INTRODUCTION TO NUMBERS

I. NAME OF THE BOOK

A. In the Hebrew (MT) the title is "In the Wilderness" (BDB 184). This is not the first word but it is in the first sentence (i.e., the fifth word). It documents the revelations and events from Mt. Sinai to the plains of Moab across from Jericho.

B. In the LXX it is entitled "Numbers" (*arithmoi*) and in the Vulgate (*numeri*) because a census was taken twice in chapters 1-4 and 26.

II. CANONIZATION

A. It is part of the first section of the Hebrew Canon called "The Torah," "Teachings," or "Law."

B. The section is known as the Pentateuch (five scrolls) in the LXX.

C. It is sometimes called "The Five Books of Moses" in English.

D. It includes a continuous account by Moses from the time of creation through Moses' life, Genesis – Deuteronomy.

III. GENRE – This book is very similar to the Exodus. It is a combination of historical narrative and legislation as well as the ancient poetic oracles (i.e., Balaam, Numbers 23-24).

IV. AUTHORSHIP

A. This is the first book of the Torah to name a written source, "The Book of the Wars of YHWH," Num. 21:14-15. This clearly shows that Moses did use written documents as well as oral traditions (see John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy, *The Lost World of Scripture*).

B. This book states that Moses could and did record the events of the wilderness wandering period. See Special Topic: Moses' Authorship of the Pentateuch.

C. Numbers also provides several examples of obvious editorial additions (possibly by Joshua or Samuel):
   1. Num. 12:1,3
   2. Num. 13:22
   3. Num. 15:22-23
   4. Num. 21:14-15
   5. Num. 32:33ff
   6. Num. 32:33ff

D. In most cases Moses is referred to in the third person except in direct quotes. This implies Moses used scribal help in compiling these materials. See Special Topic: Scribes.

E. It is interesting to notice that Numbers includes two non-Israelite literary productions:
   1. the Amorite taunt poem in Num. 21:27-30 (possibly v. 30 was an Israelite addition)
   2. Balaam's conversations with Balak, King of Moab in Numbers 23-24

   They do show the use of written or oral material included in the compilation of the book (cf. *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*, Num. 21:14-15).

V. DATE

A. The book itself gives us the date:
   1. Num. 1:1 and 10:10 say it was the 2nd month of the 2nd year after the Exodus. After this there was a 38 year wandering period.
   2. Num. 9:1 says it was the 1st month of the 2nd year after the Exodus.

B. The time of the Exodus is uncertain. It is either 1445 B.C. or 1290 B.C. See Special Topic: The Date of the Exodus.
   See Special Topic: ANE Calendars

VI. SOURCES FOR CORROBORATING THE HISTORICAL SETTING

A. There are four items from the book of Numbers that uniquely reflect an Egyptian culture:
   1. The layout of the Hebrew camp by tribes (Num. 2:1-31; 10:11-33) and the marching arrangement of the tribes (Numbers 1-7). This fits exactly the order used by Rameses II in his Syrian campaign known from the Armarna Texts. These Canaanite documents, from the 1300 B.C. period, describe the social, political, and religious interactions between Canaan and Egypt. It is also significant that this Egyptian layout and arrangement changed as we learn from the Assyrian bas-reliefs of the first millennium B.C. The Assyrians camped in a circle.
   2. The silver trumpets of Numbers 10 reflect an Egyptian source. Archaeology has specifically found them mentioned in the reign of Tutankhamen, dated around 1350 B.C. Also these silver trumpets, used for religious and civil purposes, are common in the Armarna Texts.
   3. Horse drawn chariots were introduced to Egypt by the *Hyksos*, Semitic rulers of the 15th and 16th Dynasties. The ox drawn carts were also unique to Egypt. They are seen in the Syrian campaign of Thutmose III 1470 B.C. The people of Canaan were unfamiliar with these wagons, probably because Canaan was so rugged and hilly. These carts were sent to get Jacob (Gen. 45:19, 21, 27). They were also used by the Hebrews in the Exodus (Num. 7:3, 6, 7).
   4. One last uniquely Egyptian element that was copied by the Hebrews was totally shaved priests (Num. 8:7).

B. The two censuses found in chapters 1-4 and 26 are paralleled in:
   1. the Mari Tablets from the 1700's B.C.
   2. a document from the old kingdom period of Egypt, 2900 - 2300 B.C.

VII. LITERARY UNITS (context)

A. Brief Outline Based on Geographical Setting:
   1. preparations at Mt. Sinai for the journey to the Promised Land, Num. 1:1 - 10:10.
   2. the journey to the Promised Land, Num. 10:11 - 21:35

a. to Kadesh, Num. 10:11-12:16
b. at Kadesh, Num. 13:1-20:13
c. from Kadesh, Num. 20:14-21:35

3. the events on the Plains of Moab, Num. 22:1-36:13

B. Detailed Outline
1. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 614-615.
2. E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp. 84-90.
3. NIV Study Bible, pp. 187-188.

C. One of the difficulties of analyzing Numbers is its rather unusual organization of material; i.e., the mixture of law and narrative and its inclusion of miscellaneous material. Some theories about its structure are:
1. This was obviously used by the proponents (Wellhausen) of the "documentary hypothesis," J.E.D.P., to divide the book into many non-historical, non-Mosaic sources.
Special Topic: Pentateuch Source Criticism.
2. J. S. Wright proposes a compilation of Mosaic materials at the end of his life in consultation with scribes. The piece-meal character of Numbers is noted but relegated to Moses' lifetime.
3. Gordon J. Wenham (*Tyndale Commentary on Numbers*, p. 14-18) proposes a triadic parallel using the biblical material from Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and relating them to the three journeys:
a. Red Sea to Sinai
b. Sinai to Kadesh
c. Kadesh to Moab

By doing this both for material related to "journeyings" and "stoppings" a remarkable parallel becomes evident. He further relates this triadic parallelism to Genesis 1-11, Genesis 12-50, and Deuteronomy. This approach seems very promising. It does show us that Ancient Near Eastern authors had literary structures or patterns which controlled their literary forms but are unfamiliar to us as modern westerners.

VIII. MAIN TRUTHS

A. It is a continuation of the historical narrative started in Genesis. But it must be remembered that this is not a "western history" but a Near Eastern theological history. Events are not exhaustively recorded in chronological order but are selected to reveal God and Israel's character.
Special Topic: OT As History, OT Historiography Compared to Other ANE Cultures
Special Topic: OT Historical Narratives

B. It shows God's character:
1. His presence seen in the cloud:
a. The Cloud rested onto the "Holy of Holies" of the Tabernacle, Num. 9:15. God accepted it and its procedures as the way and place for God and humanity to meet!
b. The Cloud led the people, Num. 9:17-23. God was with them, and led them by His very presence.
c. The Cloud embodied God's presence revealing Himself to Moses, Num. 11:17, 25; 16:42-43.

d. The Cloud became a symbol of God's presence in judgement as well as revelation, Num. 12:1-8; 14:10.
e. the Cloud was the visible symbol of God's presence, not only to Israel, but to the surrounding nations, Num. 14:14; 23:21.
f. God's presence symbolized in the cloud during the Exodus and wilderness wandering period was suspended as the Israelites entered the Promised Land, but still God was symbolically with them by means of the Ark, 35:34.

2. His grace and mercy in:
   a. His continuing presence with them amidst their grumbling and rejection of His leaders, Num. 11:1; 14:2,27,29,36; 16:11,42; 17:5; 20:2; 21:5.
   b. His provisions for them in the desert:
      (1) water
      (2) food
         (a) manna (daily, except on the Sabbath)
         (b) quail (twice)
      (3) clothing that did not wear out (cf. Deut. 8:4; 29:5)
      (4) the Cloud:
         (a) shade
         (b) light
         (c) guidance
         (d) revelation
   c. His harkening to Moses' intercession:
      (1) Num. 11:2
      (2) Num. 12:13
      (3) Num. 14:13-20
      (4) Num. 16:20-24
      (5) Num. 21:7
3. His justice (Holiness) in:
   a. Israel's punishment of a 38 year wilderness wandering period (Numbers 14)
   b. Moses' punishment of not being able to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:1-13; 27:14; Deut. 3:23-29)
   c. The death of Korah and the leaders of Reuben (Num. 16:1-40)
   d. The plague for the people rejecting Moses' and Aaron's leadership (Num. 16:41-50)
   e. the idolatry at Shittim was judged by God by the death of the offenders at the hand of the Levites (Numbers 25)
4. See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God

C. As Israel settled into the Covenant agreement revealed at Mt. Sinai and began to trust in YHWH, strict obedience to His Word became the central issues.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MOSES' AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH

A. The Bible itself does not name the author (as is true of many OT books). Genesis has no "I" sections like Ezra, Nehemiah, or "we" sections like Acts.
B. Jewish tradition
   1. Ancient Jewish writers say Moses wrote it
      a. Ben Sirah's *Ecclesiasticus*, 24:23, written about 185 B.C.

b. The *Baba Bathra* 14b, a part of the Talmud which gives traditional authorship of OT books
c. Philo of Alexandria, Egypt, a Jewish philosopher, living about 20 B.C. to A.D. 42
d. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian, living about A.D. 37-70

2. YHWH reveals truth to Moses
   a. Moses is said to have written for the people
      (1) Exodus 17:14
      (2) Exodus 24:4, 7
      (3) Exodus 34:27, 28
      (4) Numbers 33:2
      (5) Deuteronomy 31:9, 22, 24-26
   b. God is said to have spoken through Moses to the people
      (1) Deuteronomy 5:4-5, 22
      (2) Deuteronomy 6:1
      (3) Deuteronomy 10:1
   c. Moses is said to have spoken the words of the Torah to the people
      (1) Deuteronomy 1:1, 3
      (2) Deuteronomy 5:1
      (3) Deuteronomy 27:1
      (4) Deuteronomy 29:2
      (5) Deuteronomy 31:1, 30
      (6) Deuteronomy 32:44
      (7) Deuteronomy 33:1

3. OT authors attribute it to Moses
   a. Joshua 8:31
   b. 2 Kings 14:6
   c. Ezra 6:18
   d. Nehemiah 8:1; 13:1-2
   e. 2 Chronicles 25:4; 34:12; 35:12
   f. Daniel 9:11
   g. Malachi 4:4

C. Christian tradition
   1. Jesus attributes quotes from the Torah to Moses
      a. Matthew 8:4; 19:8
      b. Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26
      c. Luke 5:14; 16:31; 20:37; 24:27, 44
      d. John 5:46-47; 7:19, 23
   2. Other NT authors attribute quotes from the Torah to Moses
      a. Luke 2:22
      b. Acts 3:22; 13:39; 15:1, 15-21; 26:22; 28:23
      c. Romans 10:5, 19

d. 1 Corinthians 9:9
e. 2 Corinthians 3:15
f. Hebrews 10:28
g. Revelation 15:3

3. Most early Church Fathers accepted Mosaic authorship. However, Ireneaus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian all had questions about Moses' relationship to the current canonical form of Genesis (cf. D. 2. on page 3).

D. Modern Scholarship

1. There have obviously been some editorial additions to the Torah (seemingly to make the ancient work more understandable to contemporary readers, which was a characteristic of Egyptian scribes):
   a. Genesis 12:6; 13:7; 14:14; 21:34; 32:32; 36:31; 47:11
   b. Exodus 11:3; 16:36
   c. Numbers 12:3; 13:22; 15:22-23; 21:14-15; 32:33ff
   d. Deuteronomy 3:14; 34:6
2. Ancient scribes were highly trained and educated. Their techniques, however, differed from country to country:
   a. In Mesopotamia, they were careful not to change anything, and even checked their works for accuracy. Here is an ancient Sumerian scribal footnote from about 1400 B.C.: "the work is complete from beginning to end, has been copied, revised, compared, and verified sign by sign."
   b. In Egypt they freely revised ancient texts to update them for contemporary readers. The scribes at Qumran (i.e., Dead Sea Scrolls) followed this approach.
3. Scholars of the 19th century theorized that the Torah is a composite document from many sources over an extended period of time (Graff-Wellhausen). This theory was based on:
   a. the different names for God
   b. apparent doublets in the text
   c. the literary form of the accounts
   d. the theology of the accounts
4. Supposed sources and dates
   a. J source (use of YHWH from southern Israel) – 950 B.C.
   b. E source (use of Elohim from northern Israel) – 850 B.C.
   c. JE combined – 750 B.C.
   d. D source – 621 B.C. (The Book of the Law, 2 Kgs. 22:8, discovered during Josiah's reform while remodeling the Temple was supposedly the book of Deuteronomy, written by an unknown priest of Josiah's time to support his reform.).
   e. P source (priestly rewrite of OT, especially ritual and procedure) – 400 B.C.
5. There have obviously been editorial additions to the Torah. The Jews assert that it was
   a. The High Priest (or another of his family) at the time of the writing
   b. Jeremiah the Prophet
   c. Ezra the Scribe – IV Esdras says he rewrote it because the originals were destroyed in the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

6. However, the J. E. D. P. theory says more about our modern literary theories and categories than evidence from the Torah (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 495-541 and *Tyndale's Commentaries,* "Leviticus," pp. 15-25).
7. Characteristics of Hebrew Literature
   a. Doublets, like Genesis 1 & 2, are common in Hebrew. Usually a general description is given, followed by a specific account. This may have been a way to accent truths or help oral memory.
   b. The ancient rabbis said the two most common names for God have theological significance:
      (1) YHWH – the Covenant name for deity as He relates to Israel as Savior and Redeemer (cf. Ps. 19:7-14; 103).
      (2) *Elohim* – deity as Creator, Provider, and Sustainer of all life on earth (cf. Ps. 19:1-6; 104).
   c. It is common in non-biblical near eastern literature for a variety of styles and vocabulary to occur in unified literary works (cf. R. K. Harrison, pp. 522-526).
8. There is an emerging theory that there were scribes (in different parts of Israel) working on different parts of the Pentateuch at the same time under the direction of Samuel (cf. 1 Sam. 10:25). This theory was first proposed by E. Robertson's *The Old Testament Problem*.

E. The evidence from ancient Near Eastern literature implies that Moses used written cuneiform documents or Mesopotamian style (patriarchal) oral traditions to write Genesis. This in no way means to imply a lessening of inspiration, but is an attempt to explain the literary phenomenon of the book of Genesis (cf. P. J. Wiseman's *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis)*. Beginning in Genesis 37, a marked Egyptian influence of style, form and vocabulary seems to indicate Moses used either literary productions or oral traditions from the Israelites' days in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. Moses' formal education was entirely Egyptian! The exact literary formation of the Pentateuch is uncertain. I believe that Moses is the compiler and author of the vast majority of the Pentateuch, though he may have used scribes and/or written and oral (patriarchal) traditions. His writings have been updated by later scribes. The historicity and trustworthiness of these first few books of the OT have been illustrated by modern archaeology.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SCRIBES

The title comes from the Hebrew NOUN (BDB 706, KB 767) which means "a spoken message," "a written document/decree" (KB 766). The Greek translation *grammateus* (LXX) usually refers to a written message. It can denote

1. educator (Nehemiah 8)
2. governmental official (2 Kgs. 22:3-13)
3. recorder/secretary (1 Chr. 24:6; 2 Chr. 34:13; Jer. 36:22)
4. military muster officer (cf. Jdgs. 5:14)
5. religious leader (i.e., Ezra, Ezra 7:6; Neh. 12:12-13)

In the NT they are often associated with the Pharisees (see Special Topic: Pharisees). In a sense they were people who were educated in the OT and the Oral Traditions (i.e., Talmud). They helped interpret and apply the Jewish traditions to everyday life (cf. Sirah 39:6). Apparently the scribes were also called "lawyers" (cf. Mark 12:28; Luke 7:30; 10:25; 11:45; 14:3). However, their righteousness (i.e., Jewish

legalism and ritual) could not bring peace with God (cf. Matt. 5:20; Rom. 3:19-20; 9:1-5,30-32; 10:1-6; Col. 2:20-22).

They were often depicted in the Synoptic gospels (John never mentions them, 8:3 not original), as opposed to Jesus, and apparently coming as officials from Jerusalem (cf. Mark 3:22; 7:1). Some did respond to Him (cf. Matt. 8:19; 13:52; 23:34).

1. conflict over eating with sinners and tax-collectors, Mark 2:16; Matt. 9:9-13
2. conflict over the source of Jesus' authority in exorcisms, Mark 3:22
3. conflict over Jesus forgiving sin, Matt. 9:3; Luke 5:21
4. demand for a spectacular sign, Matt. 12:38
5. conflict over hand washing (i.e., ceremonial washings), Matt. 15:1-2; Mark 7:1-5
6. conflict over the crowds' affirmation at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Matt. 21:15
7. Jesus' accusation of their motives (i.e., seeking honor and preeminence), Mark 12:38-40
8. Jesus' accusing them of being hypocrites and blind guides in Moses' seat, Matt. 23:1-36

Because of their knowledge of Scripture, they should have been the first to recognize and embrace Jesus, but their traditions (cf. Isa. 29:13; 6:9-10) had blinded them! When light becomes darkness, how great is the darkness!

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CALENDARS

Canaanite (1 Kgs. 6:1,37-38; 8:2)	Sumerian-Babylonian (Nippur Calendar)	Hebrew (Geezer Calendar)	Modern Equivalents
Abib ("greenheads" of barley)	Nisanu	Nisan	March-April
Zin (spring brilliance)	Ayaru	Iyyar	April-May
	Simanu	Sivan	May-June
	Du-uzu	Tammuz	June-July
	Abu	Ab	July-August
	Ululu	Elul	August-September
Ethanim (permanent water source)	Teshritu	Tishri	September-October
Bul (rains on produce)	Arah-samna	Marcheshvan	October-November
	Kislimu	Chislev	November-December
	Tebitu	Tebeth	December-January
	Shabatu	Shebat	January-February
	Adaru	Adar	February-March

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE DATE OF THE EXODUS

There have been several scholarly opinions on the date of the Exodus.

A. From 1 Kings 6:1,"480 years from the Exodus to the building of Solomon's Temple"
   1. Solomon began to reign in 970 B.C. This is figured by using the battle of *Qarqar* (853 B.C.) as a certain starting date.

2. The Temple was built in his fourth year (965 B.C.), and the Exodus occurred about 1445/6 B.C.
3. This would make it occur in the 18th Egyptian Dynasty.
    a. The Pharaoh of the oppression would be Thutmose III (1490-1436 B.C.).
    b. The Pharaoh of the Exodus would be Amenhotep II (1436-1407 B.C.).
        (1) Some believe evidence from Jericho based on the fact that no diplomatic correspondence occurred between Jericho and Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep III (1413-1377 B.C.).
        (2) The *Amarna* texts record diplomatic correspondence written on ostraca about the *Habiru* overrunning the land of Canaan in the reign of Amenhotep III. Therefore, the Exodus occurred in the reign of Amenhotep II.
        (3) The period of the Judges is not long enough if the 13th century is the date of the Exodus.
4. The possible problems with these dates.
    a. The Septuagint (LXX) has 440 years, not 480.
    b. It is possible that 480 years is representative of twelve generations of forty years each, therefore, a figurative number.
    c. There are twelve generations of priests from Aaron to Solomon (cf. 1 Chronicles 6), then twelve from Solomon to the Second Temple. The Jews, like the Greeks, reckoned a generation as forty years. So, there is a 480 year period back and forward (symbolic use of numbers, cf. Bimson's *Redating the Exodus and Conquest*).
5. There are three other texts that mention dates.
    a. Genesis 15:13,16 (cf. Acts 7:6), 400 years of bondage
    b. Exodus 12:40-41 (cf. Gal. 3:17)
        (1) MT – 430 years of sojourn in Egypt
        (2) LXX – 215 years of sojourn in Egypt
    c. Judges 11:26 – 300 years between Jephthah's day and the conquest (supports 1445 date)
    d. Acts 13:19 – exodus, wanderings, and conquest – 450 years
6. The author of Kings used specific historical references and did not round numbers (Edwin Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, pp. 83-85).

B. The tentative evidence from archaeology seems to point toward a date of 1290 B.C. or the nineteenth Egyptian Dynasty**.**
1. Joseph was able to visit his father and Pharaoh in the same day. The first native Pharaoh who began to move the capital of Egypt from Thebes back to the Nile Delta, to a place called Avaris/Zoan/Tanis, which was the old Hyksos capital, was Seti I (1309-1290 B.C.). He would be the Pharaoh of the oppression.
    a. This seems to fit two pieces of information about the Hyksos reign of Egypt.
        (1) A stele has been found from the time of Rameses II that commemorates the founding of Avaris four hundred years earlier (1700's B.C. by the Hyksos).
        (2) The prophecy of Gen. 15:13 speaks of a 400 year oppression.
    b. This implies that Joseph's rise to power was under a Hyksos (Semitic) Pharaoh. The new Egyptian dynasty is referred to in Exod. 1:8.

2. The Hyksos, an Egyptian word meaning "rulers of foreign lands," were a group of non-Egyptian Semitic rulers, who controlled Egypt during the 15th and 16th Dynasties (1720-1570 B.C.). Some want to relate them to Joseph's rise to power. If we subtract the 430 years of Exod. 12:40 from 1720 B.C., we get a date of about 1290 B.C.
3. Seti I's son was Rameses II (1290-1224 B.C.). This name is mentioned as one of the store cities built by the Hebrew slaves, Exod. 1:11. Also this same district in Egypt near Goshen is called Rameses, Gen. 47:11. Avaris/Zoan/Tanis was known as "House of Rameses" from 1300-1100 B.C.
4. Thutmoses III was known as a great builder, as was Rameses II.
5. Rameses II had forty-seven daughters living in separate palaces.
6. Archaeology has shown that most of the large walled cities of Canaan (Hazor, Debir, Lachish) were destroyed and rapidly rebuilt around 1250 B.C. In allowing for a thirty-eight year wilderness wandering period, this fits a date of 1290 B.C. Archaeology has found a reference

   to the Israelis being in southern Canaan on a memorial stele of Rameses' successor, Merneptah (1224-1214 B.C., cf. the Stele of Merneptah, dated 1220 B.C.).
7. Edom and Moab seem to have attained strong national identity in the late 1300's B.C. These countries were not organized in the fifteenth century (Glueck).
8. The book, *Redating the Exodus and Conquest* by John J. Bimson, published by the University of Sheffield, 1978, argues against all of the archaeological evidence for an early date.

C. There has been a new theory which can be seen on the History Channel called "Exodus Decoded," which asserts a direct northern route (i.e., "the way of the philistines") even earlier than 1445 B.C., in the Hyksos period (i.e., "the Shepherd Kings," 1630-1523 B.C.)

SPECIAL TOPIC: PENTATEUCH SOURCE CRITICISM (J,E,P,D)
(Taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Jer. 11:5)

A. Modern Scholarship
   1. There have obviously been some editorial additions to the Torah (seemingly, to make the ancient work more understandable to contemporary readers, which was a characteristic of Egyptian scribes):
      a. Genesis 12:6; 13:7; 14:14; 21:34; 32:32; 36:31; 47:11
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   b. apparent doublets in the text
   c. the literary form of the accounts
   d. the theology of the accounts
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   g. However, the J. E. D. P. theory (see #3 above) says more about our modern literary theories and categories than evidence from the Torah. R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament,* pp. 495-541 and *Tyndale's Commentaries,* "Leviticus" pp. 15-25.
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         (b) *Elohim* – deity as Creator, Provider, and Sustainer of all life on earth (cf. Ps. 19:1-6; 104).
         (c) Other Ancient Near Eastern texts use several names to describe their high god (cf. *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason L. Archer, p. 68).
      (3) It is common in non-biblical near eastern literature for a variety of styles and vocabulary to occur in unified literary works (cf. *Introduction to the Old Testament*, R. K. Harrison, pp. 522-526).

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Genesis (cf. P. J. Wiseman's *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis)*. Beginning in Genesis 37, a marked Egyptian influence of style, form and vocabulary seems to indicate Moses used either literary productions or oral traditions from the Israelites' days in both Egypt and Mesopotamia. Moses' formal education was entirely Egyptian! The exact literary formation of the Pentateuch is uncertain. I believe that Moses is the compiler and author of the vast majority of the Pentateuch, though he may have used scribes and/or written and oral (patriarchal) traditions. His writings have been updated by later scribes. The historicity and trustworthiness of these first few books of the OT have been illustrated by modern archaeology.

C. There is an emerging theory that there were scribes (in different parts of Israel) working on different parts of the Pentateuch at the same time under the direction of Samuel (cf. I Sam. 10:25). This theory was first proposed by E. Robertson's *The Old Testament Problem*.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY (from Genesis and Joshua)

Christianity and Judaism are historical faiths. They base their faith on historical events (accompanied by their interpretations). The problem comes in trying to define or describe what is "history" or "historical study." Much of the problem in modern theological interpretation rests on modern literary or historical assumptions projected back onto Ancient Near Eastern biblical literature. Not only is there not a proper appreciation of the temporal and cultural differences, but also of the literary differences. As modern western people we simply do not understand the genres and literary techniques of ANE writings, so we interpret them in light of western literal genres.

The nineteenth century's approach to biblical studies atomized and depreciated the books of the Old Testament as historical, unified documents. This historical scepticism has affected hermeneutics and historical investigation of the Old Testament. The current trend toward "canonical hermeneutics" (Brevard Childs) has helped focus on the current form of the Old Testament text. This, in my opinion, is a helpful bridge over the abyss of German higher criticism of the nineteenth century. We must deal with the canonical text that has been given us by an unknown historical process whose inspiration is assumed.

Many scholars are returning to the assumption of the historicity of the OT. This is surely not meant to deny the obvious editing and updating of the OT by later Jewish scribes, but it is a basic return to the OT as a valid history and the documentation of true events (with their theological interpretations).

A quote from R. K Harrison in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, in the article, "Historical and Literary Criticism of the Old Testament" is helpful.

