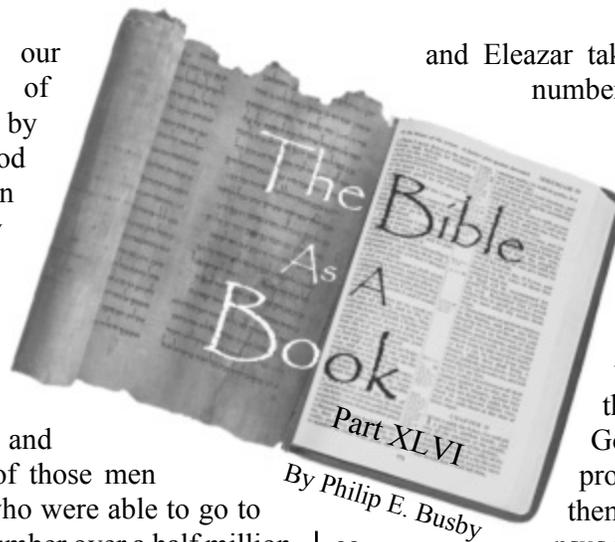


As we continue our overview of the book of Numbers, we ended last time by talking about the census God was having Moses carry out in order to count the new generation of Israel which would enter the promised land and to whom the land would be divided. This covered the numbering of all the tribes except Levi, and shows us only the number of those men twenty years old and older who were able to go to war. Of just them, we see a number over a half million. This brought us through Numbers chapter 26 verse 56, and we are ready to start our look at verse 57, which continues the census by going into talking about the tribe of Levi.

The tribe of Levi had three major divisions by which the tribe was separated into groups, and these were named for the sons of Levi. They were the Gershonites, the Kohathites, and the Merarites. These three divisions consisted of five specific houses, and in a way there were six because the specific family Moses and Aaron came from became the house of the High Priesthood. Kohath, the father of the Kohathites, had a son named Amram. We don't know how many women were involved in Levi fathering his sons, nor do we know this about Kohath. However, Amram stays within his family line very early on and marries one of his father's sisters who was born to Levi in Egypt. Her name was Jochebed. Amram and Jochebed give birth to Moses and Aaron, making them great-grandchildren of Levi on their father's side and grandchildren on their mother's. The important part of this specific branch of the family would, of course, be Aaron who had four sons, two of whom died very early on after the establishment of the tabernacle's services because they did not follow God's instructions in their duties. In all, the tribe of Levi numbered 23,000, but this was all males from one month old and upward without the stipulation they be those able to go to war. This is because the tribe of Levi would not go to war, nor would they obtain a specific piece of the promised land as a tribe. They were the priesthood and belonged to God. Those things they would possess would be things given to God by the nation.

This would finish the census God had Moses



and Eleazar take, and out of all the people numbered in this, there would only be two men who were part of the first census that was taken by Moses and Aaron when Israel originally came out of Egypt. Joshua and Caleb remained strong and healthy, because God had granted them favor due to their being the two spies who trusted in God to bring the nation into the promised land as God first wanted them to. The other anomaly in this census was that one house in the tribe of Manasseh had come to consist of only daughters. The five daughters of this house now came to Moses and Eleazar who were with the princes of Israel before the tabernacle. These daughters wanted to make the point their father died having left a significant family, but because they were only daughters there was no male to be numbered in the census. They also wanted to point out that their father was not one of the men who rose up against Moses and Aaron during Korah's rebellion, but died only of his own sin like so many others. Due to all this, they thought it only right that their father's name not be lost in Israel and be given no possession in the land.

Moses would take this issue to The Lord, as only God could tell him what was right and how to handle such a request. The answer God gives would not only bring clarity to how to handle this situation but others like it that might arise in the future after the land was divided. God told Moses the daughters were correct, and this family was to be given a possession along with those families with male representatives. God goes on to instruct that Israel was to know that in the future if a man died only having daughters, it was his daughter(s)' right to inherit the family's possession. If in an even worse case the man had no children, then his possession would pass to someone else in his same direct family tree - such as a brother or sibling's children. Further, if a man died with no children who also had no siblings, then it was to be given to a family branching from his father's siblings. Basically, the rule was to follow the family line backward until a branch of the family could be found to take the possession, and this would keep each possession within the specific family group to which it belonged in the best way it could. In some ways, this backtracking would

simply put the possession in the hands of someone who might have had it in the case the original branch that possessed it had never come about in the first place!

