, Gentiles as well as Israelites after the flesh, found an equality. They were treated alike. See also Exod. 12:49; Lev. 24:22; Num. 15:16; Rom. 3:29; Gal. 3:28.

**“That everyone that killeth any person unawares may flee hither”** — As noted in our comment on v. 11, the word “unawares” signifies in error. This is an im-

portant prerequisite. It implies that the one seeking refuge recognised his state, and understood his need. It teaches that those seeking refuge in Christ must understand their error, and their need, and seek to satisfy such in the way appointed.

#### Murder Defined — vv. 16-21

*Examples are provided to illustrate the difference between manslaughter and premeditated murder. The Cities of Refuge are provided for the former, but not for the latter. The latter came under other laws, punishable by death. However, death caused by certain specified ways provide prima facie evidence that murder is the motive, and the offender is to be punished accordingly.*

#### VERSE 16

**“And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death”** — To take life by any means whatever is accounted criminal. If it is done in enmity it is treated as murder. If it is not done in enmity, it is treated as accidental homicide. Life is considered as a very precious thing by Yahweh; and should be given to Him in service. Any forcible interruption of it by man makes the one guilty accountable to God. Evidently, capital punishment was abandoned prior to the Flood (Gen. 4:23-24 mg.), resulting in widespread evil and violence. It was re-instituted by Yahweh through Noah (Gen. 9:5-6), and re-endorsed by Him through Moses. See Exod. 21:12-14; Lev. 24:17; Deut. 19:11-12. The abandonment of the death penalty in recent times has led to a great increase of crime, “as in the days of Noah”.

#### VERSE 17

**“And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death”** — The Hebrew renders this “with a stone of the hand”, describing a deliberate act of throwing, an act of personal anger and hatred. However, if the attack was not fatal, the death penalty was not imposed, though compensation must be paid. See Exod. 21:18-19.

#### VERSE 18

**“And if he smite him with an band instrument of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die the murderer shall surely be put to death”** — It is obvious that if the man

carried a weapon he intended hurt against his neighbour. However, only if he killed him was he executed.

**VERSE 19**

**“The avenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him he shall slay him”** — The term *Avenger of Blood* in Hebrew is *Gael*. The same word is rendered “Redeemer” in other places (Job 19:25; Psa. 19:14; 78:35 etc.). See the use of this word in Deut. 19:6,12; Josh. 20:3,5. In slaying the murderer, the Avenger of Blood fulfilled the law given to Noah (Gen. 9:6).

**VERSE 20**

**“But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die”** — By comparing this verse with vv. 22-25, it will be seen that the Law carefully discriminated between deliberate murder, and accidental homicide.

**VERSE 21**

**“Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death; for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him”** — The Avenger of Blood was commanded to put to death the man guilty of murder; he could not extend forgiveness to him. As an Avenger of Blood, he was required to carry out the Law of Yahweh, as a warning to all to avoid enmity and hatred (Gal. 5:20). The Law of capital punishment had been laid down to Noah as basic to the regulation of society and endorsed by the provision of the Mosaic covenant. It will be applied by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 6:15).

**Accidental Homicide or Manslaughter Defined — vv. 22-25**

*Unintentional homicide, today described as “manslaughter,” is recognised by the Law. A person found guilty of this is not to be put to death, but is confined to the city of refuge, and strictly warned against leaving it.*

**VERSE 22**

**“But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity”** — Such occasions are described in Exod. 21:13; Deut. 19:5; Josh. 20:3-5. The one guilty of accidental homicide had to recognise his danger, and hasten to the City of Refuge, in order to escape the action of the Avenger of Blood. There he

had his case examined before judges.

**“Or have cast upon him anything without laying in wait”** — No allowance was made for accident if it were the result of pre-meditated anger. Therefore the greatest care had to be exercised by Israelites generally. Paul makes the point: “Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath” (Eph. 4:26).

**VERSE 23**

**“Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm”** — The defendant might claim that he hit a man accidentally and caused his death, whilst aiming the stone at something else. However, the excuse was inadmissible, if it were known that in time past he was at enmity with the one slain. Perhaps he had merely sought to injure him without killing him; he was nevertheless judged guilty and the death penalty was imposed.