> "Comparative historiographic studies have shown that, along with the Hittites, the ancient Hebrews were the most accurate, objective, and responsible recorders of Near Eastern history. . .Form-critical studies of books such as Genesis and Deuteronomy, based on specific types of tablets recovered from sites that include Mari, Nuzu, and Boghazköy, have shown that the canonical material has certain nonliterary counterparts in the cultures of some Near Eastern peoples. As a result, it is possible to view with a new degree of confidence and respect those early traditions of the Hebrews that purport to be historiographic in nature" (p. 232).

I am especially appreciative of R. K. Harrison's work because he makes it a priority to interpret the Old Testament in light of contemporary events, cultures and genres.

In my own classes on early Jewish literature (Genesis - Deuteronomy and Joshua), I try to establish a credible link with other ancient Near Eastern literature and artifacts.

A. Genesis literary parallels from the ancient Near East

1. Earliest known literary parallel of the cultural setting of Genesis 1-11 is the Ebla cuneiform tablets from northern Syria dating about 2500 B.C., written in Akkadian.
2. Creation
   a. The closest Mesopotamian account dealing with creation, *Enuma Elish*, dating from about 1900-1700 B.C., was found in Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh and several other places. There are seven cuneiform tablets written in Akkadian which describe creation by *Marduk*.
      1) the gods, *Apsu* (fresh water-male) and *Tiamat* (salt water-female) had unruly, noisy children. These two gods tried to silence the younger gods.
      2) one of the god's children, *Marduk*, helped defeat *Tiamat*. He formed the earth from her body.
      3) *Marduk* formed humanity from another defeated god, *Kingu*, who was the male consort of *Tiamat* after the death of *Apsu*. Humanity came from *Kingu's* blood.
      4) *Marduk* was made chief of the Babylonian pantheon.
   b. "The creation seal" is a cuneiform tablet which is a picture of a naked man and woman beside a fruit tree with a snake wrapped around the tree's trunk and positioned over the woman's shoulder as if talking to her.
3. Creation and Flood – *The Atrahasis Epic* records the rebellion of the lesser gods because of overwork and the creation of seven human couples to perform the duties of these lesser gods. Because of (1) over population and (2) noise, human beings were reduced in number by a plague, two famines and finally a flood, planned by *Enlil*. These major events are seen in the same order in Genesis 1-8. This

   cuneiform composition dates from about the same times as *Enuma Elish* and the *Gilgamesh Epic*, about 1900-1700 B.C. All are in Akkadian.
4. Noah's flood
   a. A Sumerian tablet from Nippur, called *Eridu Genesis*, dating from abut 1600 B.C., tells about *Zivsudra* and a coming flood.
      1) *Enka*, the water god, warned of a coming flood
      2) *Zivsudra*, a king-priest, saved in a huge boat
      3) The flood lasted seven days
      4) *Zivsudra* opened a window on the boat and released several birds to see if dry land had appeared
      5) He also offered a sacrifice of an ox and sheep when he left the boat
   b. A composite Babylonian flood account from four Sumerian tales, known as the *Gilgamesh Epic*, originally dating from about 2500-2400 B.C., although the written composite form was cuneiform Akkadian, is much later. It tells about a flood survivor, *Utnapishtim*, who tells *Gilgamesh*, the king of *Uruk* how he survived the great flood and was granted eternal life.
      1) *Ea*, the water god, warns of a coming flood and tells *Utnapishtim* (Babylonian form of *Zivsudra*) to build a boat
      2) *Utnapishtim* and his family, along with selected healing plants, survived the flood
      3) The flood lasted seven days

4) The boat came to rest in northeast Persia, on Mt. Nisir
5) He sent out three different birds to see if dry land had yet appeared

5. The Mesopotamian literature which describes an ancient flood draws from the same source. The names often vary, but the plot is the same. An example is that *Zivsudra*, *Atrahasis*, and *Utnapishtim* are all the same human king.
6. The historical parallels to the early events of Genesis can be explained in light of man's pre-dispersion (Genesis 10-11) knowledge and experience of God. These true historical core memories have been elaborated and mythologicalized into the current flood accounts common throughout the world. The same can also be said of: creation (Genesis 1-2) and human and angelic unions (Genesis 6).
7. Patriarch's Day (Middle Bronze)
   f. Mari tablets – cuneiform legal (Ammonite culture) and personal texts written in Akkadian from about 1700 B.C.
   g. Nuzi tablets – cuneiform archives of certain families (Horite or Hurrian culture) written in Akkadian, located about 100 miles SE of Nineveh, around 1500-1300 B.C. They record family and business procedures. For further specific examples, see Walton, pp. 52-58.
   h. Alalak tablets – cuneiform texts from Northern Syria from about 2000 B.C.
   i. Some of the names found in Genesis are specified as place names in the Mari Tablets: Serug, Peleg, Terah, Nahor. Other biblical names were also common: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Laban, and Joseph.
8. "Comparative historiographic studies have shown that, along with the Hittites, the ancient Hebrews were the most accurate, objective and responsible recorders of Near Eastern history," R. K Harrison in *Biblical Criticism*, p. 5.
9. Archaeology has proven to be so helpful in establishing the historicity of the Bible. However, a word of caution is necessary. Archaeology is not an absolutely trustworthy guide because of
   a. poor techniques in early excavations
   b. various, very subjective interpretations of the artifacts that have been discovered
   c. no agreed-upon chronology of the Ancient Near East (although one is being developed from tree rings)

B. Egyptian creation accounts can be found in John W. Walton's, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990. pp. 23-34, 32-34.
   1. In Egyptian literature creation began with an unstructured, chaotic, primeval water. Creation was seen as developing structure out of watery chaos.
   2. In Egyptian literature from Memphis, creation occurred by the spoken word of Ptah.

C. Joshua literary parallels from the Ancient Near East
   1. Archaeology has shown that most of the large walled cities of Canaan were destroyed and rapidly rebuilt about 1250 B.C.
      a. Hazor
      b. Lachish
      c. Bethel
      d. Debir (formerly called Kerioth Sepher, Jos. 15:15)

2. Archaeology has not been able to confirm or reject the biblical account of the fall of Jericho (cf. Joshua 6). This is because the site is in such poor condition:
   a. weather/location
   b. later rebuildings on old sites using older materials
   c. uncertainty as to the dates of the layers
3. Archaeology has found an altar on Mt. Ebal that might be connected to Joshua 8:30-31 (Deut. 27:2-9). It is very similar to a description found in the Mishnah (Talmud).
4. The Ras Shamra texts found at Ugarit show Canaanite life and religion of 1400's B.C.:
   a. polytheistic nature worship (fertility cult)
   b. *El* was chief deity
   c. *El's* consort was *Asherah* (later she is consort to *Ba'al*) who was worshiped in the form of a carved stake or live tree, which symbolized "the tree of life"
   d. their son was *Ba'al* (*Haddad*), the storm god
   e. *Ba'al* became the "high god" of the Canaanite pantheon. Anat was his consort
   f. ceremonies similar to *Isis* and *Osiris* of Egypt
   g. *Ba'al* worship was focused on local "high places" or stone platforms (ritual prostitution)
   h. *Ba'al* was symbolized by a raised stone pillar (phallic symbol)
5. The accurate listing of the names of ancient cities fits a contemporary author, not later editor(s):
   a. Jerusalem called Jebus, Jos. 15:8; 18:16,28 (Jos. 15:28 said the Jebusites still remained in part of Jerusalem)
   b. Hebron called Kiriath-arba, Jos. 14:15; 15:13,54; 20:7; 21:11
   c. Kiriath-jearim is called Baalah, Jos. 15:9,10
   d. Sidon is referred to as the major Phoenician city, not Tyre, Jos. 11:8; 13:6; 19:28, which later became the chief city

SPECIAL TOPIC: OLD TESTAMENT HISTORIOGRAPHY COMPARED WITH CONTEMPORARY NEAR EASTERN CULTURES

Mesopotamian sources

1. Like most ancient literature the subject is usually the king or some national hero.
2. The events are often embellished for propaganda purposes.
3. Usually nothing negative is recorded.
4. The purpose was to support current status quo institutions or explain the rise of new regimes.
5. The historical distortions involve
   e. embellished claims of great victories
   f. earlier achievements presented as current achievements
   g. only positive aspects recorded
6. The literature served not only a propagandistic function, but was also a didactic function.

Egyptian sources

1. They support a very static view of life, which was not affected by time.
2. The king and his family are the object of much of the literature.

3. It, like Mesopotamian literature, is very propagandistic.
    a. no negative aspects
    b. embellished aspects

Rabbinical sources (later)

1. Attempt to make Scripture relevant by Midrash, which moves from the faith of the interpreter to text and does not focus on authorial intent nor historical setting of the text
    a. *Halakha* deals with truths or rules for life
    b. *Haggada* deals with application and encouragement for life
2. Pesher – later development seen in Dead Sea Scrolls. It used a typological approach to see the prophetic fulfillment of past events in the current setting. The current setting was the prophesied eschaton (coming new age).

It is obvious that ancient Near Eastern genres and later Jewish literature are different from Old Testament Scripture. In many ways the genres of the Old Testament, though often sharing characteristics of contemporary literature, are unique, especially in their depiction of historical events. The closest to Hebrew historiography is the Hittite literature.

It must be acknowledged how different ancient historiography is from modern, western historiography. Herein lies the problem for interpretation. Modern historiography attempts to be objective (non-propaganda, if this is possible) and to document and record in chronological sequence what "really happened!" It attempts to document "cause and effect" of historical events. It is characterized by details!

Just because Near Eastern histories are not like modern histories does not make them wrong, inferior, or untrustworthy. Western modern histories reflect the biases (presuppositions) of their writers. Biblical history is by its very nature (inspiration) different. There is a sense in which biblical history is seen through the eyes of the faith of the inspired author and for the purposes of theology, but it is still a valid historical account.

This historicity of the Old Testament is important to me as a way of advocating my faith to others. If the Bible can be demonstrated to be historical then its faith claims have stronger appeal to non-believers. My faith does not rest on the historical confirmation of archaeology and anthropology, but these help to introduce the message of the Bible, and to give it a credibility that otherwise it would not have.

To summarize then, historicity does not function in the area of inspiration, but in the area of apologetics and evangelism.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GENRE AND INTERPRETATION: OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVE

I. OPENING STATEMENTS

A. The relationship between the OT and other ways of the chronicling events
    1. Other ancient Near Eastern literature is mythological
        a. polytheistic (usually humanistic gods reflecting the powers of nature but using interpersonal conflict motifs)
        b. Based on the cycles of nature (dying and rising gods)
    2. Greco-Roman is for entertainment and encouragement rather than the recording of historical events per se (Homer in many ways reflects Mesopotamian motifs)

B. Possibly the use of three German terms illustrates the difference in types or definitions of history
    1. "Historie," the recording of events (bare facts)

2. "Geschichte," the interpretation of events showing their significance to mankind
3. "Heilsgeschichte" refers uniquely to God's redemptive plan and activity within the historical process

C. The OT and NT narratives are "Geschichte" which leads to an understanding of Heilgeschichte. They are selected theologically-oriented historical events
1. selected events only
2. chronology not as significant as theology
3. events shared to reveal truth

D. Narrative is the most common genre in the OT. It has been estimated that 40% of the OT is narrative. Therefore, this genre is useful to the Spirit in communicating God's message and character to fallen mankind. But, it is done, not propositionally (like the NT Epistles), but by implication, summation or selected dialog/monolog. One must continue to ask why this is recorded. What is it trying to emphasize? What is its theological purpose?

This in no way is meant to depreciate the history. But, it is history as the servant and channel of revelation.

II. Biblical Narratives

A. God is active in His world. Inspired Bible authors chose certain events to reveal God. God is the major character of the OT.

B. Every narrative functions in several ways:
1. who is God and what is He doing in His world
2. mankind is revealed through God's dealing with individuals and national entities
3. as an example, specifically notice Joshua's military victory linked to covenant performance (cf. Jos. 1:7-8; 8:30-35).

C. Narratives are often strung together to make a larger literary unit which reveals a single theological truth.

III. Interpretive principles of OT narratives

A. The best discussion I have seen about interpreting OT narratives is by Douglas Stuart in *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, pp. 83-84
1. An OT narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.
2. An OT narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.
3. Narratives record what happened—not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.
4. What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.
5. Most of the characters in OT narratives are far from perfect, and their actions also.
6. We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically elsewhere in the Scripture.
7. *All* narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (cf. John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.

8. Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific, limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.
9. Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).
10. In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.

B. Another good discussion on interpreting narratives is in Walter Kaiser's *Toward Exegetical Theology*.

> "The unique aspect of the narrative portions of Scripture is that the writer usually allows the words and actions of the people in his narrative to convey the main thrust of his message. Thus, instead of addressing us through direct statements, such as are found in doctrinal or teaching portions of Scripture, the writer tends to remain instead somewhat in the background as far as direct teaching or evaluative statements are concerned. Consequently, it becomes critically important to recognize the larger context in which the narrative fits and to ask why the writer used the specific selection of events in the precise sequence in which he placed them. The twin clues to meaning now will be *arrangement* of episodes and *selection* of detail from a welter of possible speeches, persons, or episodes. Furthermore, the divine reaction to and estimate of these people and events must often be determined from the way the author allows one person or a group of people to respond at the climax of the selected sequence of events; that is, if he has not interrupted the narration to give his own (in this instance, God's) estimate of what has taken place" (p. 205).

C. In narratives the truth is found in the whole literary unit and not the details. Beware of proof-texting or using OT narratives as a precedent for your life.

IV. Two levels of interpretation
   A. YHWH's redemptive, revelatory acts for Abraham's seed
   B. YHWH's will for every believer's life (in every age)
   C. The first focuses on "knowing God" (salvation), the second on "serving Him" (the Christian life of faith, cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6,11).

SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARACTERISTICS OF ISRAEL'S GOD (OT)

1. Compassionate (BDB 933, KB 1216) – Exod. 34:6; Deut. 4:31; 2 Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
2. Gracious (BDB 337, KB 333) – Exod. 34:6; 2 Chr. 30:9; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; Neh. 9:17,31; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
3. Slow to anger (BDB74 CONSTRUCT BDB 60) – Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
4. Abounding in steadfast love (BDB 912 I CONSTRUCT BDB 338) – Exod. 34:6-7; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2
5. Faithful (or "truth," BDB 54, KB 63; see Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness in the OT)) – Exod. 34:6; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 86:15; Isa. 49:7; Jer. 42:5

6. Abundant forgiveness (BDB 699, KB 757) – Neh. 9:17
7. Did not forsake them (BDB 736 I, KB 806) – Neh. 9:17,31
8. Repents of evil (BDB 636, KB 688, *Niphal* PARTICIPLE + BDB 948,cf. Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2)
9. The great God (BDB 42, 152) – Neh. 1:5; 9:32
10. Great and terrible (BDB 152, 431) – Neh. 1:5; 4:14; 9:32
11. Keeps covenant (BDB 1036, 136) – Neh. 1:5; 9:32
12. Steadfast love (BDB 338 – Neh. 1:5; 9:32 (see Special Topic: Lovingkindness [*hesed*])

These all describe God's feelings toward His people, Israel. His character does not change (cf. Mal. 3:6); therefore, these also apply to all faithful followers (i.e., 2 Cor. 1:3).

NUMBERS 1

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS*

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Census of Israel's Warriors	The First Census of Israel	Census of the Tribes	The First Census of Israel	The Census
1:1-16	1:1-16	1:1-16	1:1-46	1:1
				1:2-4
				The Census Off
				1:5-16
1:17-19	1:17-21	1:17-19		1:17-19
				The Census
1:20-21		1:20-21		1:20-21
1:22-23	1:22-23	1:22-23		1:22-23
1:24-25	1:24-25	1:24-25		1:24-25
1:26-27	1:26-27	1:26-27		1:26-27
1:28-29	1:28-29	1:28-29		1:28-29
1:30-31	1:30-31	1:30-31		1:30-31
1:32-33	1:32-33	1:32-33		1:32-33
1:34-35	1:34-35	1:34-35		1:34-35
1:36-37	1:36-37	1:36-37		1:36-37
1:38-39	1:38-39	1:38-39		1:38-39
1:40-41	1:40-41	1:40-41		1:40-41
1:42-43	1:42-43	1:42-43		1:42-43
1:44-46	1:44-46	1:44-47		1:44-46
Levites Exempted				1:47
1:47-54	1:47-54		1:47-54	Statute for the Levites
		1:48-54		1:48
				1:49-53
				1:54

READING CYCLE THREE (from "Bible Interpretation Seminar")

*Although not inspired, paragraph divisions are the key to understanding and following the original author's intent. Each modern translation has divided and summarized the paragraph divisions as they understand them. Every paragraph has one central topic, truth or thought. Each version encapsulates that topic in its own way. As you read the text, which translation fits your understanding of the subject and verse divisions?

In every chapter you must read the Bible first and try to identify its subjects (paragraphs). Then compare your understanding with the modern versions. Only when we understand the original author's intent by following his logic and presentation at the paragraph level, can one truly understand the Bible. Only the original author was inspired—readers have no right to change or modify the message. Bible readers do have the responsibility to apply the inspired truth to their day and lives.

Note that all technical terms and abbreviations are explained fully in the Special Topics.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:1-16

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, [2]"Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head [3]from twenty years old and upward, whoever *is able to* go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies. [4]With you, moreover, there shall be a man of each tribe, each one head of his father's household. [5]These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; [6]of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; [7]of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; [8]of Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; [9]of Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; [10]of the sons of Joseph: of Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; of Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; [11]of Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; [12]of Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; [13]of Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran; [14]of Gad, Eliasaph the son of Deuel; [15]of Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan. [16]These are they who were called of the congregation, the leaders of their fathers' tribes; they were the heads of divisions of Israel."

1:1-3 These opening verses give the historical setting of the book.

1. author – YHWH speaks to Moses (see Special Topic: Moses' Authorship of the Pentateuch, after Introduction to Numbers)
2. where – at Mt. Sinai (see Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai)
3. when – see Introduction V
4. why – military census, Num. 1:2-3 (census in ANE also used for taxation purposes)

SPECIAL TOPIC: LOCATION OF MT. SINAI

A. If Moses was speaking literally and not figuratively of the three day journey he requested of Pharaoh (Exod. 3:18; 5:3; 8:27), that was not a long enough time to get to the traditional site in the southern Sinai peninsula. Therefore, some scholars place the mountain near the oasis of Kadesh-Barnea (see video on History Channel, "The Exodus Decoded").

B. The traditional site called "Jebel Musa," in the Wilderness of Sin, has several things in its favor:
   1. A large plain before the mountain
   2. Deut. 1:2 says it was an eleven day journey from Mt. Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea
   3. The term "Sinai" (BDB 696, KB 751) is a non-Hebrew term. It may be linked to the Wilderness of *Sin*, which refers to a small desert bush. The Hebrew name for the mountain is Horeb (wilderness, BDB 352, cf. Exod. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6).
   4. Mt. Sinai has been the traditional site since the 4th century A.D. It is in the "land of Midian" which included a large area of the Sinai peninsula and Arabia.
   5. It seems that archaeology has confirmed the location of some of the cities mentioned in the Exodus account (*Elim, Dophkah, Rephidim*) as being on the western side of the Sinai Peninsula.

C. The Jews were never interested in the geographical location of Mt. Sinai. They believed that God gave them the Law and fulfilled His promise from Gen. 15:12-21. "Where" was not the issue and they did not intend to return to this site (i.e., no annual pilgrimage).

D. The traditional site of Mt. Sinai was not established until *Pilgrimage of Silvia*, written about A.D. 385-8 (cf. F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, p. 151.

E. There is much speculation today on a new possible location across the Gulf of Aqaba in Arabia. It is claimed

1. that the land of Midian was always exclusively in Arabia
2. that in Gal. 4:25 Paul states it was in Arabia
3. that satellite mapping has revealed an ancient road leading from Egypt across the Sinai peninsula with a raised, rocky ledge, which crosses the Gulf of Aqaba
4. that the top of the highest peak in this area is blackened (cf. Exod. 19:16,18)

It must be restated that we simply do not know the location!

The other name used in the OT for the place YHWH gave His "Ten Words" was "Horeb" (BDB 352, KB 350, cf. Exod. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut. 1:2,6,19; 4:10,15; 5:2; 9:8; 18:16; 29:1; 1 Kgs. 8:9; 19:8; 2 Chr. 5:10; Ps. 106:19; Mal. 4:4). This root may be related to the same three Hebrew consonants that mean "waste," "desolation," or "ruin" (BDB 352, KB 349). It seems that "Horeb" referred to a range of mountains and "Sinai" to one of its peaks.

1:1 "LORD" See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE NAMES FOR DEITY

A. *El* (BDB 42, KB 48)

1. The original meaning of the generic ancient term for deity is uncertain, though many scholars believe it comes from the Akkadian root, "to be strong" or "to be powerful" (cf. Gen. 17:1; Num. 23:19; Deut. 7:21; Ps. 50:1).
2. In the Canaanite pantheon the high god is *El* (Ras Shamra texts), called "the Father of the gods" and "Lord of heaven."
3. In the Bible *El* is often compounded with other terms. These combinations became a way to characterize God.
   a. *El-Elyon* ("God Most High," BDB 42 & 751 II), Gen. 14:18-22; Deut. 32:8; Isa. 14:14
   b. *El-Roi* ("God who sees" or "God who reveals Himself," BDB 42 & 909), Gen. 16:13
   c. *El-Shaddai* ("God Almighty" or "God of all compassion" or "God of the mountain," BDB 42 & 994), Gen. 17:1; 35:11; 43:14; 49:25; Exod. 6:3
   d. *El-Olam* ("the Everlasting God," BDB 42 & 761), Gen. 21:33. This term is theologically linked to God's promise to David, 2 Sam. 7:13,16
   e. *El-Berit* ("God of the Covenant," BDB 42 & 136), Jdgs. 9:46
4. *El* is equated with
   a. YHWH in Num. 23:8; Ps. 16:1-2; 85:8; Isa. 42:5
   b. *Elohim* in Gen. 46:3; Job 5:8, "I am *El*, the *Elohim* of your father"
   c. *Shaddai* in Gen. 49:25; Num. 24:4,16
   d. "jealousy" in Exod. 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15
   e. "mercy" in Deut. 4:31; Neh. 9:31
   f. "great and awesome" in Deut. 7:21; 10:17; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4

g. "knowledge" in 1 Sam. 2:3
h. "my strong refuge" in 2 Sam. 22:33
i. "my avenger" in 2 Sam. 22:48
j. "holy one" in Isa. 5:16
k. "might" in Isa. 10:21
l. "my salvation" in Isa. 12:2
m. "great and powerful" in Jer. 32:18
n. "retribution" in Jer. 51:56

5. A combination of all the major OT names for God is found in Joshua 22:22 (*El, Elohim, YHWH,* series repeated).

B. *Elyon* (BDB 751, KB 832)

1. Its basic meaning is "high," "exalted," or "lifted up" (cf. Gen. 40:17; 1 Kgs. 9:8; 2 Kgs. 18:17; Neh. 3:25; Jer. 20:2; 36:10; Ps. 18:13).
2. It is used in a parallel sense to several other names/titles of God.
   a. *Elohim* – Ps. 47:1-2; 73:11; 107:11
   b. *YHWH* – Gen. 14:22; 2 Sam. 22:14
   c. *El-Shaddai* – Ps. 91:1,9
   d. *El* – Num. 24:16
   e. *Elah* – used often in Daniel 2-6 and Ezra 4-7, linked with *illair* (Aramaic for "High God") in Dan. 3:26; 4:2; 5:18,21
3. It is often used by non-Israelites.
   a. Melchizedek, Gen. 14:18-22
   b. Balaam, Num. 24:15
   c. Moses, speaking of the nations in Deut. 32:8
   d. Luke's Gospel in the NT, writing to Gentiles, also uses the Greek equivalent *Hupsistos* (cf. 1:32,35,76; 6:35; 8:28; Acts 7:48; 16:17)

C. *Elohim* (PLURAL), *Eloah* (SINGULAR), used primarily in poetry (BDB 43, KB 52)

1. This term is not found outside the Old Testament.
2. This word can designate the God of Israel or the gods of the nations (cf. Exod. 3:6; 20:3). Abraham's family was polytheistic (cf. Jos. 24:2).
3. It can refer to Israeli judges (cf. Exod. 21:6; Ps. 82:6).
4. The term *elohim* is also used of other spiritual beings (angels, the demonic) as in Deut. 32:8 (LXX); Ps. 8:5; Job 1:6; 38:7.
5. In the Bible it is the first title/name for Deity (cf. Gen. 1:1). It is used exclusively until Gen. 2:4, where it is combined with YHWH. It basically (theologically) refers to God as creator, sustainer, and provider of all life on this planet (cf. Psalm 104).

   It is synonymous with *El* (cf. Deut. 32:15-19). It can also parallel YHWH as Psalm 14 (*Elohim*, vv. 1,2,5; YHWH, vv. 2,6; even *Adon*, v. 4).
6. Although PLURAL and used of other gods, this term often designates the God of Israel, but usually it has the SINGULAR VERB to denote the monotheistic usage (see Special Topic: Monotheism).

7. It is strange that a common name for the monotheistic God of Israel is PLURAL! Although there is no certainty, here are the theories.
   a. Hebrew has many PLURALS, often used for emphasis. Closely related to this is the later Hebrew grammatical feature called "the plural of majesty," where the PLURAL is used to magnify a concept.
   b. This may refer to the angelic council, with whom God meets in heaven and who does His bidding (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:19-23; Job 1:6; Ps. 82:1; 89:5,7).
   c. It is even possible this reflects the NT revelation of the one God in three persons. In Gen. 1:1 God creates; Gen. 1:2 the Spirit broods, and from the NT Jesus is God the Father's agent in creation (cf. John 1:3,10; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2; 2:10).