With this new census being completed, God instructs Moses concerning the fact Moses was to end his long earthly ministry of leading the chosen nation through their official formation, and to this place where they would finally enter and possess the land where they were intended to permanently reside. God told Moses he would go up into a mountain named Abarim from which he would be able to see across a great portion of the land God would give the nation. After getting this one last chance to see the land, Moses' earthly life would end not by natural causes, but in a specific place and at a specific moment in time much like his brother Aaron's life ended. God then reminds Moses about the incident which had proven he was being pushed to his human limit in leading these people, and God would not ask him to continue taking on the burden of being the one to lead this new generation into what lay ahead. Moses then shows the spirit was still willing, in that he cared very deeply for the people and was concerned they were not yet ready to be without a specific man to lead them as he had. Showing he in no way doubted God, Moses asks God to give the nation such a man to replace him.

This is where the separation of looking only to the priesthood for leadership guidance would take place for the first time; as God instructs Moses to take Joshua, a man who had stood by Moses for so long but was not of the priestly family, to fill this task. However, Joshua had always believed with his whole heart in the plan of God for the nation, and this made him the right man to be given Moses' responsibilities. Moses was to perform a ceremony of laying his hands on Joshua before the High Priest and in the sight of the nation in order to show this was the man Moses personally trusted, but more importantly the one God had instructed to take charge of the things Moses had cared for, for so long. Unlike Moses, Joshua would not go before God's direct presence, but point the people to what they should always do, which was turn to the priest in order to ask God's instructions. Joshua would go to the High Priest, and the priest would go before God to receive God's wisdom for those things the nation faced. This was simply a man acting on a national level the way each individual in Israel was to come before God on a personal level! By the instructions of God given to the priest and relayed to

Joshua, the nation would live and move as a people through the events of taking possession of the land. Thus, Moses performs this ceremony just as God had instructed him.

The next part is God telling Moses the words he needed to give to Israel in order to ensure that the handing over of leadership to Joshua, along with the fact this is a new generation in Israel which will live a different kind of life once on their land, does not and will not change what God expects of the nation in serving Him at the tabernacle. To make it simple, it is to emphasize the representational Laws were/are not just for the wilderness journey! Thus, God's words to Moses starts with the commandment that God's sacrifices and offerings are to be offered as they are to happen at their appointed time without fail. Moving into specifics, God goes over the sacrifices that were to be performed every day, which consisted of two lambs in their first year along with the plant-based elements of flour and oil that went along with each of them. One was to be offered in the morning and the other in the evening. There was also to be a drink offering poured out before The Lord along with both these sacrifices each day.

On each weekly Sabbath there were to be added to these continual offerings two more lambs in their first year with their plant-based elements and drink offerings. Basically doubling the amount of the daily sacrifices. On the first day of each new month there were to be added to whatever daily sacrifices that needed to be offered, on the basis of what day of the week it might fall, two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year; of course, all perfect specimens as every sacrifice should be. Each of these sacrifices would also have their corresponding plant-based offering consisting of the correct measurements required for each type of animal offered along with them. Drink offerings of an amount specific to each type of animal were also to be offered with each sacrifice. Along with these there was to be offered a specific sin offering for the month, which was one young goat, offered in the manner such a sin offering was to be offered, and a drink offering along with this sin offering. Again, none of this took the place of, but was on top of, the other sacrifices the day demanded.

Now, this is where certain days would get very busy at the temple, because feast days also had their sacrifices and offerings that were to be offered on top

of what the particular day called for. The fourteenth day of the first month is Passover, and that evening would begin the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread in which no leaven was to be eaten. The first day of Unleavened Bread was to be honored in the same way a Sabbath is, in that no work was to be done. Sacrifices were also to be offered each of the seven days, which were very similar to those offered on the first day of the month. They were two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. All these were again to have their corresponding plant-based offerings, and a drink offering was to be offered along with each one. There was also to be offered a sin offering of one young goat, with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. These were to be offered after the morning sacrifice of the lambs required for the daily offerings on every day of this seven day feast. The seventh and last day of this feast was also to be observed as a Sabbath, in that no work was to be done.