**VERSE 24**

**“Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments”** — After the manslayer had been received into the City of Refuge, the Revenger of Blood could only act as prosecutor, not executioners and the magistrates, in the presence of the people, were appointed to decide the case according to the rules laid down. Probably the accused was tried at, or near, the place where the deceased had been slain, where evidence could most easily be brought to light. If he were acquitted by the decision of the judges and the approbation of the people, he was conveyed back to the City of Refuge, where he was protected as a kind of a prisoner at large, till the death of the High Priest; at which time he was permitted to return to his own inheritance. If, in the meantime, he attempted to leave the city, and the Avenger met him and slew him, he was accounted as having merited his doom by neglecting the provision of Yahweh for his preservation, and the Avenger was not punished. If the Avenger slew an innocent man on surmise, he was considered guilty. Two witnesses were required for a case to succeed.

**VERSE 25**

**“And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of**



**blood**" — The case of the innocent slayer is here contemplated. In a doubtful case, there would need be judicial enquiry as to the guilt or innocence of the person claiming the right of asylum. See v. 12; Josh. 20:6.

**"And the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled"** — The homicide was safe only within the walls of his city of refuge. He became a virtual exile from home. The provisions earmarked the gravity of manslaughter, even when not premeditated. The law became a type of the refuge that is provided by the Gospel to those who are convicted of their need, recognise their relation to death, and seek the help of Yahweh through Christ.

**"And he shall abide in it unto the death of the High Priest, which was anointed with the Holy Oil"** — This is a very important provision, pointing directly to Christ, the anti-type. His death provided the means of liberation to those who were related to death and sought the protection available in the promised Redeemer. In Gal. 3:23 Paul reasons: "before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed". The Mosaic Covenant acted as a City of Refuge. It pointed the way to life without providing it. The death of the Redeemer (foreshadowed by the High Priest) was needed for that. Meanwhile those under it "were shut in unto the Law", until the death of the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who freed them from the curse of the Law.

#### **Warning Against Refugees**

##### **Leaving the City — vv. 26-29**

*If the slayer, even after the judgment is passed, moves outside the borders of the City of Refuge, he can be slain by the Avenger without guilt on the Avenger's part.*

#### **VERSE 26**

**"But if the slayer shall at anytime come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled"** — Those in Christ, their City of Refuge, can only leave it on penalty of death. That also was the law in regard to the first passover. Strict instructions were given Israelites that "none of you shall go out of the door until the morning" (Exod. 12:22). To do so would put them at risk with the avenging angel.

#### **VERSE 27**

**"And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer"** — If, at the return of Christ, he find some who have strayed from their City of Refuge, their fate will be the same as that described for those who are the subject of this verse.

**"And the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood"** — As the homicide had deliberately disobeyed the Law, he deserved his fate. So it will be with those who deliberately set aside the immunity they otherwise receive in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is safety only in him.

#### **VERSE 28**

**"Because he should have remained in the city of refuge until the death of the High Priest"** — This means that he was still held guilty of homicide. Complete forgiveness was provisional, subject to the conditions laid down, and the avenger of blood could execute judgment upon him if he was found outside the borders of his city. So with the scheme of redemption. Whilst the Law made provisional arrangements for ultimate forgiveness in the sacrifices provided, there was no real immunity from the consequences of sin, until the death of the future High Priest. In Christ, there is found a precious liberty in the forgiveness of those things that otherwise would bring death. Paul states: "He is the mediator of the New Covenant that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). Accordingly, in another place, he exhorts: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free" (Gal. 5:1).

**"But after the death of the High Priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession"** — In type, this foreshadowed the liberty obtained through the death of Christ (Rom. 6:2-4), as a means of obtaining the promised inheritance.

#### **VERSE 29**

**"So these things shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations, in all your dwellings"** — See note Num. 27:11.