D. *El Shaddai*

The title "God Almighty" is *El Shaddai*. The etymology of this term (BDB 994) is uncertain. The rabbis say that it means "self-sufficiency." The LXX and the Vulgate follow this understanding by translating it "God (*El*) Almighty." Apparently this was the patriarchal name for God (cf. Exod. 6:3). It is used six times in Genesis and thirty-one times in Job. Albright asserted that it is from an Akkadian root that can mean mountain or rock (cf. Ps. 18:1, 2). If the term implies, "God of the mountain" as the true meaning, then it must reflect Canaanite mythology (cf. Isa. 14:13; Ezek. 28:2) or Babylonian religion (i.e., ziggurats being raised on human-built mountains, cf. Genesis 10) on which to worship their gods. Whatever the original intent, as early as Exodus 19-20 the focus will change to the God of Mt. Sinai (cf. Jdgs. 5:5).

E. YHWH (BDB 217, KB 394)

1. This is the name which reflects deity as the covenant-making God; God as savior, redeemer! Humans break covenants, but God is loyal to His word, promise, covenant (cf. Psalm 103).

   This name is first mentioned in combination with *Elohim* in Gen. 2:4. There are not two creation accounts in Genesis 1-2, but two emphases: (1) God as the creator of the universe (the physical) and (2) God as the special creator of humanity. Genesis 2:4-3:24 begins the special revelation about the privileged position and purpose of mankind, as well as the problem of sin and rebellion associated with the unique position.

2. In Gen. 4:26 it is said "*men* began to call upon the name of the LORD" (YHWH). However, Exod. 6:3 implies that early covenant people (the Patriarchs and their families) knew God only as *El–Shaddai*. The name YHWH is explained only one time in Exod. 3:13-16, esp. v. 14. However, the writings of Moses often interpret words by popular word plays, not etymologies (cf. Gen. 17:5; 27:36; 29:13-35). There have been several theories as to the meaning of this name (taken from IDB, vol. 2, pp. 409-11).
   a. from an Arabic root, "to show fervent love"
   b. from an Arabic root "to blow" (YHWH as storm God)
   c. from a Ugaritic (Canaanite) root "to speak"
   d. following a Phoenician inscription, a CAUSATIVE PARTICIPLE meaning "the One who sustains," or "the One who establishes"
   e. from the Hebrew *Qal* form "the One who is," or "the One who is present" (in FUTURE TENSE, "the One who will be")
   f. from the Hebrew *Hiphil* form "the One who causes to be"

g. from the Hebrew root "to live" (e.g., Gen. 3:21), meaning "the ever-living, only- living One"

h. from the context of Exod. 3:13-16 a play on the IMPERFECT form used in a PERFECT TENSE, "I shall continue to be what I used to be" or "I shall continue to be what I have always been" (cf. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Old Testament*, p. 67). The full name YHWH is often expressed in abbreviation or possibly an original form.

(1) *Yah* (e.g., Hallelu - yah, BDB 219, cf. Exod. 15:2; 17:16; Ps. 89:8; 104:35)

(2) *Yahu* ("iah" ending of names, e.g., Isaiah)

(3) *Yo* ("Jo" beginning of names, e.g., Joshua or Joel)

3. In later Judaism this covenant name became so holy (the tetragrammaton) that Jews were afraid to say it lest they break the command of Exod. 20:7; Deut. 5:11; 6:13. So they substituted the Hebrew term for "owner," "master," "husband," "lord"—*adon* or *adonai* (my lord). When they came to YHWH in their reading of OT texts they pronounced "lord." This is why YHWH is written LORD in English translations.

4. As with *El*, YHWH is often combined with other terms to emphasize certain characteristics of the Covenant God of Israel. While there are many possible combination terms, here are some.

a. YHWH – *Yireh* (YHWH will provide, BDB 217 & 906), Gen. 22:14

b. YHWH – *Rophekha* (YHWH is your healer, BDB 217 & 950, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 15:26

c. YHWH – *Nissi* (YHWH is my banner, BDB 217 & 651), Exod. 17:15

d. YHWH – Meqaddishkem (YHWH the One who sanctifies you, BDB 217 & 872, *Piel* PARTICIPLE), Exod. 31:13

e. YHWH – *Shalom* (YHWH is Peace, BDB 217 & 1022), Jdgs. 6:24

f. YHWH – *Sabbaoth* (YHWH of hosts, BDB 217 & 878), 1 Sam. 1:3,11; 4:4; 15:2; often in the Prophets

g. YHWH – *Ro'I* (YHWH is my shepherd, BDB 217 & 944, *Qal* PARTICIPLE), Ps. 23:1

h. YHWH – *Sidqenu* (YHWH is our righteousness, BDB 217 & 841), Jer. 23:6

i. YHWH – *Shammah* (YHWH is there, BDB 217 & 1027), Ezek. 48:35

▣ **"the wilderness of Sinai"** See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE WILDERNESSES OF THE EXODUS

A. Wilderness of Shur – in northeast Egypt (e.g., Exod. 15:22)

B. Wilderness of Paran – central Sinai Peninsula (e.g., Gen. 21:21; Num. 10:12; 12:16; 13:3,26)

C. Wilderness of Sin – southern Sinai Peninsula (e.g., Exod. 16:1; 17:1; Num. 33:11,12, also called "Wilderness of Sinai," e.g., Exod. 19:1,2; Num. 1:1,19; 3:4; 9:1,5)

D. Wilderness of Zin – southern Canaan (e.g., Num. 13:21; 20:1; 27:14; 33:36; 34:3; Deut. 32:51)

▣ **"tent of meeting"** The portable worship center goes by several names (i.e., "tabernacle of the testimony," Num. 1:50). It is possible that this title refers to

1. the tented shrine

2. the tabernacle
3. the entire enclosed area

SPECIAL TOPIC: The Tabernacle (chart)

▣ **"second month"** See Special Topic: ANE Calendars.

▣ **"after they had come out"** See Special Topic: Route of the Exodus.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS (uncertain)

A. The uncertainty of the location of
   1. the Egyptian cities
   2. bodies of water
   3. early Hebrew camp sites

B. The term "Red Sea" is literally *Yam Suph*, which
   1. means, "sea of weeds" or "sea of reeds." It can refer to salt water, Jonah 2:5; 1 Kgs. 9:26 or fresh water, Exod. 2:3; Isa. 19:26. The LXX first translated it as "Red Sea," followed by the Vulgate and then the King James Version.
   2. referred to the "sea to the south" or "sea at the end (of the earth)." It could have referred to the modern Red Sea, Indian Ocean or Persian Gulf.
   3. had several usages in the OT (cf. Num. 33:8,10).

C. There are three possible routes involving three different bodies of water.
   1. A northern route – this was along the Mediterranean coast, following the commercial highway known as "the way of the Philistines." This would have been the shortest way to the Promised Land. The body of water that they would have encountered would have been one of the shallow, marshy areas called: Lake Sirbonis or Lake Menzalch. However, one must take into account Exod. 13:17, which seems to negate this option. Also the presence of Egyptian fortresses along this route militates against this option.
   2. A middle route – this would involve the central lakes called
      a. "The Bitter Lakes"
      b. "Lake Balah"
      c. "Lake Timsah"

      This would also have been following a caravan route through the wilderness of Shur.
   3. A southern route – this would involve the large body of salt water we call the Red Sea today. There was also a caravan route from this area that linked up with the "King's Highway" (the transJordan road to Damascus) at Ezion-Geber.
      a. militating against this is the absence of reeds in this body of water
      b. pointing toward this is that 1 Kgs. 9:26 says Ezion-Geber is on the Yam-Suph. This would be the Gulf of Aqaba (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:26) or part of the Red Sea (cf. Num. 21:4; Deut. 27; Jdgs. 11:16; Jer. 49:12).

   A. Numbers 33 clearly shows the problem. In v. 8a they "pass through the sea," then in v. 10 they camped by the "Red Sea," a different body of water.
   5. Whichever body of water was crossed, it was a miracle of God. Israel was provided weaponry from the dead Egyptian soldiers who floated to their side of the body of water, another miracle, Exod. 14:30; 15:4-5.

6. It is possible from other literature that "the *yam suph*" was the uncharted, mysterious body of water to the south. In some literature (i.e., Theroditus 1.180) the Indian Ocean or the bay of Bengeli is called "*yom suph*." "*Suph* could be from the Hebrew root, "end" and may refer to the end of the known ocean. See Bernard F. Batts, "Red Sea or Reed Sea? What *Yom Suph* Really Means," *Approaches to the Bible*, vol. 1, pp. 291-304.

1:3 "from twenty years old and upward" The age had several usages.

1. Exod. 30:14 – an initial ransom payment for the service of the tent of meetings
2. Exod. 38:16 – an initial gift of precious metals for the construction of the tent of meetings
3. here, for military service. Josephus, *Antiq*. 3.12.4, says from 20 years old to 50 years old, for military service

▣ **"go out"** This VERB (BDB 422, KB 425, *Qal*) is used many times in this chapter for military service (cf. Num. 1:3,20,22,24,25,28,30,32,34,36,38,40,42,45).

Notice Aaron and the priests are to do the count.

1:4-19 Moses assembled a group of tribal leaders to assist in the military census. They are called by two designations.

1. "head" – BDB 910, Num. 1:4,16; see Special Topic: Head
2. "leaders" – BDB 672 I, literally "one lifted up," Num. 1:16,44. Here, of the twelve tribes but in Exod. 16:22; Lev. 4:22; Josh. 9:15,18; 22:30; 34:31, of leaders

Notice the levels of leadership.

1. Moses
2. Aaron and the priests
3. Levites
4. tribal leaders
5. possibly leaders of "thousands" and "hundreds"

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEAD (*kephalē*)

There has been extensive theological discussion over the meaning of "head" (*kephalē*). The term can be understood as

1. its OT Hebrew equivalent is *rosh* (BDB 910, KB 1164), which can mean
   a. head
   b. chief
   c. beginning or origin (cf. Pro. 8:23; Eccl. 3:11; Isa. 41:4)
   d. total amount

   (cf. *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 3, pp. 1015-1020)
2. in the LXX *rosh* is translated by the Greek word
   a. *archē* (beginning, cf. Ps. 137:6)
   b. *prōtotokos* (first, cf. 1 Chr. 5:12)
   c. *kephalē* (head)
      (1) head of a human
      (2) head of an animal
      (3) top of a mountain

(4) top of a tower (cf. Matt. 21:42)

3. in the NT *kephalē*
   a. head of a human (cf. 1 Cor. 11:4,5,7)
   b. head of an animal
   c. idiomatic of the whole person
   d. beginning or source (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3)
   e. sum (cf. Rom. 13:9)
   f. leader
      (1) Jesus is head over all rulers and authority, cf. Col. 2:10
      (2) Jesus is head of the church (cf. Eph. 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18: 2:19
   g. husband (cf. Eph. 5:23)

(cf. *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, pp. 156-163)

1:6 "Zurishaddai" This name is a combination of "rock" (BDB 849) and "Shaddai" 994); see Special Topic: *Shaddai*.

The Simeonite is mentioned in Num. 1:6; 2:12; 7:36,41; and 10:19. Another person's name combined with *Shaddai* is found in Num. 1:7. There is a Levite called "Zuriel" (i.e., My rock is *El*) in Num. 3:25. This shows how ancient Israeli names combined objects with titles for Deity.

For *El* see Special Topic: Names for Deity at Num. 1:1. It is somewhat shocking that "*El*" (9 times) and "*Shaddai*" (3 times) are found often in these early names but <u>not</u> YHWH

SPECIAL TOPIC: *SHADDAI*

This is the non-Hebrew term/title, *Shaddai* (always PLURAL), not the common "*El Shaddai*," which was the Patriarchs' name for Deity, (cf. Exod. 6:3). The word *Shaddai* (BDB 994, KB 1420) is an unknown root. Notice the possibilities.

1. שׁדד, BDB 994 , KB 1418, a VERB that means "to deal violently with" or "despoil" (NOUN, "violence" or "havoc," BDB 994)
2. שׁד, BDB 993, KB 1417, an Assyrian or Akkadian word for a protecting spirit or a demon
3. שׁד, BDB 994, KB 1416, a woman's breast or mother (cf. Job 24:9)
4. שׁהד, BDB 994, KB 1420, a rare word, possibly "to pour out" (i.e., God as rain giver)
5. שׁיד, BDB 994-5, KB 1420-1422, root meaning unknown; here are some guesses
   a. self-sufficient (rabbis)
   b. mighty (from #1 and/or Arabic root)
   c. rain giver (from #4)
   d. high god (Assyrian) or mountain god (Akkadian)

The book of Job uses several named for Deity.

1. *Elohim* – only in Job 1-2
2. *El* – many times, first in Job 5:8
3. *Eloah* – many times, first in Job 3:4
4. *Shaddai* – 31 times, first in Job 5:17, but mostly in chapters 21-22,27.

It is first used without "*El*" in Num. 24:4,16 and again in Ruth (cf. Ruth 1:20,21). It is found in the Psalms only twice with out "*El*" (cf. Ps. 68:14; 91:1). It is found in the Prophets only in

1. Isaiah 13:6
2. Ezekiel 1:24
3. Joel 1:15

1:14
NASB, NRSV,
NRSV, JPSOA **"Deuel"**
NJB, REV,
Peshitta **"Reuel"**
LXX **"Ragouel"**

The MT has "Deuel" (BDB 119). The UBS Text Project gives it an "A" rating (i.e., high probability). This same name is found in Num. 2:14; 7:42; 10:20. The Hebrew letters "d" and "r" are very similar in form and are often confused.

1:16 "These are they who were called" The MT has an ADJECTIVE (BDB 896) but the suggestion of the Masoretes is a PASSIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 894), so too, NASB.

▣ **"the leaders of their fathers' tribes"** These would have been tribal "elders." See Special Topic: Elder.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ELDER

I. OT Usage
   A. used of the angels of God who made up the angelic council (BDB 278, KB 278, cf. Isa. 24:23). This same terminology is used of the angelic creatures of Revelation (cf. Rev. 4:4,10; 5:5,6,8,11,14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4).
   B. used of tribal leaders in the OT (cf. Exod. 3:16; Num. 11:16). Later in the NT this term is applied to a group of leaders from Jerusalem who made up the high court of the Jews, the Sanhedrin (cf. Matt. 21:23; 26:57). In Jesus' day this seventy-member body was controlled by a corrupt priesthood (i.e. not Aaron's line, but purchased from the Roman overlords).

II. NT Usage
   A. used of the local leaders of a NT church. It was one of three synonymous terms (pastor, overseer, and elder, cf. Titus 1:5,7; Acts 20:17,28). Peter and John use it to include themselves in the leadership group (cf. 1 Peter 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).
   B. there is a play on the term elder (*presbuteros*) in 1 Pet. 1:1, 5. The term is apparently used as a title of leadership (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1) and a designation of age (cf. 1 Pet. 1:5). The use of this term is surprising considering that it is basically the Jewish tribal designation of leadership, while "bishop" or "overseer" (*episcopos*) was the Greek city-state designation for leadership. 1 Peter uses Jewish terms to address Gentile believers.

      Peter calls himself a "fellow elder," the term *presbuteros* plus the PREPOSITION *syn*, which implies "joint participation with." Peter does not assert his Apostolic authority (cf. 2 John 1, where another Apostle calls himself "elder"), but admonishes (i.e., "I exhort," a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE) the local leaders to act and live appropriately in the light of
      1. Christ's example
      2. nearness of His return

The early churches did not have paid positions of leadership, but recognized the God-given gifts of ministry and leadership within each local church. This affirmation of giftedness had to be balanced with the cultural reverence for "aged-wisdom," especially among the Jewish believing community. Therefore, Peter addresses both types of leadership.

Also notice that "elders" is PLURAL. This may refer to (1) a number of house church leaders (cf. Acts 20:17) or (2) the different spiritual gifts among a body of leaders (cf. Eph. 4:11), which clearly states that ministry belongs to all believers. This is parallel to the concept of "a kingdom of priests" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:5,9).

C. used of older men in the church, not necessarily the leadership (cf. 1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:2).

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NRSV "divisions"
NJB, LXX,
Peshitta "thousands"
JPSOA "the contingents"
REB "the clans"

The Hebrew number "thousand" (BDB 48) has several connotations. See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*). Also note brief discussion in NASB Study Bible, p. 174.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THOUSAND (*eleph*)

The Hebrew word *eleph* means "thousand" (BDB 48, KB 59 II). It is used in several senses in the OT.

1. a family unit, Jos. 22:14; Jdgs. 6:15; 1 Sam. 23:23; Zech. 9:7; 12:6
2. a military unit, Exod. 18:21,25; Deut. 1:15
3. a literal thousand, Gen. 20:16; Exod. 32:28
4. a symbolic number, Gen. 24:60; Exod. 20:6; 34:7; Deut. 7:9; Jer. 32:18
5. the Ugaritic cognate *alluph* means "chieftain," Gen. 36:15

These different connotations cause modern interpreters to question the literalness of the numbers

1. of the exodus
2. of Israeli tribal military units

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:17-19

[17]So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, [18]and they assembled all the congregation together on the first of the second month. Then they registered by ancestry in their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, head by head, [19]just as the LORD had commanded Moses. So he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:20-21

[20]Now the sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty

years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [21]their numbered men of the tribe of Reuben *were* 46,500.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:22-23

[22]Of the sons of Simeon, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, their numbered men, according to the number of names, head by head, every male from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [23]their numbered men of the tribe of Simeon *were* 59,300.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:24-25

[24]Of the sons of Gad, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [25]their numbered men of the tribe of Gad *were* 45,650.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:26-27

[26]Of the sons of Judah, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [27]their numbered men of the tribe of Judah *were* 74,600.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:28-29

[28]Of the sons of Issachar, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [29]their numbered men of the tribe of Issachar *were* 54,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:30-31

[30]Of the sons of Zebulun, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [31]their numbered men of the tribe of Zebulun *were* 57,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:32-33

[32]Of the sons of Joseph, namely, of the sons of Ephraim, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [33]their numbered men of the tribe of Ephraim *were* 40,500.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:34-35

[34]Of the sons of Manasseh, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [35]their numbered men of the tribe of Manasseh *were* 32,200.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:36-37

[36]Of the sons of Benjamin, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [37]their numbered men of the tribe of Benjamin *were* 35,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:38-39

[38]Of the sons of Dan, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [39]their numbered men of the tribe of Dan *were* 62,700.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:40-41

[40]Of the sons of Asher, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [41]their numbered men of the tribe of Asher *were* 41,500.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:42-43

[42]Of the sons of Naphtali, their genealogical registration by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war, [43]their numbered men of the tribe of Naphtali *were* 53,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:44-46

[44]These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each of whom was of his father's household. [45]So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war in Israel, [46]even all the numbered men *were* 603,550.

1:46 See note at Num. 1:16 about the term "thousand" (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 416-418). This large number is recorded several times (i.e., Exod. 12:37; 38:26; Num. 1:46; 2:32; 11:21; 25:51), but may refer to "military groups" not literally "thousands" (like the Roman military terms).

1. There is a good brief footnote in NET Bible, p. 275, #6
2. also see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 65-67
3. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 51-54
4. for an argument for the literal number see Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 129-134.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 1:47-54

[47]The Levites, however, were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe. [48]For the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying, [49]"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel. [50]But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. [51]So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death. [52]The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies.

[53]But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony." [54]Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which the LORD had commanded Moses, so they did.

1:50-51 The Levites (i.e., members of the tribe of Levi, but not of the family of Moses and Aaron) were to carry the Tabernacle from place to place.

▣ **"al its furnishings"** See the Special Topics:

1. Alter of Incense
2. Alter of Sacrifice
3. Ark of the Covenant
4. Lampstand Menorah)
5. Laver of Bronze
6. The Show Bread of the Presence
7. The Tabernacle (chart) at Num. 2:2d

SPECIAL TOPIC: ALTAR OF INCENSE

This was an altar-shaped piece of furniture where incense was placed in large quantities on the Day of Atonement to produce thick smoke which concealed YHWH's presence over the ark. Our author seems to place it inside the Holy of Holies. This has caused commentators to take this phrase to refer to a "censer" because this is how the Septuagint translates this term (cf. Lev. 16:12; 2 Chr. 26:19; Ezek. 8:11; IV Mac. 7:11). However, Philo and Josephus use the same Greek word for the incense altar. In the OT the altar is closely identified with the Holy of Holies (cf. Exod.30:1-10, 37; but especially 1 Kgs. 6:22).

Coals were taken from the great sacrificial altar at the door of the tabernacle and placed on this small stand. Incense was then placed on the coals to produce a large amount of smoke. This wonderful smelling smoke obscured the high priest's eyes from seeing YHWH, who dwelt over the ark of the covenant between the wings of the cherubim, in the Holy of Holies.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ALTAR OF SACRIFICE

This was the place of sacrifice for the tabernacle. It was an acacia wood structure overlaid with bronze (cf. Exod. 27:1-2). It was a square, 5 cubits (about 18" x 5"; see Special Topic: Cubit) by 3 cubits tall. It had its own utensils (cf. Exod. 27:3) and was portable (cf. Exod. 27:6-7).

The special feature of this altar was its four horns, probably mimicking animal horns, which were a symbol of power for the Israelites. The blood of the animal was drawn out and part of it smeared on these horns, possibly a symbol of lifting the sacrifice to God.

Like all of the tabernacle furniture, this altar was expanded in Solomon's temple (cf. 1 Kings 6). For specific procedures see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the ANE.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

I. Its place and purpose
   A. the place where YHWH dwelt (i.e., His footstool, cf. 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7; Isa. 66:1) with His people, between the wings of the *cherubim* (see Special Topic: *Cherubim*) on the ark of the covenant.
   B. the place of forgiveness of sin (i.e., the mercy seat), for all peoples (cf. Israel, Leviticus 16 and 1 Kgs. 8:27-30; foreigners, 8:41,43,60)

II. Its contents
   A. rabbinical tradition
      1. the two tablets of stone on which YHWH wrote the decalog (cf. Exod. 31:18; 32:15-16)
      2. the two silver columns which hold the tablets (no biblical references)
      3. the fragments of the original two tablets which were broken by Moses because of Israel's (Aaron) making and worshiping the golden calf (cf. Exod. 32:19; Deut. 9:17; 10:2)
      4. a copy of the entire Torah (cf. Exod. 25:16)
      5. the names of God (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:29) developed in *Kabalah*, Jewish mysticism
   B. biblical references as to the contents (it is uncertain if these refer to things inside the ark or beside it)
      1. a jar of manna (cf. Exod. 16:31-36)
      2. Aaron's rod that budded (cf. Num. 17:4,10; Heb. 9:4)
      3. the guilt offerings of the Philistines (5 golden mice and golden hemorrhoids, cf. 1 Sam. 6:3-4,8)
      4. a copy of the Decalog (cf. Deut. 10:4-5; 31:26)
   C. at the dedication of Solomon's Temple in 1 Kings 8 the Ark is said to have only contained the two tablets of stone (i.e., the Ten Words, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:9)

III. Its possible location
   A. historical options
      1. taken to Egypt by Shishak (935-914 B.C.) when he invaded Judah in the fifth year (926 B.C.) of Rehoboam's (son of Solomon) reign (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:25-26; 2 Chr. 12:9)
      2. taken to Egypt (Zoan, Tanis, Avaris—different names for the delta capital of Seti I) by Pharaoh Necco II, who also exiled the Davidic seed Jehoahaz (Josiah's son) in 597 B.C. (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:31-35; 2 Chr. 36:1-4)
      3. taken to Babylon to the temple of Marduk by Nebuchadnezzar II when Zedekiah was exiled (586 B.C.) and the Temple burned (cf. 2 Kgs. 25:9,13-17; 2 Chr. 36:18)
   B. Jewish traditions
      1. hidden on Mt. Nebo/Pisgah by Jeremiah before the fall of Jerusalem (2 Macc. 2:4-5)
      2. the apocryphal book of II Baruch says an angel hid it
      3. hidden by unknown means, but will be returned by Elijah just before the Messiah comes (cf. Mal. 4:5)
      4. hidden on Mt. Gerizim (Shechem) where the Samaritans built their temple to YHWH
      5. buried under the Temple (i.e., Mt. Moriah) before Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem

SPECIAL TOPIC: LAMPSTAND

This ("menorah," BDB 633, KB 600) is a sacred object for providing light in the Holy Place (cf. Exod. 25:37; 27:20-21). It is described in Exod. 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

1. made of gold
2. six branches on a central shaft, three on each side
3. at the top of each branch three cups, shaped like almond blossoms with a bulb and flower
4. at the top of the central shaft are four cups, like #3
5. all parts were made of one piece of hammered gold (one talent, cf. Exod. 25:39)
6. the exact pattern was revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai (cf. Exod. 25:40)
7. the pattern in Exodus is part of the vision of Zechariah in Zech. 4:1-6; this seems to reflect the post-exilic, second temple

Solomon changed it into ten separate lampstands (cf. 1 Kgs. 7:49; 2 Chr. 4:7) in his temple.

One wonders if the menorah is somehow connected to the concept of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," from Gen. 2:17, which was supposed to give light/knowledge (cf. Gen. 3:5).

It is possible that John's presentation of Jesus as "the light of the world" in John 8:12 is related to this concept. I have encluded my notes from John.

John 8:12 "I am the Light" John 6, 7, and 8 seem to be related to the "wilderness wanderings" period of Israel's history, the source of the metaphors that Jesus uses of Himself.

A. John 6 uses "manna" and "the bread of life."
B. John 7 uses "water" and "living water."
C. John 8 uses "light" and "shekinah glory."

This metaphor of light is repeated throughout John (cf. John 1:4-5, 8-9; 3:19-21; 9:5; 12:46).

There has been some debate as to exactly what this refers.