The second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is also the Feast of Firstfruits, and this day started a count of seven sets of seven. When this count is complete, the following day was to be the Feast of Weeks, and this day required a very similar set of sacrifices and offerings as well: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, each with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There was also to be a sin offering of one young goat with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. This day was also to be observed like a Sabbath day, in that no work was to be done; and all these offerings, again, were not to displace the offering that the day would normally demand.

The first day of the seventh month would be a very busy day of sacrifices and offerings, because on top of being a first day of a month, which required many offerings, it is also the Feast of Trumpets. This day was to be a day of sounding trumpets as the nation called out unto The Lord, and the day was to be observed like a Sabbath day, in that no work was to be done. Added to the offerings this day would be a similar set of sacrifices, but in this set there would be only one young bull with the one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and a drink offering required for each one. There was also to be a sin offering of one young goat with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. Thus, this day was to consist of the two lamb sacrifices a day called for, and two more if it fell on a Sabbath

day. As the first day of the month, it would call for two young bulls, one ram, seven lambs, and a ram for a sin offering. As the feast day, it would also call for another young bull, a ram, seven lambs, and a young goat for a sin offering: all these sacrifices with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings.

The tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. This day was also to be observed as a Sabbath day, in that no work was to be done, but also a special day of focusing on repentance from sin. This feast day, as a feast, called for some very specific sacrifices, offerings, and ceremony which represented the yearly cleansing of the tabernacle and the nation as a whole. However, this day would require the daily sacrifices and offerings any day of the week would call for on which it landed, on top of those specific to the feast. Being a feast in general, this day would also call for a set of sacrifices consisting again of one young bull, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings required for each one. There would also be one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering.

The seventh and last feast of the year started on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and lasted seven days. The feast cycle as a whole was marked by adding an eighth day of observance at the end of these seven days, making it a seven day feast plus one. The first day of this feast was to be observed as a Sabbath day, in that no work was to be done; and on top of the daily sacrifices, a great deal more sacrifices would be offered on each day of this feast. The rams and lambs would be doubled, and there would be an interesting decrease in the amount of bulls as the days progressed! On the first day, there were to be offered thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year. Every one of these animals was to be offered with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There was also to be offered one young goat for a sin offering along with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. On the second day of this feast the number of young bulls would decrease by one, and the sacrifices would be twelve young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year, each with their plant-based offering and drink offering. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering.

On day three, there were to be offered eleven young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. On day four, there were offered ten young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year, with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. On day five, there were to be offered nine young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. On day six, there were to be offered eight young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering.

On the seventh day, the number of bulls would be reduced to reach the same number of the feast day itself, which is God's number of completion for this creation. Thus, there would be offered seven young bulls, two rams, and fourteen lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. This day marked the technical end of the Feast of Tabernacles, but added to it was an eighth day, and this eighth day was to again be observed like a Sabbath, in that no work was to be done; but there was also to be a solemn assembly of the people. This day represents the continuance into eternity God's people will experience, and on this day the number of sacrifices would go back to the more familiar number seen on many feast days. Thus, only one young bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year, all with their corresponding plant-based offerings and drink offerings. There would also be offered one young goat for a sin offering with its plant-based offering and a drink offering. As with all these days, none of this was to displace any daily offerings that would be required if this was not a feast day. To be clear, God also points out all these daily, Sabbath, monthly, and feast day offerings were to be offered no matter how many offerings individuals might bring in a day, for all the reasons there were to bring them. All

this, Moses commands the people to remember!

Next, Moses would sit down with the leaders of the tribes and go over a rule they all needed to be enforcing as leaders of the people. He wishes to make clear the Law concerning vows or promises people make. Moses tells them that when a man makes a vow, everything he said he will do he must do. If a woman who has not been married lives with her father and makes a vow, her father must be witness to it, and she is held to everything she said just as a man would be if her father does not object to any of it. However, if her father objects, her entire vow, no matter what it included, God will forgive her for not following through with because she does not have the power to make the choice. This same thing would be true for a married woman whose vow was to be witnessed by her husband and the husband objects or allows. Now, if a woman has lost her husband to death or he has divorced her, then any vow she makes under those circumstances is binding upon her just as a man's vow would be. The critical thing for a husband to know is that when he marries a woman, she may have made vows that for these reasons she is bound to. However, when it comes to his knowledge that she has made a vow, he then has the power to disallow it, or he may allow it simply by not disallowing it at that point. Any vow he chooses not to disallow becomes binding under his authority; and if a husband then chooses to disallow or hinder the woman in what she has vowed at any point, God will forgive the woman, and the man will be the one to bear her sin instead!