**Witnesses Required For a Murder Conviction — v. 30**

*An accusation must be supported by at least two witnesses.*

**VERSE 30**

**“Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses”** — Supporting references to this Law are found elsewhere. (See Deut. 17:6; 19:15-16; Matt. 18:16). Paul made use of this Law in confirming his word to the Ecclesia in Corinth (2 Cor. 13:1. See also 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28).

**“But one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die”** — It is a pathetic reflection upon the hypocrisy of the Lord’s accusers, that they strictly adhered to the legality of this law, supporting their false accusations against him by the allegations of two false witnesses (Matt. 26:60). They had to establish their legal integrity, even though murder was in their hearts!

The instruction of the verse before us implies that a preliminary investigation was conducted at the City of Refuge at the time a person sought immunity from the Avenger. Witnesses were brought and the case was heard. The result was either acquittal (with restraint), or given over to the Avenger for execution. In those circumstances, the Avenger of Blood represented the Law which pronounced a curse upon all disobedience, whilst the preliminary hearing provided a type of the provisional redemption revealed in the Law’s promise of a Redeemer to come (Gal. 3:24). Meanwhile; the one guilty of accidental homicide was “shut up unto the faith” (v. 23) until the death of the High Priest granted him liberty. The Cities of Refuge did not exempt a criminal from deserved punishment, nor will the fact that a person might claim to be in Christ exempt him if he is guilty of such sins as deserve his rejection at the judgment seat.

**No Atonement For A Murderer — vv. 31-34**

*No forgiveness or ransom is provided for the deliberate murderer, or one who deserted the City of Refuge before the death of the High Priest.*

**VERSE 31**

**“Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: he shall be surely put to death”** — The Hebrew word rendered “satisfaction” is *kopher* and signifies *cover*. The R.V.

renders it as *ransom*. The murderer could not escape the consequences of his crime by paying a fine. This is in contrast to other laws where the payment of a ransom did release a person from his responsibility. See Exod. 21:30. The Law thus endorsed the requirements of the covenant made with Noah (see Gen. 9:5-6; Exod. 21:14; Deut. 19:11-13). See the punishment metered out to Joab (1 Kings 2:28-34). Only Yahweh could waive this law with justice and mercy. See 2 Sam. 12:13; Psa. 51:14-16). The term “guilty” signifies a sin worthy of death. See the response of the Sanhedrin to the question of Caiaphas (Matt. 26:66; Mark 14:64). Murder was thus deemed a sin deserving of death.

**VERSE 32**

**“And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest”** — There was to be no relaxation of the law that demanded that the one who sought refuge in the cities provided, must remain in those cities until the death of the High Priest. The word “satisfaction” implies a payment of a sum of money in order to obtain a release. The person who sought the City of Refuge, must be prepared to forsake family, employment, possessions, and home comforts, or face the threat of death (cp. Matt. 10:37-39). he must not loiter, yield to weariness, nor be deterred by difficulties, but hasten, with every sense of urgency, to the protection of the cities provided. See the application of these principles in Christ (Luke 14:26-27).

In the parable of the Cities of Refuge, therefore, the Gospel was set before the people very effectively. There would be for Israel, no immunity from the curse of the law, until the death of the High Priest should deliver them from its power. In Christ, a believer passes from the curse of the law to the forgiveness of grace. His death and resurrection through baptism accomplishes this. Apart from his offering, believers would be held in bondage to the curse of the Law, and “the wages of sin is death”.

**VERSE 33**

**“So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it polluteth the land”** — Because the land belonged to Yahweh, it was considered holy. However, the ungodly actions of Israelites could pollute it. This was part of the in-

dictment pressed against the nation by Ezekiel. He declared "When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings" (Ezek 36 17). See also Lev 18 25, 2 Kings 24 4, Matt 23 31-35, 27 25.

**"And the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it"** — As life is God-given, those who murder, destroy the creation of God, and as death itself is defiling (see Num 19 11), the only way in which land could be cleansed when defiled was by upholding the law of God, and putting to death the murderer.

#### VERSE 34

**"Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inherit wherein I dwell"** — Disobedience to Yahweh in the way described was

considered as polluting the very soil, and as Yahweh inhabited the land, His presence being tokened by the Shekinah glory in the Most Holy in the Tabernacle. He is considered as dwelling therein (Psa 135 21). As the dwelling place of Yahweh, the Promised Land had to be kept clean and holy.