1. the ancient fear of darkness
2. a title for God in the OT (cf. Ps. 27:1; Isa. 62:20; 1 John 1:5)
3. the background of the Feast of the Tabernacles, lighting of the candelabra in the Court of the Women
4. an allusion to the shekinah cloud of glory in the wilderness wandering period that symbolized the presence of God
5. the Messianic titles in the OT (cf. Isa. 42:6, 49:6; Luke 2:32)

The rabbis also used "light" as a title for the Messiah. The lighting of the huge lamps in the Court of the Women during the Feast of Tabernacle is the obvious setting for Jesus' statement. The Messianic implications of light and the special references in John 1:4,8 coincide with the ceremony in the Temple for Jesus to continue to reveal His true origin.

This is one of the seven "I am" statements in John (followed by a PREDICATE)

1. I am the Bread of life (John 6:35,41,46,51)
2. I am the Light of the world (John 8:12; 9: 5; cf. 1:4,9; 12:46)
3. I am the door of the sheepfold (John 10:7,9)
4. I am the good shepherd (John 10:11,14)
5. I am the resurrection, and the life (John 11:25)
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
7. I am the true vine (John 15:1,5)

These unique statements, found only in John, point toward the person of Jesus. John focuses on these personal aspects of salvation. We must trust Him!

SPECIAL TOPIC: LAVER

This was a large, bronze bowl set in the court of the tabernacle for priests to do ceremonial washings (cf. Exod. 30:20-21; Num. 8:7). It is described in Exod. 30:17-21; 38:8. Its placement was between the Tabernacle's tent/shrine and the altar of sacrifice (cf. Exod. 40:7,30).

The Laver of the Tabernacle was made more elaborate by the builders of Solomon's temple. It is called "the sea of cast metal" in 1 Kgs. 7:39. It is described in 1 Kgs. 7:44. One wonders if 1 Kgs. 7:38 is also referring to the Laver.

SPECIAL TOPIC: "Showbread" or "The Bread of the Presence"

The "consecrated bread," "bread of the promise," or "the bread offered to God" referred to "the Showbread" or "the Bread of the Presence," which was placed on the table in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle and later the Temple (each weighing over 12 pounds). This seems to have symbolized YHWH's provision and care for His people, not food for YHWH! It was unleavened, which linked back to the Exodus (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). They became weekly nourishment exclusively for the priests (cf. Lev. 24:5-9; Exod. 25:30). These twelve loaves were replaced every week. However, under the special conditions of 1 Samuel 21, David was allowed to eat them.

1:51

NASB, REB	**"the layman"**
NKJV, NRSV, JPSOA	**"the outsider"**
TEV	**"anyone"**
NJB	**"unauthorized person"**
LXX	**"a lien"**
Peshitta	**"stranger"**

The MT has *Qal* PARTICIPLE, "stranger" (BDB 266, KB 267) but here, context implies that the NASB, REB, and NJB are the best connotations (cf. Num. 3:10; 16:40).

▣ **"shall be put to death"** The Tabernacle was "holy" because of YHWH's presence. Only authorized contact (i.e., Levites and priests) was allowed. Note Exod. 19:12-13,21-23; 1 Sam. 6:19; 2 Sam. 6:6-7.

1:52 See chart at Exodus 25-31, E.

▣ **"each man by his own standard"** The word translated "standard" (BDB 186) can mean "a banner" or "a flag," representing a particular tribe, as in Num. 17:1. Moderns do not know what kind of banner or flag (see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 919).

From the Jewish Study Bible, p. 287, some rabbis made guesses about the "standards."

1. animal
2. color related to the stones of the High Priest's ephod (Ibn Ezra)
3. military unit insignia (Anchor Bible, vol. 4, pp. 146-147)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did YHWH tell Israel to take a census?
2. Why were the Levites excluded?
3. How do modern scholars handle the large number of Num. 1:46?
4. How are the ones warned of being put to death if they approach the Tabernacle?

NUMBERS 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Arrangement of the Camps	The Tribes and Leaders by Armies	The Arrangement of the Tribes While Encamped Or On the March	The Arrangement of the Tribes in Camp	Order of the Tribes
2:1-9	2:1-9	2:1-9	2:1-2	2:1
				2:2
			2:3-9	2:3-4
				2:5-6
				2:7-8
				2:9
2:10-16	2:10-17	2:10-16	2:10-16	2:10-11
				2:12-13
				2:14-15
				2:16
2:17		2:17	2:17	2:17
2:18-24	2:18-24	2:18-24	2:18-24	2:18-19
				2:20-21
				2:22-23
				2:24
2:25-31	2:25-31	2:25-31	2:25-31	2:25-26
				2:27-28
				2:29-30
				2:31
2:32-34	2:32-34	2:32-33	2:32-33	2:32-33
		2:34	2:34	2:34

READING CYCLE THREE (from "Bible Interpretation Seminar")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:1-9

[1]Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, [2]"The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. [3]Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise *shall be* of the standard of the camp of Judah, by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Judah: Nahshon the son of Amminadab, [4]and his army, even their numbered men, 74,600. [5]Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar, and the leader of the sons of Issachar: Nethanel the son of Zuar, [6]and his

army, even their numbered men, 54,400. [7]Then *comes* the tribe of Zebulun, and the leader of the sons of Zebulun: Eliab the son of Helon, [8]and his army, even his numbered men, 57,400. [9]The total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400, by their armies. They shall set out first."

2:2 "shall camp" This VERB (BDB 333, KB 332) is repeated often in this chapter.

1. *Qal* IMPERFECT – Num. 2:2 (twice),17
2. *Qal* PARTICIPLE – Num. 2:3,12,27
3. *Qal* PERFECT – Num. 2:34

Each "camp" (i.e., compass directions) had three tribes.

▣ **"each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households"** The term "standard" is first mentioned in Num. 1:52. See note there.

The term "banners" (BDB 16, #7) is only here and Ps. 74:4. Apparently every tribe had a "standard" and every clan a "banner" (TEV, NJB).

▣ **"tent of meeting"** There has been some confusion (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 874, #2) about where the Tabernacle was placed in the camp of Israel.

1. outside the camp – Exod. 33:7-11; Num. 11:24-30
2. in the midst of the camp – Num. 2:2,17; 5:3; Exod. 25:8

The Exod. 33:7-11 text mentions "a tent," not specifically the Tabernacle complex. I think Moses had a separate special small tent for revelation that was somewhat secluded from the camp, lest the Israelites see God and die!

▣

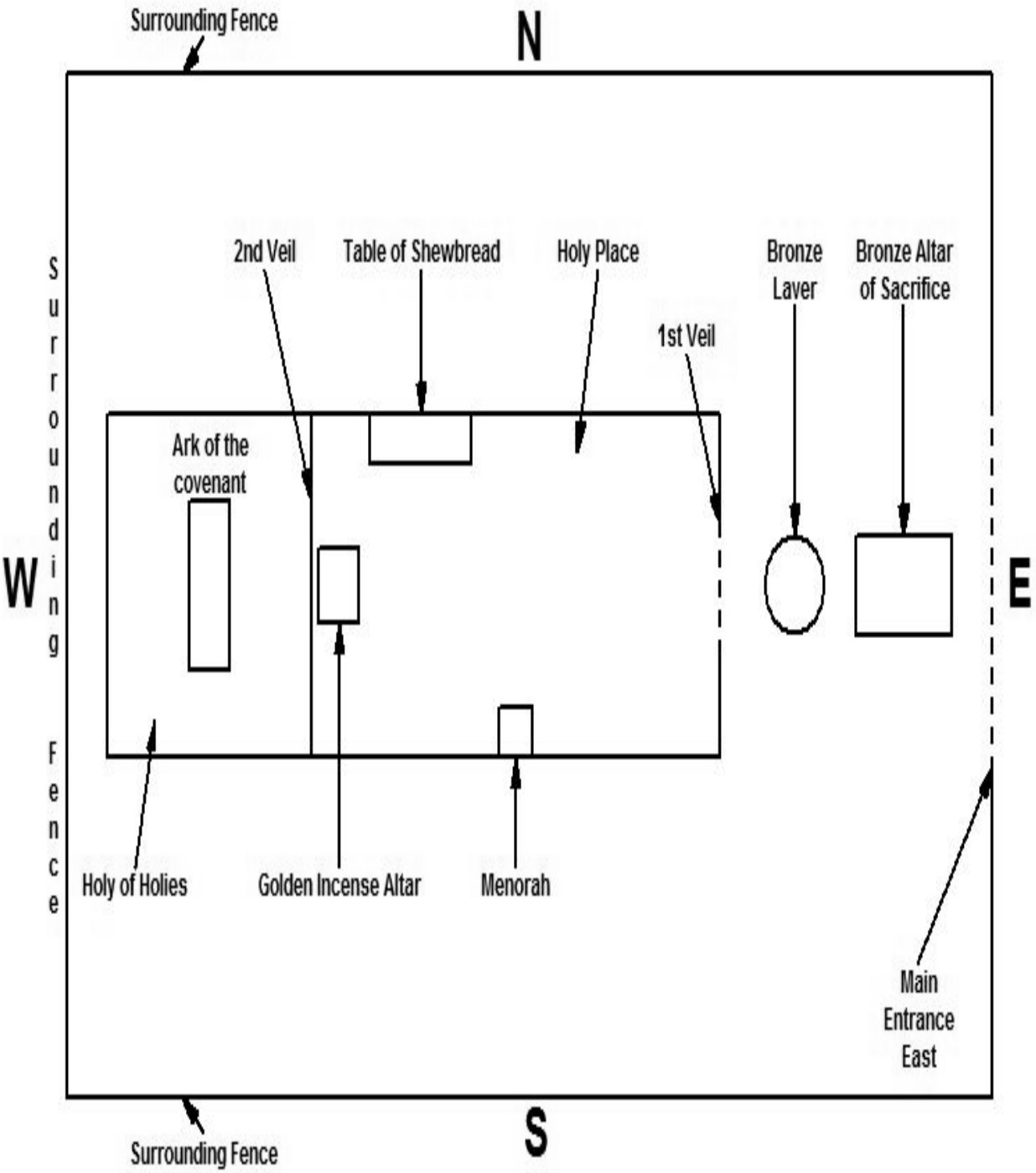
NASB, NKJV,
NJB, JPSOA "at a distance"
NRSV, REB "facing"
LXX "opposite around"
Peshitta "far off around"

The MT has two ADVERBS.

1. facing – BDB 617
2. on every side – BDB 686

This formation matches the pattern of Rameses II's military camp, except where the Pharaoh's tent was is now the Tabernacle of YHWH. See Introduction VI., A., #1. Moses was trained in the Egyptian military schools. See diagram of the layout on next page.

Tabernacle of the Wilderness



2:3 The preeminent tribal position was at the entrance of the Tabernacle, which faced east. Even though Reuben is listed first in Numbers 1, as Jacob's firstborn, here, Judah has the place of honor. By the numbers of military age men listed, it was the largest tribe (cf. Num. 2:9).

2:4 "numbered men" This VERB (BDB 823, KB 955, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) occurs often in this chapter (cf. Num. 2:4,6,8,9,13,15,16,19,21,23,24,26,28,30,31,32 [twice],33).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:10-16

[10]"On the south side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Reuben by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Reuben: Elizur the son of Shedeur, [11]and his army, even their numbered men, 46,500. [12]Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the sons of Simeon: Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, [13]and his army, even their numbered men, 59,300. [14]Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the sons of Gad: Eliasaph the son of Deuel, [15]and his army, even their numbered men, 45,650. [16]The total of the numbered men of the camp of Reuben: 151,450 by their armies. And they shall set out second."

2:14 "Deuel" See note at Num. 1:14. The Leningrad codex has "Ruel."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:17

[17]"Then the tent of meeting shall set out *with* the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camps; just as they camp, so they shall set out, every man in his place by their standards."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:18-24

[18]"On the west side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Ephraim by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud, [19]and his army, even their numbered men, 40,500. [20]Next to him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the sons of Manasseh: Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, [21]and his army, even their numbered men, 32,200. [22]Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the sons of Benjamin: Abidan the son of Gideoni, [23]and his army, even their numbered men, 35,400. [24]The total of the numbered men of the camp of Ephraim: 108,100, by their armies. And they shall set out third."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:25-31

[25]"On the north side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Dan by their armies, and the leader of the sons of Dan: Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, [26]and his army, even their numbered men, 62,700. [27]Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the sons of Asher: Pagiel the son of Ochran, [28]and his army, even their numbered men, 41,500. [29]Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali: Ahira the son of Enan, [30]and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400. [31]The total of the numbered men of the camp of Dan was 157,600. They shall set out last by their standards."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 2:32-34

[32]These are the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households; the total of the numbered men of the camps by their armies, 603,550. [33]The Levites, however, were not numbered among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. [34]Thus the sons of Israel did;

according to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they set out, every one by his family according to his father's household.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How does the formation of Israel's camp point toward a second millennium B.C. date?
2. How is the preeminence of Judah shown?
3. Do the large numbers of chapter 2 match the numbers of chapter 1?
4. Why were the Levites camped around the Tabernacle?

NUMBERS 3

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Levites To be Priesthood	The Sons of Aaron	The Levites Are Set Apart for Special Service	Aaron's Sons	The Tribe of Levi a. the Priests
3:1-4	3:1-4	3:1-4	3:1-4	3:1
				3:2
	The Levites Serve in the Tabernacle		The Levites Are Appointed to Serve the Priests	3:3-4 b. the Levites: their duties
3:5-10	3:5-13	3:5-10	3:5-10	3:5
				3:6-9
				3:10 c. their privileged status
3:11-13		3:11-13	3:11-13	3:11
	Census of the Levites Commanded		The Census of Levites	3:12-13 d. census of Levites
3:14-20	3:14-26	3:14-20	3:14-20	3:14
				3:15
				3:16-17
				3:18-20
3:21-24		3:21-26	3:21-26	3:21-26
Duties of the Priests				
3:25-26				
3:27-32	3:27-32	3:27-32	3:27-31	3:27-31
			3:32	3:32
3:33-37	3:33-37	3:33-37	3:33-37	3:33-37
3:38-39	3:38-39	3:38-39	3:38-39	3:38
				3:39
Firstborn Redeemed	Levites Dedicated Instead of the Firstborn		The Levites Take the Place of the First-born Sons	e. the Levites and the ransoming of the first-born
3:40-43	3:40-43	3:40-43	3:40-43	3:40-41
				3:42-43
3:44-51	3:44-51	3:44-51	3:44-51	3:44-48
				3:49-51

READING CYCLE THREE (from "Bible Interpretation Seminar")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Numbers 3 is all about the family of Moses and Aaron. The family of the tribe of Levi became (cf. Num. 3:6-9).

B. The different Levitical families were given specific tasks related to the Tabernacle.
   1. the family of Gershon
      a. the covering of the inner shrine, Num. 3:25
      b. the screen at the entrance to the inner shrine, Num. 3:25
      c. hangings of the court, Num. 3:26
      d. screen of the doorway of the court, Num. 3:26
      e. outer fencing around the Tabernacle, Num. 3:26
      f. the cords of "e," Num. 3:26 (cf. Exod. 35:18; how these "cords" differ from Num. 3:26,44, is uncertain)
   2. the family of Kohath
      a. taking care of the furniture of the inner shrine (after it was packed by priests), Num. 3:31
      b. the utensils of the inner shrine, Num. 3:31
      c. the two altars and their screen, Num. 3:31
   3. Eleazar (son of Aaron, Num. 3:2) and his successors were to be overseers of the Levitical workers, Num. 3:32
   4. the family of Merari
      a. the frames of the Tabernacle, Num. 3:36
      b. all that was involved in holding it together, Num. 3:26

C. The tribe of Levi, not of the family of Moses and Aaron, were to take the place of "the firstborn" of Exodus 13, cf. Num. 3:21,41

D. There is some question about the size of Israel's population. A good brief discussion is found in Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 65-67.

E. For a good brief discussion of OT genealogies see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 654-662.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:1-4

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

3:1 Moses' and Aaron's genealogy is also found in Exod. 6:20-27. This family became the priests. It is very unusual for "Aaron" to be listed before "Moses" (i.e., Exod. 6:20; Num. 26:59; 1 Chr. 23:13).

▣ **"on Mount Sinai"** This is stated as being given at the same general time as Num. 1:1. For the location os Mt. Sinai see Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai at Num. 1:1-3.

3:3 "anointed" Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 105, makes a good point about this verse.

1. only High Priests anointed – Exod. 29:4-9; Lev. 4:3,5,16; 6:13,15; 8:12; 16:32
2. all priests anointed – Exod. 28:41; 30:30; 40:12-15; Lev. 7:35-36; 10:7; and here

See Special Topics: Anointing in the Bible and Levitical Priests.

SPECIAL TOPIC: "ANOINTING" IN THE BIBLE (Hebrew VERB, BDB 602, KB 643 I; NOUN, BDB 603)

A. Used for beautification (BDB 691 I, cf. Deut. 28:40; Ruth 3:3; 2 Sam. 12:20; 14:2; 2 Chr. 28:15; Dan. 10:3; Mic. 6:15)
B. Used for guests (BDB 206, cf. Ps. 23:5; Luke 7:38,46; John 11:2)
C. Used for healing (BDB 602, cf. Isa. 61:1; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34; James 5:14) [used in hygienic sense in Ezek. 16:9]
D. Used in preparation for burial (cf. Mark 16:1; John 12:3,7; 19:39-40; note 2 Chr. 16:14, but without the VERB "anoint")
E. Used in a religious sense (of an object, BDB 602, cf. Gen. 31:13 [a pillar]; Exod. 29:36 [the altar]; Exod. 30:26; 40:9-16; Lev. 8:10-13; Num. 7:1 [the tabernacle])
F. Used for installing leaders
    1. Priests
        a. Aaron (Exod. 28:41; 29:7; 30:30)
        b. Aaron's sons (Exod. 40:15; Lev. 7:36)
        c. standard phrase or title (Num. 3:3; Lev. 16:32)
    2. Kings
        a. by God (cf. 1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 12:7; 2 Kgs. 9:3,6,12; Ps. 45:7; 89:20)
        b. by the prophets (cf. 1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 15:1,17; 16:3,12-13; 1 Kgs. 1:45; 19:15-16)
        c. by priests (cf. 1 Kgs. 1:34,39; 2 Kgs. 11:12)
        d. by the elders (cf. Jdgs. 9:8,15; 2 Sam. 2:7; 5:3; 2 Kgs. 23:30)
        e. of Jesus as Messianic king (cf. Ps. 2:2; Luke 4:18 [Isa. 61:1]; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb. 1:9 [Ps. 45:7])
        f. Jesus' followers (cf. 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20,27 [*chrisma*])
    3. possibly of prophets (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:16; Isa. 61:1)
    4. unbelieving instruments of divine deliverance
        a. Cyrus (cf. Isa. 45:1)
        b. King of Tyre (cf. Ezek. 28:14, where he uses Garden of Eden metaphors)
    5. term or title "Messiah" means "an Anointed One" (BDB 603, cf. Ps. 2:2; 89:38; 132:10)

Acts 10:38 is a verse where all three persons of the Godhead are involved in anointing. Jesus was anointed (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). The concept is widened to include all believers (cf. 1 John 2:27). The Anointed One has become the anointed ones! This may be parallel to Antichrist and antichrists (cf. 1 John 2:18). The OT symbolic act of physical anointing with oil (cf. Exod. 29:7; 30:25; 37:29) relates to those who were called and equipped by God for a special task (i.e., prophets, priests, and kings). The word "Christ" is a translation of the Hebrew term "the anointed one" or Messiah.

SPECIAL TOPIC: LEVITICAL PRIESTS

I. The Name (taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Deut. 18:1)

According to Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, p. 358, the name "Levi" can have three possible etymological sources:

A. "to whirl around," assuming a ritual dance or procedure (similar to the dance of the prophets of *Ba'al* in 1 Kgs. 18:26)

B. "to accompany someone" or "to be attached to someone," possibly the popular etymology given in Gen. 29:34, also note Num. 18:2,4

C. "to lend," "to give as a pledge," possibly referring to and parallel to "given," referring to the firstborn to YHWH (Num. 3:12; 8:16) or to Samuel being given to YHWH in 1 Sam. 1:28

There are several developmental stages involved:

A. at the Exodus it was the firstborn from every family that was given to YHWH, to serve Him (cf. Exodus 13)

B. this was changed (Mosaic Covenant) to one particular tribe (i.e., Levi) who functioned as YHWH's special servants (cf. Num. 3:12; 8:16)

C. this was modified in Israel's history:

1. some Levitical families served at the central sanctuary
2. others ministered locally
3. later rabbinical Judaism expanded the concept of local Levitical teachers into local rabbis or scribes, but not necessarily from the tribe of Levi

D. for a good discussion of another theory see

1. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, by G. B. Caird, p. 70
2. *Ancient Israel* by Roland de Vaux, vol. 2, pp. 360-371

II. Set Apart For (taken from Dr. Utley's notes at Deut. 10:8)

The VERB "set apart" (BDB 95, KB 110, *Hiphil* PERFECT, cf. Num. 8:14; 16:9; 1 Chr. 23:13) means "to divide." Here the separation is for (1) special cultic service related to the tabernacle and later temple; (2) blessings of the people (cf. Deut. 10:8; Lev.9:22-23; Num. 6:22-27); (3) judging the people's disputes (cf. Deut. 21:5); and (4) judging between clean and unclean (cf. Lev. 10:10). This VERB is parallel to "choose" (BDB 103, KB 119, cf. Deut. 18:5; 21:5).

Israel was to be separate from the other nations (cf. Lev. 20:24-26; 1 Kgs. 8:53; i.e., "a holy nation," cf. Exod. 19:6), so the tribe of Levi was to be separated from the other tribes as YHWH's special cultic servants.

They were chosen because (1) Levi was from the tribe of Moses and Aaron; (2) the Levites took the place of the "first born" for the Hebrews (cf. Exod.13; Num. 3:12; 8:14-19); or (3) the Levites faithfully responded to Moses' call to punish Israel (cf. Exod. 32:25-29). In Gen. 29:34, Leah called her first son Levi because her husband did not love her, but the child's name meant, "Jacob was attached (or joined) to me" (BDB 532).

As the priestly tribe, they will:

A. carry the ark of the covenant

B. stand before the Lord to serve Him (i.e., all the duties at the tabernacle and later, the temple, in Jerusalem, cf. Deut. 18:5; Num. 18:1-7

C. bless in His name (e.g., Num. 6:24-27)

Later there will develop specific tasks given to some families of Levi to be priests and others will function as Levites. However, in Deuteronomy all Levites can act as priests (compare Deut. 31:9 and 25). See Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 2, pp. 358-371.

▣

NASB, NRSV,
TEV, JPSOA "ordained"
NKJV, Peshitta "consecrated"
NJB "invested with the power"
REB "had been installed"
LXX "whose hands they had validated"

The MT has the idiom, "to fill the hand" (BDB 388 and the VERB BDB 569, KB 583, *Piel* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 32:29). This idiom comes from the ordination of Aaron in Leviticus 8 (esp. vv.18,22,27,33; also note Exod. 28:41).

3:4 The account of Nadab and Abihu's disobedience is recorded in Leviticus 10:1-7. They may have been drunk (cf. Lev. 10:8-11).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:5-10

[5]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [6]"Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. [7]They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. [8]They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. [9]You shall thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel. [10]So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death."

3:6 The other families from Levi were to help the priests serve the Tabernacle.

"Bring" (BDB 897, KB 1132, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE) denotes bringing someone into YHWH's presence (i.e., inner shrine). Here it refers to the consecration of the Levites to service the priests and the Tabernacle.

3:7 At the beginning of this verse the root שרמ appears three times (also note vv. 8,10,28,32,38).

1. they shall perform – BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*)
2. the duties – BDB 1038 (for Aaron)
3. #2 repeated in MT, duties for the whole congregation (cf. Num. 3:8)
4. also used of priests in Num. 3:10a

The Levites were to both serve and guard the Tabernacle (cf. Num. 3:10).

3:9 Notice the VERB "give" is repeated three times.

1. you shall give – BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*
2. *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE twice

NASB translates #2 above has "they are wholly given."

3:10b This is also mentioned in v. 38 and Num. 18:7. In Exod. 30:33, it also means "layman," not foreigner. See note at Num. 1:51.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:11-13

[11]Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [12]"Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine. [13]For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the Lord."

3:12-13 The last plague on Egypt was the death of the firstborn of Egypt, both cattle and humans (cf. Exodus 11). Because of this, all firstborn of animals and humans belonged to YHWH, for His service (Exodus 13). In time, the tribe of Levi replaced these as the servants of YHWH.

For a good brief discussion of "substitution" see article in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 824.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:14-20

[14]Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, [15]"Number the sons of Levi by their fathers' households, by their families; every male from a month old and upward you shall number." [16]So Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, just as he had been commanded. [17]These then are the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari. [18]These are the names of the sons of Gershon by their families: Libni and Shimei; [19]and the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel; [20]and the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers' households.

3:14 "the wilderness of Sinai" See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

3:15 "Number" This word (BDB 823, KB 955) is used often in this chapter. It has a wide semantic field (i.e., attend to, visit, appoint), but in ths context it means "muster."