Before he is taken from this life, God would also give Moses the task of demonstrating God meant what He said about vexing the Midianites for what they had tried to do in tempting Israel. To do this, Moses would call for one thousand men out of each tribe to arm themselves for the task. This would send an army of twelve thousand men against Midian. Phinehas, the son of the High Priest, would go with this army, acting not as a soldier but a priest to blow the trumpet and call upon The Lord for Israel. The battle against the Midianites was such a success Israel killed every male among them including their kings. Interestingly, the prophet Balaam, whom the king of Moab had called to curse Israel, was also killed in this battle. The army also proceeded to gather up all the things of value from Midian and burned their cities and strongholds. As they brought all this back to the camp of Israel, the problem was that the army had followed

tradition in taking all the women and children captive as part of the spoils of this war.

Moses and Eleazar the High Priest, along with the princes in Israel, went out to meet them as they returned, and Moses was angry when he found out they had done this. Moses asks them to consider why they had kept the very women whom joining with had been a big part of the problem after Balaam had not cursed Israel when the king of Moab asked him to; and Midian chose to tempt Israel by getting them to join in the worship of their gods, which caused a plague in Israel. The bloodline of Midian was not to be among Israel's. There was to be no dispute about Midian living on as part of Israel. Thus, Moses commands that all the male children be killed. He also tells them to kill all the women who had already been with a man. This was to leave only women upon whom no male, living or dead, had a claim; and due to Midian's promiscuous ways, this would seem to only leave girls and very young women. We also see Moses giving the instructions that all those involved in the killing during and after the battle, along with those females left of the captives, and every article the Law instructed needed purifying after being exposed to a dead body, should go through the seven day purification process, which necessitated them to stay out of the camp for that time. Eleazar would further detail these instructions mostly concerning the process of items made of materials that could withstand fire, and those things that could not, needing to be purified; and everything, including people, would go through the water of purification made with the ashes of the red heifer just as the Law commanded. Before accomplishing this, neither they nor anything they had, could enter the camp.

God then instructs Moses and Eleazar to count all the people and beasts that were taken during this battle and divide them into two equal groups. One half would belong to the men who had actually taken part in this battle, and the other half would be given to the congregation at large. God would also instruct how to honor Him in giving to God His portion of the increase, as this was no ordinary increase. To do this, Moses was to take from the half that belonged to the army one person for every five hundred captives, and one animal out of every five hundred of the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep. These were to be given to Eleazar to heave offer, and thus, belong to the priests. Out of the half that went to the congregation, Moses was to take one for every fifty of both the people and

of all the kinds of animals they had captured. These would be given to the others in the tribe of Levi who did the service of the tabernacle. Moses and Eleazar take this count and determine the army had captured 675,000 sheep, 72,000 cattle, 61,000 donkeys; and of the people kept alive, 32,000 women remained. The half that went to the army consisted of 337,500 sheep, 36,000 cattle, 30,500 donkeys, and 16,000 people. Out of these, Moses took 675 sheep, 72 cattle, 61 donkeys, and 32 people and gave them to Eleazar to heave offer before God. The portion that belonged to the congregation consisted of 337,500 sheep, 36,000 cattle, 30,500 donkeys, and 16,000 people. Out of these and all the other kinds of animals, Moses took one for every fifty and gave them to the tribe of Levi as God had commanded Him to do.

After this, the officers who led the overall army, along with the officers from each tribe that were over a thousand, along with those officers under them who were each in charge of a hundred men a piece came to Moses and informed him that they had counted the men that went to war, and not a one had been lost! Due to this amazing fact, they wanted to give God an offering of thanksgiving and show they understood war was not something to be celebrated but cleansed from. Due to this, each man wanted to thank God for preserving their soul by giving items out of the things each man had gotten. These were items not included in the count and division of the spoils, such as precious stones, gold, and valuable metalwork of all types. The total weight of the gold alone which they brought was 16,750 shekels. Moses and Eleazar accepted all these gifts from the officers on behalf of the men who had went into battle, and brought them to the tabernacle to be part of the treasures held there as witness to God's great blessings upon His people!

Let's stay in God's Word!