**"For I Yahweh dwell among the children of Israel"** — As Yahweh dwelt among the children of Israel, any infraction of Law would not go unpunished. Dwellers therein had to be conscious of His presence. See the exhortation to Abraham (Gen 17 1). See also Exod 25 8, Num 5.2-5. Those called to Yahweh must keep separate from the world of flesh about them. See Isa 57 15, Acts 15 14; 2 Cor 6.16-17.

## THE PARABLE OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE

The murderer, or deliberate destroyer of God's life was to be put to death; but involuntary killing, or the accidental homicide who sought protection in a City of Refuge would be delivered from the Avenger if on investigation his claim was considered valid. However, he had to remain a prisoner in the City until the death of the High Priest when he was forgiven his crime.

This provision of the Law illustrated the principle of redemption in the Redeemer promised from the beginning (Gen. 3:15). The Israelite, brought into relationship with Yahweh through the Mosaic Covenant based upon the Law, discovered that through the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3) the Law did not lead to life but was as the Avenger of Blood (see Rom. 7:10-14), threatening death. He had to seek a City of Refuge which typified the protection granted in the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). Hence the Law became as a "schoolmaster leading to Christ" (Gal. 3:24), that those motivated thereby "might be justified by faith". A man of faith, therefore, was taught to look forward to the death of one who could provide complete liberty. Christ taught the Jews of his day that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32), whilst, at the same time warning them that to cultivate the lusts of the flesh was to act the part of a murderer (John 8:44). For the involuntary sinner there is protection and ultimate liberty through his death (Gal. 5:1). Many facets of the plan of redemption are revealed in the significant and important provisions of the Law relating to the Cities of Refuge.

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX LEGISLATION REGARDING INHERITANCES AND MARRIAGES OF HEIRESSES

*This section is supplementary to chapter 27:1-11 where it is decided that daughters can inherit property if there is no son. However, a situation is now brought to light which can cause real complications in the tribal divisions of the land. If a woman has inherited property in the absence of a son, and then marries another man in another tribe, her land will transfer to her husband, and so to a different tribe. The result will be to break down the Divine division of the land among the tribes, and cause confusion. In view of this possibility, Moses legislates that any woman who is granted an inheritance, must not marry outside her own tribe. It is further explained that the daughters of Zelophehad (27:1-11), about whom the original problem has centred, did, in fact, marry according to this ruling (vv. 10-12). The chapter divides into three parts;*

- a. *Objections to the existing law (vv. 1-4);*
- b. *Limitations of partners to marriage with heiresses (vv. 5-9);*
- c. *Conditions excepted (vv. 10-13).*

### **Objections to the Existing Law — vv. 1-4**

*Some prominent men of the tribe of Manasseh, present a problem to Moses arising out of his decision of inheritance in cases such as Zelophehad who was of that tribe*

#### **VERSE 1**

**“And the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near”** — Reference to these Gileadites is found in Num 26 29-30. On this occasion, they evidently approached Moses who convened a conference of the major administrators of Israel.

**“And spake before Moses, and before the Princes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel”** — The problem was deemed sufficiently important to call to-

gether the chief rulers of Israel; the decision would affect the whole nation.

#### **VERSE 2**

**“And they said, Yahweh commanded my Lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Israel”** — Reference to this is found in Num 26 55, 33:54. The basis of the objection now presented to Moses was the fact that the land had been divided by lot to the various tribes, according to the command of Yahweh. The appointment of land, therefore was a Divine inheritance. Should human failure interfere with God's appointment? The answer must be in the negative. The failure of parents to provide a son must not allow a God-given inheritance to pass permanently to another tribe. The petition was presented in a very respectful man-

ner Moses was addressed as "Lord" that is *Adon*. The petitioners thereby acknowledged his authority, indicating their confidence in him, and their willingness to accept his decision. The respect afforded him by these Gileadites is a pleasant contrast to the attitude of the previous generation which opposed him in a most disrespectful manner. Korah, for example, raised the standard of revolt by boldly declaring "Ye take too much upon you" (Num 16 3).