1. Num. 3:15,40 – *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. Num. 3:15 – *Qal* IMPERFECT
3. Num. 3:15,42 – *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*
4. Num. 3:22 (twice), 34,39,43 – *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE
5. Num. 3:39 – *Qal* PERFECT

3:16 "the word of the LORD" "Word" is literally "mouth" (BDB 804, cf. Exod. 17:1; 3:39,51; 33:2). YHWH is spirit. He does not have a physical body but humans are forced to use anthropomorphic words to speak of God. See Special Topic: Anthropomorphic Language to Describe Deity.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GOD DESCRIBED AS HUMAN (anthropomorphism)

I. This type of language (i.e., deity described in human terms) is very common in the OT (some examples)
   A. Physical body parts
      1. eyes – Gen. 1:4,31; 6:8; Exod. 33:17; Num. 14:14; Deut. 11:12; Zech. 4:10
      2. hands – Exod. 15:17; Num. 11:23; Deut. 2:15
      3. arm – Exod. 6:6; 15:16; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 26:8
      4. ears – Num. 11:18; 1 Sam. 8:21; 2 Kgs. 19:16; Ps. 5:1; 10:17; 18:6

5. face – Exod. 33:11; Lev. 20:3,5,6; Num. 6:25; 12:8; Deut. 31:17; 32:20; 34:10
6. finger – Exod. 8:19; 31:18; Deut. 9:10; Ps. 8:3
7. voice – Gen. 3:9,11,13; Exod. 15:26; 19:19; Deut. 26:17; 27:10
8. feet – Exod. 24:10; Ezek. 43:7
9. human form – Exod. 24:9-11; Ps. 47; Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26
10. the angel of the Lord – Gen. 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16; Exod. 3:4,13-21; 14:19; Jdgs. 2:1; 6:22-23; 13:3-22

B. Physical actions (some examples)
1. speaking as the mechanism of creation – Gen. 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26
2. walking – Gen. 3:8 (i.e., sound of); Lev. 26:12; Deut. 23:14
3. closing the door of Noah's ark – Gen. 7:16
4. smelling sacrifices – Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18,25; Lev. 26:31
5. coming down – Gen. 11:5; 18:21; Exod. 3:8; 19:11,18,20
6. burying Moses – Deut. 34:6

C. Human emotions (some examples)
1. regret/repent – Gen. 6:6,7; Exod. 32:14; Jdgs. 2:18; 1 Sam. 15:29,35; Amos 7:3,6
2. anger – Exod. 4:14; 15:7; Num. 11:10; 12:9; 22:22; 25:3,4; 32:10,13,14; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 29:20
3. jealousy – Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16,21; Jos. 24:19
4. loathe/abhor – Lev. 20:23; 26:30; Deut. 32:19

D. Family terms (some examples)
1. father
   a. of Israel – Exod. 4:22; Deut. 14:1; Isa. 1:2; 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1
   b. of the king – 2 Sam. 7:11-16; Ps. 2:7
   c. metaphors of fatherly action – Deut. 1:31; 8:5; 32:6-14; Ps. 27:10; Pro. 3:12; Jer. 3:4,22; 31:20; Hosea 11:1-4; Mal. 3:17
2. parent – Hosea 11:1-4
3. mother – Isa. 49:15; 66:9-13 (analogy to nursing mother)
4. young faithful lover – Hosea 1-3

II. Reasons for the use of this type of language

A. It is a necessity for God to reveal Himself to human beings. There is no other vocabulary than fallen, worldly words. The very pervasive concept of God as male is one example of an anthropomorphism, because God is spirit!

B. God takes the most meaningful aspects of human life and uses them to reveal Himself to fallen humanity (father, mother, parent, lover).

C. Though necessary at times (i.e., Gen. 3:8), God does not want to be limited to any physical form (cf. Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).

D. The ultimate anthropomorphism is the incarnation of Jesus! God became physical, touchable (cf. 1 John 1:1-3). The message of God became the Word of God (cf. John 1:1-18).

III. For a good brief discussion, see G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the bible*, chapter 10, "Anthropomorphism" (pp. 172-182); or see the article, "Anthropomorphism" in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, pp. 152-154.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:21-24

[21]Of Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimeites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites. [22]Their numbered men, in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *even* their numbered men *were* 7,500. [23]The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward, [24]and the leader of the fathers' households of the Gershonites IEliasaph the son of Lael.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:25-26

[25]Now the duties of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting *involved* the tabernacle and the tent, its covering, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, [26]and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords, according to all the service concerning them.

3:25 There are several terms used to describe different aspects of the portable worship place.

1. the tent of meeting – BDB 13 CONSTRUCT BDB 417
2. the Tabernacle – BDB 1015, UBS Text Project, p. 212, says this refers to "the tapestries covering the wood structures of the tent"
3. the tent – BDB 13
4. covering – BDB 492, UBS Text Project, p. 212, says this refers to "the covering piece of goat-hair which was spread out over the whole tent" (cf. Exod. 26:7; 36:14)
5. screen for the doorway – BDB 697 says it refers to the three "screens" of the Tabernacle
   a. at the gate – Exod. 27:16; 35:17; 38:18; 39:40; 40:8,33; Num. 3:26; 4:26
   b. at the entrance to the tent – Exod. 26:30,37; 35:15; 36:37; 39:38; 40:5,28; Num. 3:25,31; 4:25
   c. before the Holy of Holies – Exod. 35:12; 39:34; 40:21; Num. 4:5

3:26 "the altar" This refers to the altar of sacrifice because the altar of incense mentioned in v. 31. See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Num. 1:50-51b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:27-32

[27]Of Kohath Ithe family of the Amramites and the family of the Izharites and the family of the Hebronites and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites. [28]In the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, I8,600, performing the duties of the sanctuary. [29]The families of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the southward side of the tabernacle, [30]and the leader of the fathers' households of the Kohathite families was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. [31]Now their duties *involved* the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all the service concerning them; [32]and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was* the chief of the leaders of Levi, *and had* the oversight of those who perform the duties of the sanctuary.

3:27 "Kohath" Moses and Aaron were from this family of Levi (cf. Num. 26:59; Exod. 6:20).

3:31 "the ark" See Special Topic: The Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"the table"** See Special Topic: The Showbread of the Presence at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"the lampstand"** See Special Topic: Lampstand (*Menorah*) at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"the altars"** See Special Topic: Altar of Incense at Num. 1:50-51b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:33-37

[33]Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari. [34]Their numbered men in the numbering of every male from a month old and upward, *were* 6,200. [35]The leader of the fathers' households of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They *were* to camp on the northward side of the tabernacle. [36]Now the appointed duties of the sons of Merari *involved* the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, all its equipment, and the service concerning them, [37]and the pillars around the court with their sockets and their pegs and their cords.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:38-39

[38]Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but the layman coming near was to be put to death. [39]All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the LORD by their families, every male from a month old and upward, *were* 22,000.

3:39 "22,000" This total number does not fit the sums given in vv. 14-30. Gordon Wenham, *Tyndale OT Commentaries*, vol. 4, p. 71, mentions that probably the "8,600" of v. 28 is a scribal error between the "6," שֵׁשׁ, and "3," שְׁלֹשׁ. This change is supported by some LXX MSS and the Armenian version.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:40-43

[40]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names. [41]You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel." [42]So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded him; [43]and all the firstborn males by the number of names from a month old and upward, for their numbered men were 22,273.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 3:44-51

[44]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [45]"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am the LORD. [46]For the ransom of the 273 of the firstborn of the sons of Israel who are in excess beyond the Levites, [47]you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take *them* in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), [48]and give the money, the ransom of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons." [49]So Moses took the ransom money from those who were in excess, beyond those ransomed by the Levites; [50]from the firstborn of the sons of Israel he took the money in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary, 1,365. [51]Then Moses gave the ransom money to Aaron and to his sons, at the command of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3:46 These numbers of firstborn among the other tribes were greater than the number of firstborn of Levi, so Israel had to pay a ransom price for the 273 extras (i.e., very precise number). See Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem.

It is surprising that the firstborn males of Levi were so close to the firstborn of all the other tribes combined. But remember, the other tribes were numbered from 20 years and up, while the Levites from one month up. If a baby reached one year of age, it was expected to live to adulthood.

Firstborn of domestic animals were sacrificed but firstborn of humans were ransomed (i.e., Luke 2:27). See Special Topic: Firstborn.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RANSOM/REDEEM

I. OLD TESTAMENT

A. There are primarily two Hebrew legal terms which convey this concept.

1. *Ga'al* (BDB 145 I, KB 169 I), which basically means "to free by means of a price paid." A form of the term *go'el* adds to the concept a personal intermediary, usually a family member (i.e., kinsman redeemer). This cultural aspect of the right to buy back objects, animals, land (cf. Leviticus 25,27), or relatives (cf. Ruth 4:14; Isa. 29:22) is transferred theologically to YHWH's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (cf. Exod. 6:6; 15:13; Ps. 74:2; 77:15; Jer. 31:11). He becomes "the Redeemer" (cf. Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; Pro. 23:11; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Jer. 50:34).
2. *Padah* (BDB 804, KB 911), which basically means "to deliver" or "to rescue."
   a. the redemption of the firstborn (Exod. 13:13-15 and Num. 18:15-17)
   b. physical redemption is contrasted with spiritual redemption (Ps. 49:7,8,15)
   c. YHWH will redeem Israel from their sin and rebellion (Ps. 130:7-8)

B. The theological concept involves several related items.

1. There is a need, a bondage, a forfeiting, an imprisonment.
   a. physical
   b. social
   c. spiritual (cf. Ps. 130:8)
2. A price must be paid for freedom, release, and restoration.
   a. of the nation of Israel (cf. Deut. 7:8)
   b. of the individual (cf. Job 19:25-27; 33:28; Isaiah 53)
3. Someone must act as intermediary and benefactor. In *ga'al* this one is usually a family member or near kin (i.e., *go'el*, BDB 145).
4. YHWH often describes Himself in familial terms.
   a. Father
   b. Husband
   c. Near Kin Redeemer/Avenger

   Redemption was secured through YHWH's personal agency; a price was paid, and redemption was achieved!

II. NEW TESTAMENT

A. There are several terms used to convey the theological concept.

1. *Agorazō* (cf. 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet. 2:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). This is a commercial term which reflects a price paid for something. We are blood-bought people who do not control our own lives. We belong to Christ.

2. *Exagorazō* (cf. Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5). This is also a commercial term. It reflects Jesus' substitutionary death on our behalf. Jesus bore the "curse" of a performance-based law (i.e., Mosaic Law, cf. Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14), which sinful humans could not accomplish. He bore the curse (cf. Deut. 21:23) for us all (cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21)! In Jesus, God's justice and love merge into full forgiveness, acceptance, and access!
3. *Luō*, "to set free"
   a. *Lutron*, "a price paid" (cf. Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). These are powerful words from Jesus' own mouth concerning the purpose of His coming, to be the Savior of the world by paying a sin-debt He did not owe (cf. John 1:29).
   b. *Lutroō*, "to release"
      (1) to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21)
      (2) to give Himself to redeem and purify a people (Titus 2:14)
      (3) to be a sinless substitute (1 Pet. 1:18-19)
   c. *Lutrōsis*, "redemption," "deliverance," or "liberation"
      (1) Zacharias' prophecy about Jesus, Luke 1:68
      (2) Anna's praise to God for Jesus, Luke 2:38
      (3) Jesus' better, once offered sacrifice, Heb. 9:12
4. *Apolytrōsis*
   a. redemption at the Second Coming (cf. Acts 3:19-21)
      (1) Luke 21:28
      (2) Romans 8:23
      (3) Ephesians 1:14; 4:30
      (4) Hebrews 9:15
   b. redemption in Christ's death
      (1) Romans 3:24
      (2) 1 Corinthians 1:30
      (3) Ephesians 1:7
      (4) Colossians 1:14
5. *Antilytron* (cf. 1 Tim. 2:6). This is a crucial text (as is Titus 2:14) which links "release" to Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross. He is the one and only acceptable sacrifice, the one who dies for "all" (cf. John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 1 Tim. 2:4; 4:10; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14).

B. The theological concept in the NT.
   1. Mankind is enslaved to sin (cf. John 8:34; Rom. 3:10-18,23; 6:23).
   2. Mankind's bondage to sin has been revealed by the OT Mosaic Law (cf. Galatians 3) and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (cf. Matthew 5-7). Human performance has become a death sentence (cf. Col. 2:14).
   3. Jesus, the sinless lamb of God, has come and died in our place (cf. Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21). We have been purchased from sin so that we might serve God (cf. Romans 6).
   4. By implication both YHWH and Jesus are "near kin" who act on our behalf. This continues the familial metaphors (i.e., father, husband, son, brother, near kin).

5. Redemption was not a price paid to Satan (i.e., Medieval theology), but the reconciliation of God's word and God's justice with God's love and full provision in Christ. At the cross peace was restored, human rebellion was forgiven, the image of God in mankind is now fully functional again in intimate fellowship!
6. There is still a future aspect of redemption (cf. Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30), which involves our resurrection bodies and personal intimacy with the Triune God (see Special Topic: The Trinity). Our resurrected bodies will be like His (cf. 1 John 3:2). He had a physical body, but with an extra dimensional aspect. It is hard to define the paradox of 1 Cor. 15:12-19 with 1 Cor. 15:35-58. Obviously there is a physical, earthly body and there will be a heavenly, spiritual body. Jesus had both!

SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRSTBORN

This word "firstborn" (*prōtotokos*) is used in the Bible in several distinct senses.

1. its OT background refers to
   a. the firstborn belongs to YHWH (BDB 114, KB 131, cf. Exod. 13:2,12; 22:29; 34:19; Num. 3:13)
   b. the pre-imminence of the firstborn son of the family (cf. Deut. 21:17; Ps. 89:27; Luke 2:7; Rom. 8:29; Heb. 11:28)
2. its use in Col. 1:15 speaks of Jesus as the first of creation which is a possible OT allusion to Pro. 8:22-31, or God's agent of creation (cf. John 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-16; Heb. 1:2)
3. its use in Col. 1:15,18; 1 Cor. 15:20,23; Rev. 1:5 refers to Jesus as the firstborn from the dead
4. it is an OT title used of the Messiah (cf. Ps. 89:27; Heb. 1:6; 12:23); it is a title which combines several aspects of the primacy and centrality of Jesus.

▣ **"shekel. . .gerah"** See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN WEIGHTS AND VOLUMES (METROLOGY)

The weights and measurements used in commerce were crucial in ancient agricultural economy. The Bible urges the Jews to be fair in their dealings with one another (cf. Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:13-16; Pro. 11:1; 16:11; 20:10). The real problems were not only honesty, but the non-standardized terms and systems used in Palestine. It seems that there were two sets of weights; a "light" and a "heavy" of each amount (see *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4, p. 831). Also the decimal system (base of 10) of Egypt had been combined with the sexagesimal (base of 6) of Mesopotamia.

Many of the "sizes" and "amounts" used were based on human body parts, animal loads, and farmer's containers, none of which were standardized. Therefore, the charts are only estimations and are tentative. The easiest way to show weights and measures is on a relational chart.

I. Volume terms used most often
   A. Dry measures
      1. Homer (BDB 330, possibly a "donkey-load," BDB 331), e.g., Lev. 27:16; Hosea 3:2
      2. Letekh (or lethech, BDB 547, possibly alluded to in Hosea 3:2)

3. Ephah (BDB 35), e.g., Exod. 16:36; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:10-11,13,24
4. Se'ah (BDB 684), e.g., Gen. 18:6; 1 Sam. 25:18; 1 Kgs. 18:32; 2 Kgs. 7:1,16,18
5. Omer (BDB 771 II, possibly "a sheaf" [a row of fallen grain], BDB 771 I), e.g., Exod. 16:16,22,36; Lev. 23:10-15
6. 'Issaron (BDB 798, "a tenth part" of ephah), e.g., Exod. 29:40; Lev. 14:21; Num. 15:4; 28:5,13
7. Qav (or Kab, BDB 866), cf. 2 Kgs. 6:25

B. Liquid Measures
1. Kor (BDB 499), e.g., Ezek. 45:14 (can be dry measure, cf. 2 Chr. 2:10; 27:5)
2. Bath (BDB 144 II), e.g., 1 Kgs. 7:26,38; 2 Chr. 2:10; 4:5; Isa. 5:10; Ezek. 45:10-11,14
3. Hin (BDB 228), e.g., Exod. 29:40; Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:24
4. Log (BDB 528), cf. Lev. 14:10,12,15,21,24

C. Chart (taken from Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, p. 201 and *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16, p. 379)

homer (dry) = kor (liquid or dry)	1					
ephah (dry) = bath (liquid)	10	1				
se'ah (dry)	30	3	1			
hin (liquid)	60	6	2	1		
omer/issaron (dry)	100	10	-	-	1	
qav/kab (dry)	180	18	6	3	-	1
log (liquid)	720	72	24	12	-	41

II. Weight terms used most often

A. The three most common weights are the talent, the shekel, and the gerah.
1. The largest weight in the OT is the talent. From Exod. 38:25-26 we learn that one talent equals 3,000 shekels (i.e., "round weight," BDB 503).
2. The term shekel (BDB 1053, "weight") is used so often that it is assumed, but not stated in the text. There are several values of shekel mentioned in the OT.
   a. "commercial standard" (NASB of Gen. 23:16)
   b. "the shekel of the sanctuary" (NASB of Exod. 30:13)
   c. "by the king's weight" (NASB of 2 Sam. 14:26), also called "royal weight" in the Elephantine papyri.
3. The gerah (BDB 176 II) is valued at 20 per shekel (cf. Exod. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; 18:16; Ezek. 45:12). These ratios vary from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Israel followed the evaluation most common in Canaan (Ugarit)
4. The mina (BDB 584) is valued at either 50 or 60 shekels. This term is found mostly in later OT books (i.e., Ezek. 45:12; Ezra 2:69; Neh. 7:71-72). Ezekiel used the 60 to 1 ratio, while Canaan used the 50 to 1 ratio.
5. The beka (BDB 132, "half a shekel," cf. Gen. 24:22) is used only twice in the OT (cf. Gen. 24:22; Exod. 38:26) and is valued at one-half a shekel. Its name means "to divide."

B. Chart

1. Based on Pentateuch

talent	1				
mina	60	1			
shekel	3,000	50	1		
beka	6,000	100	2	1	
gerah	60,000	1,000	20	10	1

2. Based on Ezekiel

talent	1				
mina	60	1			
shekel	3,600	60	1		
beka	7,200	120	2	1	
gerah	72,000	1,200	20	10	1

3:51 This is a repeated refrain (cf. Num. 1:54; 2:34; 3:16).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did Israel take a census?
2. Were all priests or just the High Priest anointed?
3. What did the idiom "ordained" mean?
4. Did the firstborn originally serve YHWH and later YHWH replaced them with the Levites?
5. Why did the Levites camp immediately around the Tabernacle?
6. Why are the numbers in this census too large?

NUMBERS 4

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Duties of the Kohathites	Duties of the Sons of Kohath	Another Levitical Census	The Duties of the Clan of Kohath	The Levite Clans a. Kohathitites
4:1-4	4:1-3	4:1-4	4:1-4	4:1-3
	4:4-16			4:4
4:5-15		4:5-15	4:5-6	4:5-6
			4:7-8	4:7-8
			4:9-10	4:9-10
			4:11-15a	4:11
				4:12
				4:13-14
				4:15-16
			4:15b	
4:16		4:16	4:16	
4:17-20	4:17-20	4:17-20	4:17-20	4:17
Duties of the Gershonites	Duties of the Sons of Gershon		The Duties of the Clan of Gershon	4:18-20 b. Gershonites
4:21-28	4:21-28	4:21-28	4:21-28	4:21
				4:22-23
				4:24-26a
				4:26b-28
Duties of the Merarites	Duties of the Sons of Merari		The Duties of the Levite Clan of Merari	Merarites
4:29-33	4:29-33	4:29-33	4:29-33	4:29-30
				4:31-32
				4:33
	Census of Levites		The Census of the Levites	Census of the Levites
4:34-37	4:34-37	4:34-37	4:34-49	4:34-37
4:38-41	4:38-41	4:38-41		4:38-41
4:42-45	4:42-45	4:42-45		4:42-45
4:46-49	4:46-49	4:46-49		4:46-49

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This is an elaboration of chapter 3. It lists males of the Levite families from the age of one month up, but in chapter 4 it lists males between 20-50 years, which was the time of service in the Tabernacle.

B. The family of Kohath (NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 855-856) has an extensive treatment because they carry the "most holy" things of the inner shrine. They were also the family from which Moses and Aaron came.

C. Comparison of Numbers 3 and Numbers 4.
   1. Gershon – Num. 3:17-18,21-26
      Num. 4:21-28
   2. Kohath – Num. 3:17,19,27-31
      Num. 4:2-15,17-20
   3. Merari – Num. 3:17,20,33-37
      Num. 4:28-33

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:1-4

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, [2]"Take a census of the descendants of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' households, [3]from thirty years and upward, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting. [4]This is the work of the descendants of Kohath in the tent of meeting, *concerning* the most holy things."

4:1 "Take a census" This is a *Qal* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE (cf. Num. 4:22), functioning as a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (cf. Num. 1:2; 26:2).

The basic root means "lift up the head" (i.e., so as to count).

4:3 "from thirty years upward, even to fifty years old" This was the designated period of service in the Tabernacle for Levites (cf. Num. 4:43). Numbers 8:24-25 gives the time as 25 years to 50 years old. Some commentators have suggested a five year apprenticeship (NET Bible, p. 183).

Apparently there were so few priests and Levites who returned to Judah after Cyrus II's decree that the age of service for them was expanded to 20 years up to 50 years old (cf. Ezra 3:8; compare 1 Chr. 23:4 with 23:24; 2 Chr. 31:17).

4:4 "the most holy things" This was the furniture of the shrine.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:5-15

[5]"When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it; [6]and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over *it* a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles. [7]Over the table of the bread of the Presence they shall also spread a cloth of blue and put on it the dishes and the pans and the sacrificial bowls and the jars for the drink offering, and the continual bread shall be on it. [8]They shall spread over them a cloth of scarlet *material*, and cover the same with a covering of porpoise skin, and

they shall insert its poles. [9]Then they shall take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand for the light, along with its lamps and its snuffers, and its trays and all its oil vessels, by which they serve it; [10]and they shall put it and all its utensils in a covering of porpoise skin, and shall put it on the carrying bars. [11]Over the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth and cover it with a covering of porpoise skin, and shall insert its poles; [12]and they shall take all the utensils of service, with which they serve in the sanctuary, and put them in a blue cloth and cover them with a covering of porpoise skin, and put them on the carrying bars. [13]Then they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it. [14]They shall also put on it all its utensils by which they serve in connection with it: the firepans, the forks and shovels and the basins, all the utensils of the altar; and they shall spread a cover of porpoise skin over it and insert its poles. [15]When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy *objects* and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry *them*, so that they will not touch the holy *objects* and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry."

4:5 "Aaron and his sons" The priests packed the Tabernacle and the Levites carried the pieces.

▣ **"the veil of the screen"** This is the veil between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place. See Special Topic: The Tabernacle (chart) at Num. 1:50-51b. Also see note at Num. 3:25, #5.

▣ **"the ark of the testimony"** One wonders if the High Priest himself covered the ark in several layers of material. See Special Topic: The Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b.

4:6

NASB	**"porpoise skin"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"badger skins"**
NRSV, TEV, NJB	**"fine leather"**
JPSOA (Arabic root)	**"dolphin skin"**
JPSOA footnote at Ex. 25:5 (Akkadian cognate root)	**"dyed sheep or goat skin"**
REB	**"dugong-hide" (i.e., sea cows)**
LXX	**--------**

The LXX did not know how to translate this term (cf. Num. 4:6,8,10,11,12,14) and simply left it out. I think the NRSV is best guess (cf. Ezek. 16:10, where used of sandals). If so, it comes from an Egyptian process for dyed leather (i.e., Arabic root from Akkadian word for color). See Special Topic: Porpoise Skins and NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 287.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Porpoise Skins

The meaning of this root (BDB 1065 I, KB 1720 I) is uncertain. The traditional interpretation of the skin of a marine mammal comes from the Arabic root for "dolphin."

However, the root may come from an Egyptian root for fine leather. This fits its usage in Ezek. 16:10, where it is used of sandal leather. This leather of animal skins was used to cover parts of the Tabernacle when it was moved.

The phrase in Exod. 25:5, "ram skins dyed red," also denotes a process of tanning hides, whereby they become reddish in color.

It seems God chose common, readily accessible items to construct the Tabernacle (i.e., acacia wood), so it just makes sense that this word does not refer to marine mammal skins.

▣ **"blue"** See Special Topic: ANE Sacred Colors.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANE SACRED COLORS

It is difficult to be precise about the exact shades of colors in the ANE. Terminology changed from language to language and period to period. In Exod. 25:4, several special colors are mentioned to decorate the Tabernacle and High Priest's clothing.

1. "blue" – BDB 1067, KB 1732-3, denotes a blue, violet, or purple color. This color comes from mollusks and was developed by the Phoenicians.
2. "purple" – BDB 71, KB 84, denotes a reddish purple. It is possibly from an Akkadian root.
3. "scarlet" – BDB 1040, KB 1603, the etymology and color are uncertain, possibly crimson. The root seems to mean "dyed," "plunged" from a certain insect (IDB, p. 233), possibly also from Phoenicia

▣ **"shall insert the poles"** The pieces of the Tabernacle (packed by priests, carried by Levites) were transported in two ways.

1. by poles
   a. ark, Num. 4:6
   b. table, Num. 4:8
   c. incense altar and its utensils, Num. 4:11
   d. sacrificial altar and its utensils, Num. 4:14
2. carrying bars
   a. lampstand, Num. 4:10
   b. utensils of tabernacle, Num. 4:12

4:7 "the table of the bread of the Presence" See Special Topic: The Showbread of the Presence at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"the jars for the libations"** Wine was part of certain sacrificial offerings. See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

I. Biblical Terms
   A. Old Testament
      1. *Yayin* – This is the general term for wine (BDB 406, KB 409), which is used 141 times. The etymology is uncertain because it is not from a Hebrew root. It always means fermented fruit juice, usually grape. Some typical passages are Gen. 9:21; Exod. 29:40; Num. 15:5,10.
      2. *Tirosh* – This is "new wine" (BDB 440, KB 1727). Because of climatic conditions of the Near East, fermentation started as soon as six hours after extracting the juice. This term refers to wine in the process of fermenting. For some typical passages see Deut. 12:17; 18:4; Isa. 62:8-9; Hos. 4:11.
      3. *Asis* – This is obviously alcoholic beverages ("sweet wine," BDB 779, KB 860, e.g. Joel 1:5; Isa. 49:26).