"And my Lord was commanded by Yahweh to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters" — Reference to this law is found in Num 27 1, Josh 17 3-4. The case of the daughters of Zelophehad has been considered in our treatment of Numbers 27. They obtained an ordinance permitting daughters of an Israelite dying without male issue, to inherit their father's property (27 6-11). The chiefs of the Machirites, of whom Zelophehad was one before his death, now obtain a supplementary enactment, requiring such heiresses to marry within their own tribes. The reason for this important limitation is given in the following verses.

#### VERSE 3

"**And if they be married to any of the sons of the other tribes of the children of Israel, then shall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and shall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; so shall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance**" — This was a shrewd, though obvious observation presenting a very valid objection to a problem that could easily arise. The land had been divided among the tribes by Yahweh, but His purpose in doing so could be defeated if a daughter inheriting property married into another tribe. Obviously her property, under normal circumstances, would be joined to that of her husband. It would mean that if he were of a different tribe, the property would be joined to the tribe into which the heiress had married. So the original purpose of Yahweh would be defeated through natural weakness. It was a very valid objection.

#### VERSE 4

"**And when the jubilee of the children of Israel shall be**" — The law relating to the jubilee is found in Lev 25 10.

"**Then shall their inheritance be put**

**unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received; so shall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers**" — A woman marrying an Israelite of another tribe was accounted a member of the tribe into which she had married. Her inheritance, therefore, would become part of the tribal allotment of her new tribe. This would be confirmed by the ordinance of the Year of Jubilee, for in that year, all inheritances reverted back to their original owners. In the case of an heiress who had married into another tribe, therefore, the jubilee, in effect, would confirm the permanent transfer of that land to the new tribe, after which the transfer could not be challenged in any way. In the words of the Machirites, the inheritance would be "taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers". The problem presented was a very real one, and if legislation had not been introduced to prevent it, could have resulted in the various tribal inheritances becoming completely mixed up.

#### Limitation of Partners To Such A Marriage — vv. 5-9

*Moses, recognising the validity of the objection, orders that such heiresses, must marry within their father's tribe*

#### VERSE 5

"**And Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of Yahweh, saying, the tribe of the sons of Joseph hath said well**" — Moses recognised the validity of the objection, and commended the Machirites for their observation, as, previously, he had commended the daughters of Zelophehad for their interest in the disposal of their God-given inheritance (see ch 27 7).

#### VERSE 6

"**This is the thing which Yahweh doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their fathers shall they marry**" — Moses' decision confirmed his former order establishing the right of daughters to inherit the property of their fathers if there were no sons to do so, but now, he limits their marriage to Israelites within their own tribe. By this decision, the tribal inheritance would be retained to the tribe. A case of this is recorded in 1 Chron 23 22.

## VERSE 7

**“So shall not the inheritance of the children of Israel remove from tribe to tribe: for everyone of the children of Israel shall keep himself to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers”** — The word “keep” in the Hebrew signifies *to cleave to*. The important legislation now introduced, commanded by law that Yahweh’s inheritance should be considered of greater importance than marriage. The order that an heiress must marry within her own tribe, is similar to the limitations of marriage imposed on believers, namely “to whom she will, only in the Lord” (1 Cor 7:39). This important decision announced by Moses emphasised the importance of God’s inheritance above the considerations of flesh. It taught that discipleship requires that one put the divine inheritance above the considerations of marriage. See Luke 14:26. To the devout Hebrew, the Divine inheritance was greater than life itself. Because of that, Naboth suffered death, rather than give up his inheritance to Ahab (1 Kings 21:3). Though the King promised to replace it with a better field and vineyard, the response of the faithful Israelite who faced death because of his refusal, was “Yahweh forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my father unto thee” (1 Kings 21:3). It was not merely stubbornness, but faith, that motivated him at that time.

## VERSE 8

**“And every daughter, that possesseth an inheritance to any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Israel may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers”** — This limitation meant that the Divine purpose in allocating territory to every tribe was retained.

## VERSE 9

**“Neither shall the inheritance remove from one tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Israel shall keep himself to his own inheritance”**

— The tribal inheritance was the Divine apportionment of the land, and therefore was not subject to revision through human manipulation or weakness.

**The Conditions Accepted — vv. 10-13**

*The daughters of Zelophehad are obedient to the instructions of Moses, providing an example to all other heiresses under similar circumstances*

## VERSE 10

**“Even as Yahweh commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad”** — They subsequently married men of the tribe of Manasseh, so preserving their inheritance within the tribal boundaries.

## VERSE 11

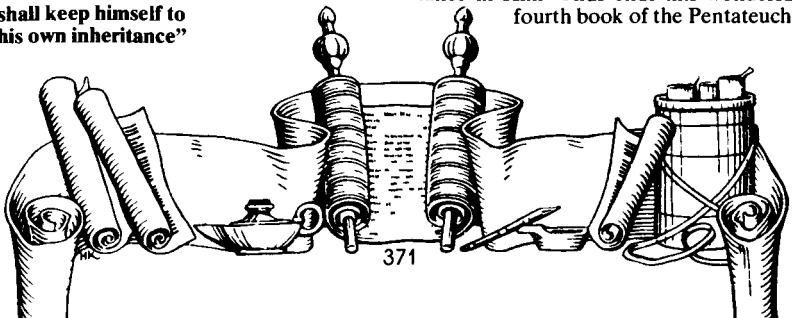
**“For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father’s brothers’ sons”** — The significance of the names of these Israelitish women is shown in our notes on ch. 27:1. The reference to “the father’s brothers’ sons” signifies the sons of their kinsmen, that is, members of their tribe.

## VERSE 12

**“And they were married into the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father”** — They were obedient to the divine command.

## VERSE 13

**“These are the commandments and the judgment, which Yahweh commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan, near Jericho”** — This statement terminates the book of Numbers, and is introductory to the book of Deuteronomy that follows. See the connection with the introductory note of Deut. 1:1. This final chapter fittingly deals with the security of the inheritance in Him. Thus ends this wonderful fourth book of the Pentateuch.



## APPENDIX

### Ideas Related to Holiness

Five words related to holiness are used rather freely in the Pentateuch, but are not commonly understood. They are not commonly understood because generally the concept of holiness is considered more as a *condition* rather than a *state*.

The words in Hebrew with their common English translations, are *Cherem* rendered "devoted, or utterly destroyed"; *Qodesh*, rendered "holy"; *Chol* rendered "common"; *Tame* signifying "unclean"; and *Tahor* signifying "to be clean".

These words are all related to the idea of holiness, but in ways that are not obvious. The problem is that the English words used for their translation do not supply the same connotations as originally intended.

For example, the word *Qodesh* is usually translated "holy". To many, the word signifies a state of sinlessness. But that is not its real meaning. The basic significance of *Qodesh* is "wholly belonging to God, in a special relationship with Him". It therefore denotes a person or object separated unto God for His special use or purpose. The principle of *separation* is inherent in the word, rather than a *state of being*. This is seen in the fact that the opposite of *Qodesh* is not "sinful" but "common" from the Hebrew *Chol*. Things which are common, are those that are not separated, or dedicated to God; they do not have a special relationship with God. They can be used for anybody for common, ordinary purposes. Persons who are "holy" have been wholly dedicated to the work of Yahweh. They belong to Him in some special sense. They have a special relationship with Him, which sets them apart from all others, and from all other ordinary purposes and work. There is a sense in which all the people of Israel were the people of God, and therefore were "holy"; for they were separated from all other peoples unto Yahweh (Exod. 19:5-6). This is given repeatedly as the reason they must keep themselves from the customs and religions of the people about them. The land of Israel was "holy", and therefore could only be occupied and inherited in accordance with Divine law. The city of Jerusalem ultimately became "holy", because it was set aside for the Divine purpose as the centre of His administration and worship. So the people, the land, and city, as well as other things were considered "holy". That is, they were separated for Divine use and purpose. As "holy", they must refrain, or be kept, from all defilement. In comparison with Israel, all other nations were common (*Chol*) because they were not separated and dedicated to God, and did not have a personal relationship with Him. The words *Tame* (unclean) and *Tahor* (clean) are related to the first two as two parallel lines are related to each other. That is, *clean*