4. *Sekar* – This is the term "strong drink" (BDB 1016, KB 1500). The Hebrew root is used in the term "drunk" or "drunkard." It had something added to it to make it more intoxicating. It is parallel to *yayin* (cf. Pro. 20:1; 31:6; Isa. 28:7).

B. New Testament
1. *Oinos* – the Greek equivalent of *yayin*
2. *Neos oinos* (new wine) – the Greek equivalent of *tirosh* (cf. Mark 2:22).
3. *Gleuchos vinos* (sweet wine, *asis*) – wine in the early stages of fermentation (cf. Acts 2:13).

II. Biblical Usage
A. Old Testament
1. Wine is a gift of God (Gen. 27:28; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; Hos. 2:8-9; Joel 2:19,24; Amos 9:13; Zech. 10:7).
2. Wine is a part of a sacrificial offering (Exod. 29:40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:7,10; 28:14; Deut. 14:26; Jdgs. 9:13).
3. Wine is used as medicine (2 Sam. 16:2; Pro. 31:6-7).
4. Wine can be a real problem (Noah – Gen. 9:21; Lot – Gen. 19:33,35; Nabal – 1 Sam. 25:36; Uriah – 2 Sam. 11:13; Amnon – 2 Sam. 13:28; Elah – 1 Kgs. 16:9; Benhadad – 1 Kgs. 20:12; Rulers – Amos 6:6; and Ladies – Amos 4).
5. Wine can be abused (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isa. 5:11,22; 19:14; 28:7-8; Hosea 4:11).
6. Wine was prohibited to certain groups (priests on duty, Lev. 10:9; Ezek. 44:21; Nazirites, Numbers 6; and rulers, Pro. 31:4-5; Isa. 56:11-12; Hosea 7:5).
7. Wine is used in an eschatological setting (Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18; Zech. 9:17).

B. Interbiblical
1. Wine in moderation is very helpful (Ecclesiasticus 31:27-33).
2. The rabbis say, "Wine is the greatest of all medicine, where wine is lacking, then drugs are needed." (BB 58b).

C. New Testament
1. Jesus changed a large quantity of water into wine (John 2:1-11).
2. Jesus drank wine (Matt. 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34; 22:17ff).
3. Peter accused of drunkenness on "new wine" at Pentecost (Acts 2:13).
4. Wine can be used as medicine (Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; 1 Tim. 5:23).
5. Leaders are not to be abusers. This does not mean total abstainers (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7; 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:3).
6. Wine used in eschatological settings (Matthew 22:1ff; Rev. 19:9).
7. Drunkenness is deplored (Matt. 24:49; Luke 12:45; 21:34; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 13:13-14).

III. Theological Insight
A. Dialectical tension
1. Wine is the gift of God.
2. Drunkenness is a major problem.
3. Believers in some cultures must limit their freedoms for the sake of the gospel (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1- 23; 1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14).

B. Tendency to go beyond given bounds
   1. God is the source of all good things.
      a. food – Mark 7:19; Luke 11:41; 1 Cor. 10:25-26
      b. all things clean – Rom. 14:14,20; 1 Tim. 4:4
      c. all things lawful – 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23
      d. all things pure – Titus 1:15
   2. Fallen mankind has abused all of God's gifts by taking them beyond God-given bounds.

C. Abuse is in us, not in things. There is nothing evil in the physical creation (see B. 1 above).

IV. First Century Jewish Culture and Fermentation

A. Fermentation begins very soon, approximately 6 hours after the grape is crushed.

B. Jewish tradition says that when a slight foam appeared on the surface (sign of fermentation), it is liable to the wine-tithe (*Ma aseroth* 1:7). It was called "new wine" or "sweet wine."

C. The primary violent fermentation was complete after one week.

D. The secondary fermentation took about 40 days. At this state it is considered "aged wine" and could be offered on the altar (*Edhuyyoth* 6:1).

E. Wine that had rested on its lees (old wine) was considered good, but had to be strained well before use.

F. Wine was considered to be properly aged usually after one year of fermentation. Three years was the longest period of time that wine could be safely stored. It was called "old wine" and had to be diluted with water.

G. Only in the last 100 years with a sterile environment and chemical additives has fermentation been postponed. The ancient world could not stop the natural process of fermentation.

V. Closing Statements

A. Be sure your experience, theology, and biblical interpretation do not depreciate Jesus and first century Jewish/Christian culture! They were obviously not total-abstainers.

B. I am not advocating the social use of alcohol. However, many have overstated the Bible's position on this subject and now claim superior righteousness based on a cultural/denominational bias.

C. For me, Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10 have provided insight and guidelines based on love and respect for fellow believers and the spread of the gospel in our culture, not personal freedom or judgmental criticism. If the Bible is the only source for faith and practice, then maybe we must all rethink this issue.

D. If we push total abstinence as God's will, what do we imply about Jesus, as well as those modern cultures that regularly use wine (e.g., Europe, Israel, Argentina)?

▣ **"the continual bread"** See Exod. 25:30; Lev. 24:5-9.

4:8 "scarlet" See Special Topic: ANE Sacred Colors at Num. 4:6b.

▣ **"dolphin skin"** This same word (BDB 1065, cf. Num. 4:10,11,12) is translated by NASB as "porpoise skin" in Num. 4:6,14. See Special Topic: Porpoise Skins at Num. 4:6.

4:9 "the lampstand" See Special Topic: The Lampstand (*Menorah*) at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"snuffers"** This term (BDB 544) is used in two senses.

1. tool used to replace or extinguish the wicks on the lampstand – Exod. 25:38; 37:23; Num. 4:9
2. tongs for moving coals – Isa. 6:6; NASB translates 1 Kgs. 7:49 and 2 Chr. 4:21 as "tongs of gold"

▣ **"tray"** This term (BDB 367) has several connotations.

1. snuff-holder of gold for the lampstand – Exod. 25:38; 37:23; Num. 4:9
2. fire pan of bronze for the altar of sacrifice – Exod. 27:3; 38:3; Num. 4:14
3. censer of bronze – Lev. 10:1; 16:12; Num. 16:6,17,18

The utensils of gold were for the holy place, while bronze is associated with the alter of sacrifice in the courtyard.

4:11 "the golden altar" See Special Topic: The Altar of Incense at Num. 1:50-51b.

4:13 "ashes from the altar" This refers to the altar of sacrifice. See Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Num. 1:50-51b.

These ashes were from the items sacrificed to YHWH. They became holy. There was a need to carry some of the "holy" ashes (i.e., fire) to the next location.

4:15 "they will not touch the holy *objects* and die" The Tabernacle was YHWH's temple and home. It was, therefore, holy and could not be touched by anyone except priests (cf. Num. 4:19-20; 2 Sam. 6:7).

▣ **"carry"** This is the same root as "take a census" in Num. 4:2,22 (INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of BDB 669, KB 724, cf. Num. 4:25).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:16

[16]"The responsibility of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest is the oil for the light and the fragrant incense and the continual grain offering and the anointing oil—the responsibility of all the tabernacle and of all that is in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

4:16 Eleazar, Aaron's son, is again given a special task (cf. Num. 3:32).

▣ **"the continual grain offering"** This was part of a daily offering, morning and evening, of several sacrifices (cf. Lev. 6:20).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:17-20

[17]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, [18]"Do not let the tribe of the families of the Kohathites be cut off from among the Levites. [19]But do this to them that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy *objects*: Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign each of them to his work and to his load; [20]but they shall not go in to see the holy *objects* even for a moment, or they will die."

4:18 "Do not let. . .be cut off" This is an IMPERFECT VERB (BDB 503, KB 500, *Hiphil*) used in a JUSSIVE sense.

4:19 "do this to them that they may live" This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 793, KB 889). For my full discussion of this subject see Special Topic: Can Humans See God and Live?

SPECIAL TOPIC: Can Humans See God and Live?

Moses wants to visibly see YHWH. Already he has a unique, intimate relationship (cf. Exod. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10), but he wants more. Apparently Moses

1. did not think seeing YHWH meant death
2. did not fully grasp Exod. 20:4
3. wanted another experience like Exod. 24:10,11, but this time just for him

There is uncertainty about the fear of seeing God, which was thought to cause death because of God's holiness.

1. some did see God (in the Angel of the Lord) and live
   a. Gen. 16:13 – Hagar, as the Angel of the LORD
   b. Gen. 32:30 – Jacob in a vision
   c. Exod. 24:10-11 – 70 elders and Moses in a theophany
   d. Deut. 5:24 – Israel sees the glory of YHWH as the Angel of the LORD
   e. Jdgs. 6:22-23 – Gideon
   f. Jdgs. 13:21-22 – Samson's parents as the Angel of the LORD
   g. Isa. 6:1,5 (cf. John 12:41) – Isaiah in a vision,
   h. Ezek. 1:26-27 – Ezekiel in a vision of YHWH's chariot/throne
   i. Dan. 7:9-14 – Daniel in a vision as the Ancient of Days
2. no one has seen God and lived
   a. Exod. 3:6; 19:21; 33:20,23
   b. Lev. 16:2
   c. Num. 4:20
   d. 1 Kgs. 19:13
   e. even angels hid their faces, Isa. 6:2
   f. John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46
   g. 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16
   h. 1 John 4:12,20
3. no one has heard God and lived
   a. Exod. 20:19
   b. Deut. 4:33; 5:24-26; 18:16
   c. 2 Cor. 12:1-4
4. believers can see God in Jesus – John 12:45; 14:9
5. one day believers will see God
   a. Matt. 5:8
   b. 1 Cor. 13:12
   c. Heb. 12:14
   d. Rev. 22:4
   e. note Job 42:5; Ps. 17:15; 42:2

There are three, possibly four, images used to denote a visible aspect to Deity.

1. "Your glory," Exod. 33:18,22 – BDB 458, cf. Exod. 16:7; see Special Topic: Glory (*kabod*, OT)
2. "All My goodness," Exod. 33:19 – BDB 375 CONSTRUCT BDB 481

3. also note "My hand," Exod. 33:22,23; see Special Topic: God Described as Human
4. "My back," Exod. 33:23 – BDB 30, KB 35

This sets the theological stage for the theophany of Exod. 34:5-9, where

1. #3 above is fulfilled
2. the revelation of "the name," cf. Exod. 33:19; see
   a. Special Topic: The Name of the Lord
   b. Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God (OT)

YHWH will do two things before Moses to reveal Himself.

1. All His goodness (i.e., character, both mercy and judgment, cf. Exod. 34:6-7) will pass before Moses.
2. He will pronounce His covenant name, Yahweh, to Moses (cf. Exod. 3:13-16). To know a deity's name was very important in the ANE.

"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. . ." This is quoted by Paul in Rom. 9:15 to assert the sovereignty of YHWH. He is free but chooses to act in compassion and mercy (cf. Hos. 11:9). However, remember here it is sinful, idolatrous, rebellious, impatient Israel! There is mystery here, as Romans 9-11 demonstrates, but also always purposeful mercy (see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan).

One wonders if "the cleft of the rock" in Exod. 33:22 (BDB 849) is "the" cave of 1 Kgs. 19:9-14. In Isa. 2:19-21. Several parallel terms for a hiding place are used.

1. caves of the rocks, Exod. 33:19 – BDB 849
2. holes of the ground, Exod. 33:19 – BDB 320
3. caverns of the rocks, Exod. 33:21 – BDB 669
4. clefts of the cliffs, Exod. 33:21 – BDB 703

There is anthropomorphic imagery in Exod. 33:23, "My hand. . .My back." See Special Topic: God Described as Human. Remember, God is an eternal spirit (i.e., John 4:24), present through creation and time.

There is a word play on "face" (see note at Exod. 33:15-16; also note stark contrast between Exod. 33:11 and 20) and "form." No one can see God's face (i.e., full personal revelation) but humans can see His glory, majesty, and power. Moses is allowed to see a part of YHWH's glory, but not His "face," as He "passes by" (DB 716, KB 778, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, cf. 1 Kgs. 19:11-13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:21-28

[21]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [22]"Take a census of the sons of Gershon also, by their fathers' households, by their families; [23]from thirty years and upward to fifty years old, you shall number them; all who enter to perform the service to do the work in the tent of meeting. [24]This is the service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and in carrying: [25]they shall carry the curtains of the tabernacle and the tent of meeting *with* its covering and the covering of porpoise skin that is on top of it, and the screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting, [26]and the hangings of the court, and the screen for the doorway of the gate of the court which is around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords and all the equipment for their service; and all that is to be done, they shall perform. [27]All the service of the sons of the Gershonites, in all their loads and in all their work, shall be *performed* at the command of Aaron and his sons; and you shall assign to them as a duty all their loads. [28]This

is the service of the families of the sons of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their duties *shall be* under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

4:23 "to do the work" This is a COGNATE ACCUSATIVE of BDB 712, KB 773 (i.e., *Qal* VERB and *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT). This same VERB appears several times.

1. Num. 4:26 – *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*
2. Num. 4:30 – *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
3. Num. 4:37 – *Qal* PARTICIPLE

It denotes service to the Tabernacle.

4:25 "screen for the doorway of the tent of meeting" See full note at Num. 3:25, #5.

4:28 "*shall be* under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron" Another of Aaron's sons (cf. Eleazar, cf. Num. 3:32; 4:16) is put in a position of leadership (cf. Num. 4:33).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:29-33

[29]"*As for* the sons of Merari, you shall number them by their families, by their fathers' households; [30]from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tent of meeting. [31]Now this is the duty of their loads, for all their service in the tent of meeting: the boards of the tabernacle and its bars and its pillars and its sockets, [32]and the pillars around the court and their sockets and their pegs and their cords, with all their equipment and with all their service; and you shall assign *each man* by name the items he is to carry. [33]This is the service of the families of the sons of Merari, according to all their service in the tent of meeting, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

4:31

NASB, NKJV, Peshitta	**"boards"**
NRSV, TEV	**"frames"**
NJB	**"framework"**
JPSOA, REB	**"planks"**
LXX	**"the capitals of the tent"**

The MT has the rare word "boards," which comes from a root "to be solid" or "to be firm." In Ezek. 27:6 it refers to the decking of a ship.

The basic meaning here is the wooden structure that supports the heavy skins that cover the shrine of the Tabernacle (cf. Exod. 26:15-19; 35:11; 36:20-34; 40:18; Num. 3:36). This wood was overlaid with gold (cf. Exod. 26:29; 36:34). They must have been very thick and strong to support this weight!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:34-37

[34]So Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' households, [35]from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. [36]Their numbered men by their families were 2,750. [37]These are the numbered men of the Kohathite families, everyone who was serving in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the Lord through Moses.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:38-41

[38]The numbered men of the sons of Gershon by their families and by their fathers' households, [39]from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. [40]Their numbered men by their families, by their fathers' households, were 2,630. [41]These are the numbered men of the families of the sons of Gershon, everyone who was serving in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:42-45

[42]The numbered men of the families of the sons of Merari by their families, by their fathers' households, [43]from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tent of meeting. [44]Their numbered men by their families were 3,200. [45]These are the numbered men of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD through Moses.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 4:46-49

[46]All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and by their fathers' households, [47]from thirty years and upward even to fifty years old, everyone who could enter to do the work of service and the work of carrying in the tent of meeting. [48]Their numbered men were 8,580. [49]According to the commandment of the LORD through Moses, they were numbered, everyone by his serving or carrying; thus these were his numbered men, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is there a second census of the Levites in this chapter?
2. Why is the time of Levites' service different in the Pentateuch?
3. Who packed the Tabernacle for transport? Why?
4. Why does NASB have "porpoise skins" in Num. 4:6,14,25, but "dolphin skins" in 4:8,10,11? What kind of coverings do these represent?
5. How is Num. 3:32 like Num. 4:16?
6. How many "screens" were there in the Tabernacle?

NUMBERS 5

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
On Defilement	Ceremonially Unclean Persons Isolated	Various Instructions to the People (5:1-6:21)	Unclean People	Expulsion of the Unclean
5:1-4	5:1-4	5:1-4	5:1-4	5:1-4
	Confession and Restitution		Repayment for Wrongs Done	Restitution
5:5-10	5:5-10	5:5-10	5:5-10	5:5-6a
				5:6b
				5:7
				5:8-10
The Adultery Test	Concerning Unfaithful Wives		Cases of Wives with Suspicious Husbands	Cereal Offerings in Cases of Suspicion
5:11-15	5:11-15	5:11-15	5:11-15	5:11-12a
				5:12b-15
5:16-22	5:16-22	5:16-22	5:16-22a	5:16-18
				5:19-22
			5:22b	
5:23-28	5:23-28	5:23-28	5:23-28	5:23-24
				5:25-26a
				5:26b-28
5:29-31	5:29-31	5:29-31	5:29-31	5:29-31

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. The book of Numbers divides into three major geographical units.
   1. preparation to leave Mt. Sinai
   2. the wilderness wandering period
   3. the journey from Kadesh-Barnea to the plains of Moab

B. Numbers 1:1-10:10 forms the first major literary unit.
   1. the numbering of the army, chapters 1-4
   2. the cleansing of the camp, chapters 5-6
   3. the gifts of the leaders to dedicate the altar, chapter 7
   4. the dedication of the Levites, chapter 8
   5. the second Passover and the explanation of the leadership of the *shekinah* cloud of glory, chapter 9
   6. the two silver trumpets, chapter 10:1-10

C. YHWH dwelt in the Tabernacle over the ark which was at the center of Israel's camp (cf. Num. 5:3; Numbers 4). He was holy and His people must be holy to maintain His presence. This chapter continues, from the book of Leviticus, the discussion on how to maintain holiness. Pollution must be removed.
   1. physical pollution, Num. 5:2-4
   2. acts of unfaithfulness, Num. 5:5-10
   3. suspected acts of marital unfaithfulness, Num. 5:11-31 (see Josephus, *Antiq*. 3.11.6)

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:1-4

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp every leper and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a *dead* person. [3]You shall send away both male and female; you shall send them outside the camp so that they will not defile their camp where I dwell in their midst." [4]The sons of Israel did so and sent them outside the camp; just as the LORD had spoken to Moses, thus the sons of Israel did.

5:2 "Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp" The VERB "send away" (BDB 1018, KB 1511) is used four times in Num. 5:1-4.
1. Num. 5:2 – *Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
2.-3. Num. 5:3 – *Piel* IMPERFECT possibly also in a JUSSIVE sense
4. Num. 5:4 – *Piel* IMPERFECT with *waw*

There are three types of individuals named here:
1. those with skin disease (cf. Lev. 13:45-46)
2. those who had a bodily discharge (cf. Leviticus 15)
3. those who were unclean because of touching a dead person (cf. Leviticus 21; Num. 6:6-8)

Uncleanness is the opposite of wholeness and normalcy, just as an innocent, unblemished animal represented normalcy.

5:3 "both male and female" There is no distinction in uncleanness between the sexes. They had to remain outside the camp as a visible symbol of the holiness (see Special Topic: Holy) and separateness of God, who dwelt in the midst of the camp (i.e., Tabernacle). God symbolically dwelt between the *cherubim* (see Special Topic: *Cherubim*) over the ark of the covenant (see Special Topic: The Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b) in the Holy of Holies (see Special Topic: The Tabernacle at Num. 1:50-51b).

This verse, like v. 2, has *Piel* IMPERFECTS functioning as JUSSIVES. There is also one in v. 4. There is not textual marker that these IMPERFECTS should be seen as JUSSIVES. Only context can determine this. Another possible example in this chapter would be the PERFECT VERB with *waw*, "go into" of Num. 5:22. It, too, may function as a JUSSIVE.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HOLY

I. The Old Testament (illustrated mostly from Isaiah)
   A. The etymology of the term *kadosh* (BDB 872, KB 1072) is uncertain, possibly Canaanite (i.e., Ugaritic). It is possible that part of the root (i.e., *kd*) means "to divide." This is the source of the popular definition "separated (from Canaanite culture, cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19) for God's use."

B. It relates to God's presence in things, places, times, and persons. It is not used in Genesis, but becomes common in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

C. In the Prophetic literature (esp. Isaiah and Hosea) the personal element previously present, but not emphasized, comes to the fore (see Special Topic: The Holy One). It becomes a way of designating the essence of God (cf. Isa. 6:3). God is holy. His name representing His character is Holy. His people who are to reveal His character to a needy world are holy (if they obey the covenant in faith).

Holiness is a central theme in Isaiah.

1. שׁקדו, ADJECTIVE, BDB 872, "holy," "sacred," used of
   a. God, Isa. 5:16; 6:3 (thrice; see Special Topic: The Holy One)
   b. His name, Isa. 40:25; 49:7; 57:15
   c. His abode, Isa. 57:15
   d. His Sabbath, Isa. 58:13
2. שׁקד, VERB, BDB 872, "to be set apart," "consecrated"
   a. God's character, Isa. 5:16; 29:23
   b. God, Isa. 8:13; 65:5
   c. God's angels, Isa. 13:3
   d. God's name, Isa. 29:23
   e. festival, Isa. 30:29
   f. consecrated humans, Isa. 66:17
3. שׁקד, NOUN, BDB 871, "apartness," "sacredness"
   a. holy seed, Isa. 6:13
   b. holy mountain, Isa. 11:9; 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11,25; 66:20
   c. set apart, Isa. 23:18
   d. way of holiness, Isa. 35:8
   e. sanctuary, Isa. 43:28; 62:9; 64:11
   f. holy city, Isa. 48:2; 52:1
   g. holy One, Isa. 49:7 (see Special Topic: The Holy One)
   h. holy arm, Isa. 52:10
   i. Holy day, Isa. 58:13
   j. holy people, Isa. 62:12
   k. Holy Spirit, Isa. 63:10,11
   l. God's throne, Isa. 63:15
   m. holy place, Isa. 63:18
   n. holy cities, Isa. 64:10

D. God's mercy and love are inseparable from the theological concepts of covenants, justice, and essential character. Herein is the tension in God toward an unholy, fallen, rebellious humanity. There is a very interesting article on the relationship between God as "merciful" and God as "holy" in Robert B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 112-113.

II. The New Testament

A. The writers of the NT (except Luke) were Hebrew thinkers, but were writing in Koine Greek. The NT church used the Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint. It is the Greek translation of the OT, not Classical Greek literature, thought, or religion, that controls their vocabulary.

B. Jesus is holy because He is of God and like God (cf. Luke 1:35; 4:34; Acts 3:14; 4:27,30; Rev. 3:7). He is the Holy and Righteous One (cf. Acts 3:14; 22:14). Jesus is holy because He is sinless (cf. John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5).

C. Because God is holy (cf. John 17:11; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:8; 6:10), His children are to be holy (cf. Lev. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:16). Because Jesus is holy, His followers are to be holy (cf. Rom. 8:28-29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:15). Christians are saved to serve in Christlikeness (holiness).

SPECIAL TOPIC: *CHERUBIM* (BDB 500, KB 497)

A. One of several types of angelic beings mentioned in the OT (i.e., *Cherubim*, *Seraphim*, Archangels, messenger angels). This particular type guarded sacred areas (cf. Gen. 3:24; Exod. 25:18-22; 1 Kgs. 8:6-7).

B. Etymology is uncertain.
   1. from Akkadian "intercessor" or "mediator" between God and mankind
   2. from Hebrew there is a possible word play between "chariot" and "cherub" (cf. Ezekiel 1; 10)
   3. some scholars say it means "brilliant appearance"

C. Physical form – This has been difficult to ascertain because of varying descriptions within the Bible and varying animal-human forms found in the Ancient Near East. Some link them to
   1. winged bull of Mesopotamia
   2. winged eagle – lions of Egypt called "griffins"
   3. winged creatures on Hiram's (King of Tyre) throne
   4. sphinx of Egypt and similar forms found in King Ahab's ivory palace in Samaria

D. Physical Description
   1. The form of the *Cherubim* is linked with the form of the *Seraphim* of Isaiah 6.
   2. Examples of different forms
      a. Number of faces
         (1) two – Ezek. 41:18
         (2) four – Ezek. 1:6,10; 10:14,21
         (3) one – Rev. 4:7
      b. Number of wings
         (1) two – 1 Kgs. 6:24
         (2) four – Ezek. 1:6,11; 10:7,8-21
         (3) six (like Seraphim of Isa. 6:2) – Rev. 4:8
   3. Other features (also called "The Living Creatures")
      a. Human hands – Ezek. 1:8; 10:8,21
      b. Legs
         (1) Straight, no knee – Ezek. 1:7

(1) Calf feet – Ezek. 1:7

4. Flavius Josephus admits that no one knew what a cherub looked like (cf. *Antiquities of the Jews*, VIII.3.3).

E. Places and purpose found in the Bible

1. Guardian of the tree of life, Gen. 3:24 (possibly used metaphorically in Ezek. 28:14,16)
2. Guardian of the Tabernacle
   a. Over the Ark of the Covenant; Exod. 25:18-20; Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; Heb. 9:5
   b. Depicted on veil and curtains of the tabernacle; Exod. 26:1,31; 36:8,35
3. Guardian of Solomon's Temple
   a. Two large carved cherubs in Holy of Holies; 1 Kgs. 6:23-28; 8:6-7; 2 Chr. 3:10-14; 5:7-9
   b. On walls of inner shrine; 1 Kgs. 6:29,35; 2 Chr. 3:7
   c. On panels that were associated with the several lavers; 1 Kgs. 7:27-39
4. Guardian of Ezekiel's Temple – Carved on walls and doors; Ezek. 41:18-20, 25
5. Connected with transportation of deity
   a. possibly a metaphor for wind; 2 Sam. 22:11; Ps. 18:10; 104:3-4; Isa. 19:1
   b. guardian of God's throne; Ps.80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16
   c. guardian of God's portable throne chariot; Ezek. 1:4-28; 10:3-22; 1 Chr. 28:18
6. Herod's Temple – Painted on walls (i.e., guardian cf. Talmud "Yoma" 54a)
7. Revelation throne scene (i.e., guardian cf. Rev. 4-5)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:5-10

5Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6"Speak to the sons of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give *it* to him whom he has wronged. 8But if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution which is made for the wrong *must* go to the LORD for the priest, besides the ram of atonement, by which atonement is made for him. 9Also every contribution pertaining to all the holy *gifts* of the sons of Israel, which they offer to the priest, shall be his. 10So every man's holy *gifts* shall be his; whatever any man gives to the priest, it becomes his.'"