does not mean "holy", and *unclean* does not mean "common". The thought is rather, that that which is clean is capable of being made holy, and that which is unclean is incapable of being made holy. In other words, a person, a nation, a land, or a city, must be cleansed in order to be holy, that is, separated unto God. The people were cleansed by the Covenant at Sinai. The Land was cleansed by war. The Temple site in Jerusalem was cleansed by sacrifice. Having been cleansed, these things were made "holy," that is, they were appropriated by Yahweh for His special purpose. Therefore, all persons, or things, could be made holy, but persons could be rendered temporarily unclean by a number of things, such as, touching a dead body (Num. 5:1-2; 19:11). An unclean person in such a state was no less moral than his brother who had not touched the dead body. But in order to impress the lesson of death, he was treated as unclean. Such a person could not participate in the religious ceremonies until he had cleansed himself by the process outlined for such cleansing in the laws provided (see Num. 19).

Some things were by nature thought of as unclean, and therefore unfit for any use of Yahweh in the Tabernacle. They were also unfit for human use and to be avoided. Swine, for example, were unclean.

Therefore, a person could be unclean without being sinful. This is important to know when reading "that touching a dead body", for example, made one temporarily unclean. Death is related to sin as cause to effect, and to impress that fact and lesson, the person who touched a dead body was accounted "unclean" for a season, and was required to go through a cleansing ceremony, which included washing his body and his clothes. In the mind of modern medical knowledge of transmittable diseases, that was a good rule! But, in fact, the idea behind it was doctrinal and not hygienic. The important aspect was that the uncleanness was ceremonial, or religious. An unclean person, or thing, could not be dedicated to God until cleansed.

The remaining word is *Cherem*, which is translated in a confusing variety of ways. One of the most common translations is "devoted". The word is not merely used in that way, but also to signify "devoted to some god other than Yahweh". This could be said of a thing or of a person. In that sense, to be *cherem*, was far worse than to be "unclean". Some things which were *cherem* could be "undevoted", and then had to be dedicated to Yahweh. If they could not, then they had to be destroyed. If a person who was *cherem* because he served other gods, chose to serve Yahweh, he had to dedicate himself to Yahweh, and become "holy" unto unto Him. If he did not so choose, he was to be destroyed. This is the reason the word is sometimes translated as "utterly destroyed" (see Josh. 6:18); and the background for



such commands as are found in Deut. 20:10-18, and Josh. 6:17-19.

(Notes taken from a study manual on Numbers by K.E. Jones).

## SUMMARY

Literally, the Book of Numbers is the history of Israel's wilderness-life from Sinai onwards, that is, after its formal incorporation as the people of God under the legal covenant. It is a history of sad and terrible failure. Instead of a rapid march to the Promised Land, they experience a sojourn of thirty-eight years in the desert, during which the entire generation that left Egypt as grown-up men (except two persons) perish under the judgment of Yahweh. But a new generation is led on to the borders of the land, conquerors over all opposition, until just opposite and ready to enter the Promised Land the narrative ends. Deuteronomy is merely a review, and not a history; the narrative continues with the Book of Joshua.

Spiritually, its lesson is simple and obvious: it is the trial of the believer in the world; in which, unfortunately, his weaknesses become manifest, yet by the grace of God he does not fail. The resources of the priesthood, as found in the Lord whose resurrection is the token of victory, are brought out, the enemy is defeated, no curse can succeed on those whom Yahweh has not cursed, they go from strength to strength, until the good land of their inheritance is practically reached.

The Levites and their service are prominent throughout the book. This foreshadows the responsibility of believers to exhibit the principles of Christ in the world. The people are seen as Yahweh's army, united together for wilderness-warfare; strengthened by God to overcome. So it is that whilst the first generation perished, the second reached the Land of Promise. Many powerful exhortations are presented through these experiences that reach down to our age and generation.