5:6 "When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD" As Num. 5:1-4 dealt with the ceremonial uncleanness of the camp, 5:5-11 deals with overt kinds of sin, particularly those which are related to a covenant partner.

In Num. 5:7, two qualifications for forgiveness are given and a third is in v. 8. They are:

1. confess the sin publicly, apparently before the priest
2. make full restitution and add one-fifth (cf. Leviticus 6)
3. offer a sacrifice (cf. Leviticus 4-5)

These three elements involve, not only the mind, emotions, and will, but also symbolic acts which show that there is a procedure for cleanliness that YHWH has provided.

5:7 "confess" This VERB (BDB 392, KB 389, *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*), like the NT word (see Special Topic: Confession/Profession), has two meanings.

1. confess – Lev. 5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Dan. 9:20

2. give thanks – 2 Chr. 30:22

The *Hiphil* stem also has these two senses.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CONFESSION/PROFESSION

A. There are two forms of the same Greek root used for "confession" or "profession," *homologeō* and *exomologeō*. The compound term is from *homo*, the same; *legō*, to speak; or *ex*, out of. The basic meaning is to say the same thing, to agree with. The Greek PREPOSITION, *ex*, added implies a public declaration.

B. The English translations of this word group are
   1. praise
   2. agree
   3. declare (cf. Matt. 7:23)
   4. profess
   5. confess (cf. Heb. 4:14; 10:23)

C. This word group had two seemingly opposite usages
   1. to praise (God)
   2. to admit sin

   These may have developed from mankind's sense of the holiness of God and its own sinfulness. To acknowledge one truth is to acknowledge both.

D. The NT usages of the word group are
   1. to promise (cf. Matt. 14:7; Acts 7:17)
   2. to agree or consent to something (cf. John 1:20; Luke 22:6; Acts 24:14; Heb. 11:13)
   3. to praise (cf. Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; Rom. 14:11; 15:9; Heb. 13:15)
   4. to assent to
      a. a person (cf. Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8; John 9:22; 12:42; Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:11; 1 John 2:23; Rev. 3:5)
      b. a truth (cf. Acts 23:8; 1 John 4:2)
   5. to make a public declaration of (legal sense developed into religious affirmation, cf Acts 24:14; 1 Tim. 6:13)
      a. without admission of guilt (cf. 1 Tim. 6:12; Heb. 10:23)
      b. with an admission of guilt (cf. Matt. 3:6; Acts 19:18; Heb. 4:14; James 5:16; 1 John 1:9)

▣ **"make restitution in full"** This VERB (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*) has a wide semantic field. Its basic meaning is "to turn," "to return," "to turn back." In this context, it is uniquely translated "restitution" (Num. 5:7,8 [twice]) by adding (*Hiphil* JUSSIVE) "a fifth" to
1. the injured person
2. or offer a ram to the priests for atonement (cf. Lev. 5:15; see Special Topic: Atonement)

SPECIAL TOPIC: ATONEMENT

The Hebrew root (BDB 497, KB 493) combines several OT images.
1. the holiness of God which is offended by human rebellion
2. the cost of rebellion is death (cf. Ezek. 18:4,20)

3. the life of a sacrificial animal substituted for the death penalty of sinful human beings

The basic meaning of the root is "to cover," which may best be illustrated by the "Day of Atonement" or "Day of Covering" (i.e., Leviticus 16). YHWH dwelt between the wings of the *Cherubim* on the ark of the covenant. Inside the gold box were the laws given to Moses by YHWH on Mt. Sinai. As the High Priest sprinkled blood on the lid of the ark, it symbolically obscured God's eyes from the Law.

The perfect and eternal blood of the covenant (see the NT book of Hebrews) was the innocent blood of Jesus (cf. John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The NT term "propitiation" also relates to the lid of the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant. For extra information see the following Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant
2. Special Topic: *Cherubim*
3. Special Topic: Mercy Seat

5:8 "if the man has no relative to whom restitution may be made" The rabbis question this because they wonder if there was anybody in Israel who had no relatives. They, therefore, assume that this refers to a proselyte.

This "relative" (BDB 145 I) is the family member who

1. rescues the family – Gen. 48:16; Exod. 6:6
2. redeems persons – Lev. 25:47-55
3. redeems property – Lev. 25:25; 27:9-25; Jer. 32:-8
4. redeems family honor of dead relative – Num. 5:8
5. kinsman avenger – Num. 35:9-34

5:9 "contribution" This is literally "heave offering" (BDB 929), which refers to

1. that which was "lifted off"
2. that which was lifted up and waved before the Lord (see note at Num. 5:25)

Here, it refers to an offering for the priest to whom it was given (cf. Lev. 22:12; Num. 18:8,11,19; 2 Chr. 31:10,12,14).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:11-15

[11]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [12]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'If any man's wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him, [13]and a man has intercourse with her and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is undetected, although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act, [14]if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has defiled herself, or if a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife when she has not defiled herself, [15]the man shall then bring his wife to the priest, and shall bring *as* an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of memorial, a reminder of iniquity.'"

5:11-31 This deals with a very unusual test for adultery. It has some very manipulative psychological elements which are unusual for the Bible. This is more like the curse formulas and procedures which are characteristic of Babylonian (see James Pritchard, *The ANE*, vol. 1, p. 152, #132, from the Code of Hammurabi) and Hittite civilizations. Apparently this is listed here because even a hidden sin would pollute the camp.

The reason "adultery" was so serious a sin in Israel is because of "inheritance rights." YHWH gave each tribe a special allotment in Joshua. Each tribe had to conquer their assigned land and allocate it to each clan, family. Every 50 years, the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25), the land was to revert to its original owner. Inheritance rights were very important and sacred to Israelite families.

As unfair and shocking as this seems to modern westerners, it must be stated that this procedure was an act of grace for the accused woman.

1. it was a recourse to stoning
2. she must be taken from the husband's family and presented to a priest
3. there was a specific procedure to verify her innocence

5:12 "goes astray" This VERB (BDB 966, KB 1316, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used in vv. 12,19,20,29. The imagery is from "a straight, smooth, level path," which denotes the will of God but if one "turns aside" or "deviates" from the path, it denotes a willing rejection of God's laws (see. Ps. 89:15; 119:105; Isa. 2:5; 1 John 1:7).

5:14 "a spirit of jealousy comes over him" This says nothing about a demonic spirit named "jealous," but has to do with a man's attitude toward his wife (NOUN, BDB 888 and VERB BDB 888, KB 1109). The rabbis say that he must have some evidence of her unfaithfulness, such as one witness, or seeing her with another man. However, this is not stated in the text.

5:15 "one-tenth of an ephah of barley" This type of sacrifice shows something of the uncleanness of the situation. Barley was the cheapest kind of grain, often used for bread for the poor. It was rarely offered as sacrifice (cf. Ezek. 45:13).

It could include no oil or frankincense, which shows the seriousness of the sin and it was even called a "reminder of iniquity." Everything in this process would repeatedly bring the guilt, if there was any, to the mind of the woman involved in this procedure.

For "ephah" (BDB 35) see Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

▣ **"frankincense"** See Special Topic: Frankincense.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FRANKINCENSE

Like myrrh, frankincense (BDB 526, NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 750-757) was made from sweet-smelling tree sap from Arabia (cf. Jer. 6:20). It was used for several purposes.

1. cereal sacrifice, Lev. 2:1; 6:14-18
2. sin sacrifice, Lev. 5:11
3. holy incense, Exod. 30: 34-38; 1 Chr. 9:29
4. put on the table of showbread along with the twelve loaves, Lev. 24:7
5. personal perfume, Song of Songs 3:6; 4:6,14

See UBS, *Fauna and Flora of the Bible*, pp. 121-122.

▣ **"a grain offering of jealousy"** This offering was to be placed on the wife's palms. After the oath curse part was burned on the altar and the priest received the rest (cf. Num. 5:25-26).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:16-22

[16]"'Then the priest shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD, [17]and the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel; and he shall take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put *it* into the water. [18]The priest shall then have the woman stand before the Lord and let *the hair of* the woman's head go loose, and place the grain offering of memorial in her hands, which is the grain offering of jealousy, and in the hand of the priest is to be the water of bitterness that brings a curse. [19]The priest shall have her take an oath and shall say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you and if you have not gone astray into uncleanness, *being* under *the authority of* your husband, be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse; [20]if you, however, have gone astray, *being* under *the authority of* your husband, and if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has had intercourse with you" [21](then the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of the curse, and the priest shall say to the woman), "the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people by the LORD's making your thigh waste away and your abdomen swell; [22]and this water that brings a curse shall go into your stomach, and make your abdomen swell and your thigh waste away." And the woman shall say, "Amen. Amen."

5:16 "shall bring her near and have her stand before the LORD" Obviously the positioning of the suspected wife is religiously significant. Exactly where they would stand is uncertain but somewhere within the outer bounds of the Tabernacle, possibly close to or facing the inner shrine.

5:17 "holy water" This would have been water from the bronze laver, which was before the inner shrine or to one side between the shrine and the altar of sacrifice. See Special Topic: The Tabernacle (chart) and Special Topic: Laver of Bronze at Num. 1:50-51b.

The LXX has "pure living water," which in some rituals, refers to spring water (see Josephus, *Antiq*. 3.11.1). The NJB has "fresh water."

▣ **"holy water. . .some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle"** These are the three physical elements in the water of bitterness.

1. holy water came from the Laver
2. the dust from the floor of the Tabernacle (where exactly is unknown)
3. ink from the curse scroll (v. 23)
4. one wonders if some of the grain offering was included (v. 15)

5:18 "The priest shall then have the woman" The woman's part is seen in a series of acts.

1. she had to stand before the Lord
2. the hair on her head had to be loose
3. she had to take an oral oath
4. she had to swear along with the priest
5. she had to affirm the oath with an "amen"
6. she had to drink the water

▣ **"let the hair of her head go loose"** This may show

1. her uncleanness, like that of a leper (cf. Lev. 13:45)
2. or it was a sign of mourning (see *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 145)
3. it could be a sign of openness, like the removal of one's shoes

5:19 "be immune" This is literally the *Niphal* IMPERATIVE "be free," "be exempt," or "be clean" (BDB 667, KB 720).

1. free from guilt – Num. 5:31; Ps. 19:13; Jer. 2:35
2. free from punishment – Num. 5:28; Exod. 21:19; 1 Sam. 26:9; Pro. 6:29; 11:21; 16:5; 17:5; 18:5,9; 28:20; Jer. 25:29; 49:12
3. free from effect – Num. 5:19

5:21 "the priest shall have the woman swear with the oath of a curse" The oath and consequences are spelled out in vv. 20-22. The results of unfaithfulness without the appropriate witnesses could not be the death penalty, Lev. 20:10, but would be the punishment of not having children, which to an Israelite, would be an ultimate curse (cf. Num. 5:28). However, it may be that the woman, being pregnant already, was the source of the husband's "spirit of jealousy."

For "curse" see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 491-493. Curses are the clearly stated result of disobedience to God's revealed will. They are the opposite of what to do (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-28; 30:15,19; Psalm 1).

5:22 "Amen. Amen" "Amen" is a form of the Hebrew word for "faith," but here it is used in our modern usage of "I affirm," "I agree," or "may it be so." See Special Topic: Amen.

SPECIAL TOPIC: AMEN

I. OLD TESTAMENT
   A. The term "Amen" is from a Hebrew word for
      1. "truth" (*emeth*, BDB 49)
      2. "truthfulness" (*emun, emunah*, BDB 53)
      3. "faith" or "faithfulness"
      4. "trust" (*dmn*, BDB 52)
   B. Its etymology denoted a person's stable physical stance. The opposite would be one who is unstable, slipping (cf. Psalm 35:6; 40:2; 73:18; Jeremiah 23:12) or stumbling (cf. Ps. 73:2). From this literal usage developed the metaphorical extension of faithful, trustworthy, loyal, and dependable (cf. Hab. 2:4).
   C. Special usages (see Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness in the OT)
      1. a pillar, 2 Kgs. 18:16 (1 Tim. 3:15)
      2. assurance, Exod. 17:12
      3. steadiness, Exod. 17:12
      4. stability, Isa. 33:6
      5. true, 1 Kgs. 10:6; 17:24; 22:16; Pro. 12:22
      6. firm, 2 Chr. 20:20; Isa. 7:9
      7. reliable (Torah), Ps. 119:43,142,151,160
   D. In the OT two other Hebrew terms are used for active faith.
      1. *bathach* (BDB 105), trust
      2. *yra* (BDB 431), fear, respect, worship (cf. Gen. 22:12)
   E. From the sense of trust or trustworthiness developed a liturgical usage to affirm a true or trustworthy statement of another (cf. Num. 5:22; Deut. 27:15-26; 1 Kgs. 1:36; 1 Chr. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6; Ps. 41:13; 72:19; 89:52; 106:48; Jer. 11:5; 28:6).

F. The theological key to this term is not mankind's faithfulness, but YHWH's (cf. Exod. 34:6; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 108:4; 115:1; 117:2; 138:2). Fallen humanity's only hope is the merciful, faithful, covenant loyalty of YHWH and His promises. Those who know YHWH are to be like Him (cf. Hab. 2:4). The Bible is a history and a record of God restoring His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) in mankind. Salvation restores mankind's ability to have intimate fellowship with God. This is why we were created.

II. NEW TESTAMENT

A. The use of the word "amen" as a concluding liturgical affirmation of a statement's trustworthiness is common in the NT (cf. 1 Cor. 14:16; Rev. 1:7; 5:14; 7:12).

B. The use of the term as a close to a prayer is common in the NT (cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; 6:18; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 4:20; 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18).

C. Jesus is the only one who used the term (doubled in John 25 times, i.e., John 1:51; 3:3,5,11, etc.) to introduce significant statements (cf. Luke 4:24; 12:37; 18:17,29; 21:32; 23:43).

D. It is used as a title for Jesus in Rev. 3:14 (also note 2 Cor. 1:20, possibly a title of YHWH from Isa. 65:16).

E. The concept of faithfulness or faith, trustworthiness or trust is expressed in the Greek term *pistos* or *pistis*, which is translated into English as "trust," "faith," "believe" (see Special Topic: Faith, Believe, or Trust).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:23-28

[23]"'The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness. [24]Then he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water which brings a curse will go into her and *cause* bitterness. [25]The priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, and he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar; [26]and the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial offering and offer *it* up in smoke on the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water. [27]When he has made her drink the water, then it shall come about, if she has defiled herself and has been unfaithful to her husband, that the water which brings a curse will go into her and *cause* bitterness, and her abdomen will swell and her thigh will waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people. [28]But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free and conceive children.'"

5:23 "The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll, and he shall wash them off into the water of bitterness" The ink from the scroll would come off in the water and thereby, the curse itself would be drunk by the accused woman.

5:25 "he shall wave the grain offering before the LORD" The MT has the VERB (BDB 631, KB 682, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*), which is used for a wave offering. The motion is uncertain.

1. lift up then back down (i.e., give to YHWH and receive back)
2. side to side (i.e., to show YHWH)

Notice the different "wave offerings."

1. Exod. 29:27; Lev. 9:21
   a. breast wave offering
   b. right thigh heave offering
2. Exod. 29:22-25; Lev. 8:27, several items waved

3. Lev. 14:12,24, guilt offering waved
4. Lev. 23:11-12,20, first fruits
5. Num. 6:20, part of Nazirite offerings
6. Num. 8:11,13,15,21, part of Levites' dedication to service

5:26 "make the woman drink the water" These drink curses are not common in the Bible. The only other one known is Exod. 32:20, which has to do with the golden calf experience. Drink curses were quite common in North African and Hittite cultures.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 5:29-31

[29]"'This is the law of jealousy: when a wife, *being* under *the authority of* her husband, goes astray and defiles herself, [30]or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife, he shall then make the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest shall apply all this law to her. [31]Moreover, the man will be free from guilt, but that woman shall bear her guilt.'"

5:31 "the man shall be free from guilt" This could possibly refer to

1. the death of the woman involved
2. her inability to bear children
3. the fact that he accused her but she was not guilty

The concepts of the equality of the sexes and women's rights are both modern, western concepts. Individual rights are a western political affirmation. I do believe that there was an original mutuality (Gen. 1:26-27) damaged by the Fall (Genesis 3).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was the "holiness" of Israel's camp so important?
2. Does Num. 5:5-10 specify what kind of "sins of mankind" are being referred to?
3. Why was "restitution" plus 20% important?
4. Define "the kinsman redeemer."
5. How does Num. 5:11-28 protect the wife?

NUMBERS 6

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Law of the Nazirites	The Law of the Nazirite	Various Instructions to the People (5:1-6:21)	Rules for Nazirites	The Nazirite
6:1-4	6:1-8	6:1-4	6:1-4	6:1-8
6:5		6:5	6:5-8	
6:6-8		6:6-8		
6:9-12	6:9-12	6:9-12	6:9-12	6:9-12
6:13-20	6:13-20	6:13-20	6:13-15	6:13-20
			6:16-18	
			6:19-20	
6:21	6:21	6:21	6:21	6:21
Aaron's Dedication	The Priestly Blessing	The Aaronic Benediction	The Priestly Blessing	The Form of Blessing
6:22-23	6:22-27	6:22-26	6:22-23	6:22-23
6:24			6:24	6:24
6:25			6:25	6:25
6:26-27			6:26	6:26
		6:27	6:27	6:27

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Numbers 6 is the only place in the Pentateuch that discusses this special voluntary dedication vow (either for a lifetime or a period of time).

B. There are several examples of parents dedicating their sons to YHWH in this fashion.
   1. Samson (i.e., Jdgs. 13:4-5)
   2. Samuel (i.e., 1 Sam. 1:11; not stated in the MT but in DSS)
   3. John the Baptist (i.e., Luke 1:15)

C. This special vow was a way for Israeli people (??, women, slaves) to become special servants of YHWH.

   Remember, at the time of the last plague (i.e., death of the firstborn of cattle and humans in Egypt, cf. Exodus 12), YHWH announced through Moses that the firstborn uniquely belonged to Him (cf. Exodus 13). Later this service was taken over by the tribe of Levi (i.e., Num. 3:12,45). Israelis (not Levites or priests) had two ways for laymen and laywomen to show their love and thanksgiving to YHWH.
   1. voluntary sacrifices (i.e., the peace offering)

2. Nazirite vows
    a. permanent (usually dedicated by parents before birth)
    b. temporary (Mishnah said 30 days was normal limit)

The Nazirite vow cut the vower off from normal Israeli society
1. by diet
2. by social customs related to the dead

These vows were difficult to maintain and to end (i.e., series of expensive sacrifices).

D. The subject of "vows" is dealt with in several places.
1. Lev. 5:4-6; 27:1-33
2. Num. 6:1-21; 30
3. Deut. 23:21-23

They were important aspects of Mosaic worship.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:1-4

[1]Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When a man or woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to dedicate himself to the LORD, [3]he shall abstain from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar, whether made from wine or strong drink, nor shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh or dried grapes. [4]All the days of his separation he shall not eat anything that is produced by the grape vine, from *the* seeds even to *the* skin.'"

6:2 "When a man or woman makes a special vow" It is significant that this special dedicatory vow was possible for both laymen and laywomen (see Special Topic: Women in the Bible). It was a way of laypeople giving their lives to God, either for a lifetime, like Samuel and John the Baptist, of for a limited period of time, like Paul in Acts 21.

The term "special" (BDB 810, KB 927, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) has several connotations.
1. be surpassing
2. extraordinary
3. wonderful act
4. hard or difficult, here and Lev. 27:2

See Special Topic: Wonderful Things.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

I. The Old Testament
    A. Culturally women were considered property
        1. included in list of property (Exodus 20:17)
        2. treatment of slave women (Exodus 21:7-11)
        3. women's vows annullable by socially responsible male (Numbers 30)
        4. women as spoils of war (Deuteronomy 20:10-14; 21:10-14)
    B. Practically there was a mutuality
        1. male and female made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27)
        2. honor father and mother (Exodus 20:12 [Deut. 5:16])
        3. reverence mother and father (Leviticus 19:3; 20:9)
        4. men and women could be Nazirites (Numbers 6:1-2)

5. daughters have right of inheritance (Numbers 27:1-11)
6. part of covenant people (Deuteronomy 29:10-12)
7. observe teaching of father and mother (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20)
8. sons and daughters of Heman (Levite family) led music in Temple (1 Chronicles 25:5-6)
9. sons and daughters will prophesy in new age (Joel 2:28-29)

C. Women were in leadership roles
1. Moses' sister, Miriam, called a prophetess (Exodus 15:20-21 also note Micah 6:4)
2. women gifted by God to weave material for the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:25-26)
3. a married woman, Deborah, also a prophetess (cf. Jdgs. 4:4), led all the tribes (Judges 4:4-5; 5:7)
4. Huldah was a prophetess whom King Josiah invoked to read and interpret the newly-found "Book of the Law" (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chr. 34:22-27)
5. Queen Esther, a godly woman, saved Jews in Persia

II. The New Testament

A. Culturally women in both Judaism and the Greco-Roman world were second class citizens with few rights or privileges (the exception was Macedonia).

B. Women in leadership roles
1. Elizabeth and Mary, godly women available to God (Luke 1-2)
2. Anna, a prophetess serving at the Temple (Luke 2:36)
3. Lydia, believer and leader of a house church (Acts 16:14,40)
4. Philip's four virgin daughters were prophetesses (Acts 21:8-9)
5. Phoebe, deaconess of church at Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1)
6. Prisca (Priscilla), Paul's fellow-worker and teacher of Apollos (Acts 18:26; Rom. 16:3)
7. Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Julia, Nereus' sister, several women co-workers of Paul (Rom. 16:6-16)
8. Junia (KJV), possibly a woman apostle (Rom. 16:7)
9. Euodia and Syntyche, co-workers with Paul (Phil. 4:2-3)

III. How does a modern believer balance the divergent biblical examples?

A. How does one determine historical or cultural truths, which apply only to the original context, from eternal truths valid for all churches, all believers of all ages?
1. We must take the intent of the original inspired author very seriously. The Bible is the Word of God and the only source for faith and practice.
2. We must deal with the obviously historically-conditioned inspired texts.
a. the cultus (i.e., ritual and liturgy) of Israel (cf. Acts 15; Gal. 3)
b. first century Judaism
c. Paul's obviously historically-conditioned statements in 1 Corinthians
(1) the legal system of pagan Rome (1 Corinthians 6)
(2) remaining a slave (1 Cor. 7:20-24)
(3) celibacy (1 Cor. 7:1-35)
(4) virgins (1 Cor. 7:36-38)
(5) food sacrificed to an idol (1 Cor. 8; 10:23-33)

(6) unworthy actions at Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11)

3. God fully and clearly revealed Himself to a particular culture, a particular day. We must take seriously the revelation, but not every aspect of its historical accommodation. The Word of God was written in human words, addressed to a particular culture at a particular time.

B. Biblical interpretation must seek the original author's intent. What was he saying to his day? This is foundational and crucial for proper interpretation. But then we must apply this to our own day. The real interpretive problem may be defining the term. Were there more ministries than pastors who were seen as leadership? Were deaconesses or prophetesses seen as leaders? It is quite clear that Paul, in 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:9-15, is asserting that women should not take the lead in public worship! But how do I apply that today? I do not want Paul's culture or my culture to silence God's Word and will. Possibly Paul's day was too limiting, but also my day may be too open. I feel so uncomfortable saying that Paul's words and teachings are conditional, first century, local situational truths. Who am I that I should let my mind or my culture negate an inspired author?!

However, what do I do when there are biblical examples of women leaders (even in Paul's writings, cf. Romans 16)? A good example of this is Paul's discussion of public worship in 1 Corinthians 11-14. In 1 Cor. 11:5 he seems to allow women's preaching and praying in public worship, with their heads covered, yet in 14:34-35 he demands they remain silent! There were deaconesses (cf. Rom. 16:1) and prophetesses (cf. Acts 21:9). It is this diversity that allows me freedom to identify Paul's comments (as relates to restrictions on women) as limited to first century Corinth and Ephesus. In both churches there were problems with women exercising their newly-found freedom (cf. Bruce Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth*), which could have caused difficulty for the church in reaching their society for Christ. Their freedom had to be limited so that the gospel could be more effective.

My day is just the opposite of Paul's. In my day the gospel might be limited if articulate, trained women are not allowed to share the gospel, not allowed to lead! What is the ultimate goal of public worship? Is it not evangelism and discipleship? Can God be honored and pleased with women leaders? The Bible as a whole seems to say "yes"!

I want to yield to Paul; my theology is primarily Pauline. I do not want to be overly influenced or manipulated by modern feminism! However, I feel the church has been slow to respond to obvious biblical truths, like the inappropriateness of slavery, racism, bigotry, and sexism. It has also been slow to respond appropriately to the abuse of women in the modern world. God in Christ set free the slave and the woman. I dare not let a culture-bound text reshackle them.

One more point: as an interpreter I know that Corinth was a very disrupted church. The charismatic gifts were prized and flaunted. Women may have been caught up in this. I also believe that Ephesus was being

affected by false teachers who were taking advantage of women and using them as surrogate speakers in the house churches of Ephesus.

C. Suggestions for further reading

1. *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart (pp. 61-77)
2. *Gospel and Spirit: Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* by Gordon Fee
3. *Hard Sayings of the Bible* by Walter C. Kaiser, Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Branch (pp. 613-616; 665-667)

SPECIAL TOPIC: WONDERFUL THINGS (OT)

This word (BDB 810, KB 927) denotes actions that humans cannot accomplish themselves or can even explain, acts which cause wonder and awe (cf. Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17,27; Zech. 8:6).

The VERB

1. the Exodus, Exod. 3:20; 34:10; Mic. 7:15
2. plagues, Deut. 28:59
3. crossing of Jordan, Jos. 3:5
4. past events of God, Jdgs. 6:13; 1 Chr. 16:9,12,24; Neh. 9:17
5. birth of Samson, Jdgs. 13:19
6. David's love for Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:26
7. often in Job, 5:9; 9:10; 10:16; 37:5,14; 42:3
8. thirty-two times in the Psalms
9. YHWH's counsel, Isa. 28:29
10. YHWH's acts, Isa. 29:14 (twice); Joel 2:26

The NOUN

1. the Exodus, Exod. 15:11; Ps. 77:11,14; 78:12
2. in relation to the dead, Ps. 88:10,12
3. heaven praises YHWH's acts, Ps. 89:5
4. YHWH's laws, Ps. 119:129
5. YHWH's Messiah, Isa. 9:6
6. YHWH's acts, Isa. 25:1; 29:14
7. end-time actions, Dan. 12:6

God acts in powerful, redemptive ways to reveal Himself to His highest creation (mankind). He wants them to know Him and trust Him. His acts are revelation, the recording of those acts is inspiration, and the understanding of those acts is illumination. YHWH wants the world to know Him!

See the following Special Topics.

1. Special Topic: Know
2. Special Topic: Inspiration
3. Special Topic: Illumination

▣

NASB, TEV,
REB **"to dedicate"**
NKJV, NRSV,
Peshitta **"to separate"**
NJB **"to vow"**
JPSOA **"to set himself apart"**
LXX **"a pure vow"**

There are two uses of this NOUN.

1. the NOUN, BDB 634, vv. 2,4,5,7,8,12, (twice),13 (twice), 18 (thrice), 19 (twice), 20,21 (thrice)
2. the VERB, BDB 634, KB 684
   a. *Hiphil* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, vv. 2,6

b. *Hiphil* IMPERFECT, vv. 3,5
c. *Hiphil* PERFECT, v. 12

▣ **"Nazirite"** This term (BDB 634 I, KB 684) seems to be related to the word "separate" (BDB I), which is part of the concept of holiness. These people were especially dedicated to the Lord. This was a very special kind of vow and is not mentioned along with the other vows in Leviticus 27. See Special Topic: Nazirite Vow.

SPECIAL TOPIC: Nazirite Vow

A. This was a way for someone, male or female (cf. Num. 6:1), who was not of the tribe of Levi, to dedicate himself or herself to God's service (i.e., "holy to the Lord"). Nazirite means "one separated" (BDB 634. KB 684), which is the root idea of the Hebrew term holy (see Special Topic: Holy).
B. In the OT it was a life-long vow
   1. Samson (Jdgs. 13:7)
   2. Samuel (1 Sam. 1:21)
   3. John the Baptist (NT)
C. Judaism developed a short-term Nazirite vow (probably developed from the words in Num. 6:5). The shortest length was thirty days. This short-term vow culminated in the shaving of the head and burning of the shavings along with a sacrifice at the temple.
D. The specific requirements (cf. Num. 6:1-8)
   1. Abstain from wine and strong drink, eat no product of the vine (cf. Num. 6:3-4).
   2. Do not cut one's hair.
   3. Do not touch a dead person. This would make it impossible to participate in any of the Jewish funeral procedures.
   4. A provision for accidental defilement is in Num. 6:9. Apparently Paul's situation in Acts 21:23-25 involved this issue. There was a period of purification and a sacrifice prescribed (cf. Num. 6:9-12).

6:3-6 There are basically three restrictions to keep a Nazirite vow:
1. the abstinence from all products of the grape vine, Num. 6:3
2. no razor shall pass over their head, Num. 6:5
3. he shall be totally separated from any dead person, even if the death of a close relative occurred, Num. 6:6-8

There are several examples of this vow.
1. permanent
   a. Samson – Jdgs. 13:4-5
   b. Samuel – 1 Sam. 1:11
   c. John the Baptist – Luke 1:15
2. temporary
   Paul and four others – Acts 18:18; 21:23-26
3. also note
   a. I Macc. 3:49-50
   b. Josephus, *Antiq.* 19.6.1

6:3 "wine and strong drink. . .vinegar" These were different types of fermented drink.

1. wine – BDB 406
2. strong drink – BDB 1016
3. vinegar – BDB 330; common bitter drink, cf. Ruth 2:14; Ps. 69:22; Pro. 10:26; 25:20

Also note that nothing from the grapevine may be eaten or drunk.

1. grape juice – BDB 1056
2. grapes
   a. fresh (BDB 535)
   b. dried (BDB 386 II)
3. seeds – BDB 359, Num. 6:4 (only here in the OT, from Arabic root, possibly unripe grapes)
4. skins – BDB 260, Num. 6:4 (only here in the OT)

The implication of #3-4 is no part of the grape from inner seed to outer skin may be consumed. See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Num. 4:7b.

Why would a restriction be placed on wine?

1. the experience of Nadab and Abihu (cf. Lev. 10:8-11)
2. to make one separate from normal social life (i.e., model holiness)
3. to restrict contact with Canaanite culture and worship
   a. drunkenness
   b. raisin cakes (i.e., Hos. 3:1)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:5

5"'All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD; he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long.'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:6-8

6"'All the days of his separation to the LORD he shall not go near to a dead person. 7He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. 8All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.'"

6:6 Defilement by touching a dead corpse is also mentioned in Lev. 21:1-4 and Num. 19:11-22. Why this caused someone to be unclean is not certain, except it represents the opposite of life and health. Once death occurs, a natural process of decomposition begins (cf. Gen. 3:19). It may also be directed toward ANE ancestor worship. See Special Topic: Burial Practices.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BURIAL PRACTICES

I. Mesopotamia
   A. Proper burial was very important to a happy afterlife.
   B. An example of a Mesopotamian curse is, "May the earth not receive your corpses."

II. Old Testament
   A. Proper burial was very important (cf. Eccl. 6:3).
   B. It was done very quickly (cf. Sarah in Genesis 23 and Rachel in Gen. 35:19 and notice Deut. 21:23).

C. Improper burial was a sign of rejection and sin.
   1. Deuteronomy 28:26
   2. Isaiah 14:20
   3. Jeremiah 8:2; 22:19

D. Burial was done, if possible, in family vaults in the home area.

E. There was no embalming, as in Egypt. Mankind came from dust and must return to dust (ex. Gen. 3:19; Ps. 103:14; 104:29).

F. In rabbinical Judaism it was difficult to balance a proper respect and handling of the body with the concept of ceremonial defilement connected to dead bodies.

III. New Testament

A. Burial quickly followed death, usually within twenty-four hours. The Jews often watched the grave for three days, believing that the soul could return to the body within that time frame (cf. John 11:39).

B. Burial involved cleaning and wrapping of the body with spices (cf. John 11:44; 19:39-40).

C. There were no distinctive Jewish or Christian burial procedures (or items placed in the grave) in first century Palestine.

6:8 "he is holy to the LORD" The Nazirite vow of separation to YHWH made a person uniquely "holy." See Special Topic: Holy at Num. 5:3.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:9-12

[9]"'But if a man dies very suddenly beside him and he defiles his dedicated head *of hair*, then he shall shave his head on the day when he becomes clean; he shall shave it on the seventh day. [10]Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the doorway of the tent of meeting. [11]The priest shall offer one for a sin offering and *the* other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him concerning his sin because of the *dead* person. And that same day he shall consecrate his head, [12]and shall dedicate to the LORD his days as a Nazirite, and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering; but the former days will be void because his separation was defiled.'"

6:9-12 "if a man dies very suddenly beside him" These is a series of very significant sacrifices which are involved here, as well as a shaving of the head and a reinstating of a Nazirite vow. It is surprising that apparently only a violation of touching a dead corpse required an elaborate ritual. Nothing is mentioned about how to deal with eating/drinking grape products or trimming of the hair/beard.

6:11 "his sin" This is a good place to see that Israelites saw "ceremonial uncleanness" as a violation of God's law and, thereby, a "sin." Clean vs. unclean was a major theological category for Israel. Israel was to be very different from her surrounding pagan neighbors, in all areas. This was a way to protect them from social and religious contact. See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 477-485.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:13-20

[13]"'Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall bring the offering to the doorway of the tent of meeting. [14]He shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb a year old without defect for a burnt offering and one ewe-lamb a year old without defect

for a sin offering and one ram without defect for a peace offering, [15]and a basket of unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil and unleavened wafers spread with oil, along with their grain offering and their drink offering. [16]Then the priest shall present *them* before the LORD and shall offer his sin offering and his burnt offering. [17]He shall also offer the ram for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD, together with the basket of unleavened cakes; the priest shall likewise offer its grain offering and its drink offering. [18]The Nazirite shall then shave his dedicated head *of hair* at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and take the dedicated hair of his head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of peace offerings. [19]The priest shall take the ram's shoulder *when it has been* boiled, and one unleavened cake out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put *them* on the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his dedicated *hair*. [20]Then the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. It is holy for the priest, together with the breast offered by waving and the thigh offered by lifting up; and afterward the Nazirite may drink wine.'"

6:13-20 There is a series of extensive sacrifices which are required to exit the Nazirite vow. There was no provision for the poor regarding a lesser sacrifice (unless Num. 6:21b). This expensive vow of the Nazirite seems to be even more stringent in its rules than those for the priest.

Notice what offerings were required.

1. one male lamb for a whole burnt offering, Leviticus 1
2. one ewe lamb for a sin offering, Leviticus 4
3. one ram for a peace offering, Num. 6:14,17; Leviticus 3
4. a basket of unleavened cakes, Leviticus 2
5. his/her long hair also offered on the altar of sacrifice, Num. 6:18

6:14 "without defect" (three times) See Special Topic: Without Defect.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WITHOUT DEFECT

Sacrificial animals had to be healthy representatives of their breed. They could not have any physical defect, including

1. mis-colored
2. blind
3. sick
4. lame
5. any deformity

See the guidelines in Lev. 22:18-25 and Deut. 15:21. Malachi 1:6-8 shows the kind of abuse that occurred. The animal was a gift of one's best to YHWH.

This perfect example of a breed symbolized innocence and wholeness, which was in contrast to the offerer. Therefore, the animal became a substitute (i.e., the soul that sins, it will surely die, cf. Ezek. 18:4,20). The prefect substitute will be Jesus (cf. Isaiah 53; John 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21).

6:15 "grain offering" See Leviticus 2.

▣ **"libations"** These could be of olive oil (i.e., Num. 15:4), wine (i.e., Num. 15:5), or both (Exod. 29:40-41; Num. 28:5-7; 29:3-6; Ezra 7:17).

6:19 "shall put *them* on the hands of the Nazirite" This physical gesture was a way of the offerer identifying with the sacrifice (cf. Num. 5:18).

6:20 The exact difference between a "wave offering" (BDB 632) and "lift up" offering (BDB 929) is uncertain. See notes at Num. 5:25 and Lev. 7:30.

▣ **"and afterward the Nazirite may drink wine"** This phrase shows that there was no cultural stigma to drinking fermented wine. See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Num. 4:7b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:21

[21]"This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD according to his separation, in addition to what *else* he can afford; according to his vow which he takes, so he shall do according to the law of his separation."

6:21 "in addition to what *else* he can afford" The idiom is literally "his hand can reach." This is surprising to me in light of the expensive offerings that were required. The Nazirite vow itself was an offering of one's life to YHWH.

Maybe the idiom should be understood as saying the text of Numbers 6 states only the minimum requirements; additional offerings were acceptable but not required.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:22-23

[22]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [23]"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:24

[24]'The LORD bless you, and keep you;'

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:25

[25]'The LORD make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;'

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 6:26-27

[26]'The LORD lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.'
[27]So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them."

6:24-26 This is often called the Aaronic blessing. It seems to be a threefold repetition of the covenant name for God (i.e., YHWH; see Special Topic: "The Name" of YHWH) in a semi-poetic form. It emphasizes God's care, guidance, and special notice of the one blessed.

The term "peace" is the Hebrew term for "wholeness." See Special Topic: Peace (OT). One wonders if the blessing (see Special Topic: Blessing) was meant for the male and female Nazirites only or if it was a general blessing unrelated to Num. 6:2-21. The Scriptures that mention the priests' blessing in YHWH's name (cf. Lev. 9:22-23; Deut. 10:8; 21:5) imply that this is a general blessing to be given to all Israelites at

times of worship. All Israel was to be a holy priesthood dedicated to YHWH (cf. Exod. 19:5-6). All the "you's" are SINGULAR (v. 27 is PLURAL).

Notice the VERBS related to YHWH's actions and attitude toward the ones receiving the priestly blessing.

1. bless you – BDB 138, KB 159, *Piel* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
2. keep you – BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
3. face shine on you – BDB 21, KB 24, *Hiphil* JUSSIVE; see Special Topic: God Described as Human at Num. 3:16
4. be gracious to you – BDB 335, KB 334, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
5. lift up His countenance on you – BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
6. give you peace – BDB 963, KB 1321, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense; this VERB is repeated in v. 27 referring "to putting" (NASB, "involving") YHWH's name (*Piel* PERFECT with *waw*)

SPECIAL TOPIC: "THE NAME" OF YHWH (OT)

The use of "the name" as a substitute for YHWH Himself is parallel to the Exod. 23:20-33 use of "angel," who is said to have "My name is in him." This same substitution can be seen in the use of "His glory" (e.g., John 1:14; 17:22; see Special Topic: God Described As Human). All are attempts to soften the personal anthropomorphic presence of YHWH (cf. Exod. 3:13-16; 6:3). YHWH is surely spoken of in human terms, but it was also known that He was spiritually present throughout creation (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 139:7-16; Jer. 23:24; Acts 7:49 quotes Isa. 66:1).

There are several examples of "the name" representing YHWH's divine essence and personal presence.

1. Deut. 12:5; 2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Kgs. 9:3; 11:36
2. Deut. 28:58
3. Ps. 5:11; 7:17; 9:10; 33:21; 68:4; 91:14; 103:1; 105:3; 145:21
4. Isa. 48:9; 56:6
5. Ezek. 20:44; 36:21; 39:7
6. Amos 2:7
7. John 17:6,11,26

The concept of "calling on" (i.e., worshiping) the name of YHWH is seen early in Genesis.

1. Gen. 4:26, the line of Seth
2. Gen. 12:8, Abraham
3. Gen. 13:4, Abraham
4. Gen. 16:13, Hagar
5. Gen. 21:33, Abraham
6. Gen. 26:25, Isaac

and in Exodus:

1. Exod. 5:22-23, speak in Your name
2. Exod. 9:16, proclaim My name through all the earth (cf. Rom. 9:17)
3. Exod. 20:7, do not take the name of the LORD your God in vain (cf. Lev. 19:12; Deut. 5:11; 6:13; 10:20)
4. Exod. 20:24, where I cause my name to be remembered (cf. Deut. 12:5; 26:2)
5. Exod. 23:20-21, an angel ("since My name is in him")
6. Exod. 34:5-7, Moses calls on (or "called out") the name of the Lord. This is one of a handful of texts that describe YHWH's character (cf. Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13)

Knowing someone by name implies an intimacy (cf. Exod. 33:12); Moses knows YHWH's name and in 33:17, YHWH knows Moses' name. This is the context where Moses wants to see God's glory (cf. Exod. 33:18), but God allows him to see "His goodness" (33:19), which is parallel to "the name" (33:19).

The Israelites are to destroy "the names" of Canaan's gods (cf. Deut. 12:3) and call on Him (cf. Deut. 6:13; 10:20; 26:2) at the special place He causes His name to dwell (cf. Exod. 20:24; Deut. 12:5,11,21; 14:23,24; 16:2,6,11; 26:2).

YHWH has a universal purpose involving His name.

1. Gen. 12:3
2. Exod. 9:16
3. Exod. 19:5-6
4. Deut. 28:10,58
5. Micah 4:1-5

SPECIAL TOPIC: PEACE (*shalom*) [OT]

The Hebrew term *shalom* (BDB 1022, KB 1532) is common in Semitic cognates.

A. Akkadian
   1. to be unharmed
   2. to stay well
   3. to be in good condition

B. Ugaritic (Canaanite)
   1. to be unharmed
   2. to be healthy

C. Arabic
   1. to be healthy
   2. to be in a happy situation

D. Aramaic
   1. to be complete
   2. to come to an end/completion
   3. conclude a peace
   4. stay unharmed

E. Hebrew connotations
   1. completeness
   2. soundness
   3. welfare
   4. peace

Today the term *shalom* is a Hebrew greeting and farewell statement. It still denotes the absence of evil and the presence of good (i.e., contentment with life). It denotes a mental state of security and satisfaction. Notice how the OT speaks of a "covenant of peace" (cf. Num. 25:12; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26; also note Gen. 26:29,31; Jos. 9:15). It must be pursued (cf. Ps. 34:14; Rom. 14:19). AB, vol. 5, p. 206, says, "Peace," "truth," and "justice" are parallel Hebrew concepts (cf. Zech. 8:16-19). YHWH is called "LORD of Peace" (cf. Jdgs. 6:24; Rom. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23). The Messiah will be called "the Prince of Peace" (cf. Isa. 9:5). There will be a new day when peace, truth, and justice will be a reality in human

experience (cf. Isa. 60:17; 66:12,22). The "very good" of Gen. 1:31 is again a possibility, yea, a promise (i.e., "a new heaven and a new earth").

SPECIAL TOPIC: BLESSING (OT)

There are several kinds of blessings (BDB 139) in the OT. The two most common are

1. blessings of God
   a. to all nations through Abraham (and the Patriarchs), Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 27:29; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8
   b. conditioned on repentance, Exod. 32:29; Joel 2:12-14
   c. conditioned on obedience to the covenant, Lev. 25:18-21
   d. a proper relationship with God brings prosperity (i.e., the cursings vs. blessings), Deut. 11:26,27,29; 23:5; 28:2,8; 30:1,19; Jos. 8:34; Ps. 133:3; Pro. 10:22
   e. on obedient Israel, Deut. 12:15; 16:17; 32:13; Isa. 44:3; Ezek. 34:25-31; Mal. 3:10-12
   f. on Levitical priests, Ezek. 44:28-31; Mal. 3:3-,10-12
   g. on David and the Messianic line, 2 Sam. 7:29; Ps. 3:8; 21:3; 118:26 (cf. Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; 19:38; John 12:13)
   h. on the one who is sent by God, Ps. 118:26; 129:8
2. the blessing of parents
   a. Isaac blessing Jacob (by trickery), Gen. 27:12,18-29,35
   b. Jacob, Gen. 49:3-27,28-29
   c. Moses (surrogate parent), Deut. 33:1-25

God's word, and for that matter, the spoken blessings of the Patriarchs, became an independent, self-directed power to accomplish its purpose, Isa. 55:11; 45:23; Matt. 24:35 (5:17-19); Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33.

The power of the spoken word can be seen in:

1. creation (i.e., "He said. . .")
2. Messiah called "word," John 1:1,14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13

God's greatest blessing is Himself! His personal presence with us and for us!

6:25 "His face shine on you" This became a common prayer/blessing in the Psalter (cf. Ps. 4:6; 31:16; 67:1; 80:3,7,19; 119:135).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does the word "Nazirite" mean?
2. Why did someone take this "special" vow?
3. Why were products from the grapevine prohibited?
4. Explain why there was no sacrifice available that would have allowed a poor person to be a Nazirite?
5. How is the blessing of the Num. 6:22-27 related to Nazirites?
6. How are the blessings of the Aaronic prayer related to YHWH's promise of Canaan to Abraham's seed?

NUMBERS 7

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Offerings of the Leaders	Offerings of the Leaders	Offerings from the Tribal Leaders	The Offerings of the Leaders	Offering of Wagons
7:1-9	7:1-9	7:1-9	7:1-9	7:1-9
				Dedication Offering
7:10-11	7:10-11	7:10-11	7:10-11	7:10-11
7:12-17	7:12-17	7:12-17	7:12-83	7:12-17
7:18-23	7:18-23	7:18-23		7:18-23
7:24-29	7:24-29	7:24-29		7:24-29
7:30-35	7:30-35	7:30-35		7:30-35
7:36-41	7:36-41	7:36-41		7:36-41
7:42-47	7:42-47	7:42-47		7:42-47
7:48-53	7:48-53	7:48-53		7:48-53
7:54-59	7:54-59	7:54-59		7:54-59
7:60-65	7:60-65	7:60-65		7:60-65
7:66-71	7:66-71	7:66-71		7:66-71
7:72-77	7:72-77	7:72-77		7:72-77
7:78-83	7:78-83	7:78-83		7:78-83
7:84-88	7:84-88	7:84-88	7:84-88	7:84-88a
				7:88b
7:89	7:89	7:89	7:89	7:89

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading**")**

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Each of the twelve tribal leaders brought the same gifts for the Tabernacle's dedication. This list is similar to many ANE temple/sanctuary lists of sacrifices.
   1. silver dish (130 shekels)
   2. silver bowl (70 shekels)
   3. gold pan (10 shekels)
   4. burnt offering
      a. one bull
      b. one ram
      c. one male lamb (one year old)
   5. sin offering – one male goat
   6. peace offerings
      a. two oxen

b. five rams
c. five male goats
d. five male lambs (one female)

B. All of these items of silver and gold came from the gifts of the Egyptians as Israel left Egypt (Exod. 3:22; 11:1; 12:35-36). They once may have been used in Egyptian idolatry but now they were given to YHWH for His Tabernacle.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:1-9

[1]Now on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it with all its furnishings and the altar and all its utensils; he anointed them and consecrated them also. [2]Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' households, made an offering (they were the leaders of the tribes; they were the ones who were over the numbered men). [3]When they brought their offering before the Lord, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for *every* two of the leaders and an ox for each one, then they presented them before the tabernacle. [4]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [5]"Accept *these things* from them, that they may be used in the service of the tent of meeting, and you shall give them to the Levites, *to* each man according to his service." [6]So Moses took the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. [7]Two carts and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service, [8]and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. [9]But he did not give *any* to the sons of Kohath because theirs *was* the service of the holy *objects*, *which* they carried on the shoulder.

7:1 "On the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle" This relates back to Exodus 40. The exact time relationship between the events recorded in Leviticus and Numbers 1-6 are ambiguous as to their relationship to Exodus 40 through Numbers 7.

▣ **"the tabernacle"** See Special Topic: The Tabernacle (chart) at Num. 1:50-51b.

▣ **"anointed"** This VERB (BDB 602, KB 643, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*)
1. is repeated twice in v. 1; also notice *Niphal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT in Num. 7:10,84,88
2. is parallel to the VERB "consecrated" (BDB 872, KB 1073, *Piel* IMPERFECT with *waw*)

See Special Topic: Anointing in the Bible at Num. 3:3.

From Exod. 29:10-14 and Lev. 8:15, which record the consecration of Aaron and his sons, part of the procedure was putting blood on the horns of the altar of sacrifice. But blood is not mentioned in this chapter and olive oil is assumed.

▣ **"all its furnishings"** See the following Special Topics:
1. The Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b
2. Altar of Incense at Num. 1:50-51b
3. Lampstand (*Monorah*) at Num. 1:50-51b
4. The Showbread of the Presence at Num. 1:50-51b
5. Laver of Bronze at Num. 1:50-51b

▣ **"the altar"** See Special Topic: The Altar of Sacrifice at Num. 1:50-51b.

7:2 "the leaders of Israel" These twelve leaders are described as

1. the heads of their fathers' households
2. the ones who were over the muster of Num. 1:2-18

7:3 "six covered carts" One cart for every two tribes. These carts were for transporting the pieces of the Tabernacle, except for the holy furniture and altar (cf. Num. 7:9), which had to be carried by poles on the shoulders of the priests.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:10-11

[10]The leaders offered the dedication *offering* for the altar when it was anointed, so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. [11]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Let them present their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

7:7-9 Here are three groups of Levites who camped around the Tabernacle and were responsible for moving it. These special gifts of carts and oxen, given by the twelve leaders of Israel, provided transportation which was needed to perform the tasks of the Levites.

7:11 Each tribe brought their identical animal sacrifices each day. Therefore, the dedication of the altar of sacrifice took twelve days.

1. burnt offering totally consumed on the altar (Num. 7:15)
2. sin offerings, partly eaten by priests (Num. 7:16)
3. peace offerings
   a. partial portion given to YHWH by fire
   b. partial portion to priests
   c. partial portion to offerer and friends

These twelve days were days of solemn assembly and festival.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:12-17

[12]Now the one who presented his offering on the first day *was* Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah; [13]and his offering *was* one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [14]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [15]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [16]one male goat for a sin offering; [17]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

7:12-88 There is a series of sacrifices here which are given by an elected representative from every tribe. The tribes are taken in order of their marching order around the Tabernacle, beginning with Judah on the east, then moving to the south, the west, and the north (cf. Num. 2:3-9). This series of sacrifices is repeated exactly for every tribe on a separate day.

7:12 "of the tribe of Judah" Judah's preeminence is shown by

1. its being listed first
2. it having the most soldiers
3. its position before the gate of the Tabernacle to the east

This all goes back to Jacob's blessing in Gen. 49:8-12, esp. v. 10. Reuben was rejected because he slept with his father's concubine (cf. Gen. 35:27). Simeon and Levi are rejected because they broke Jacob's vow and killed the men of Shechem (cf. Gen. 34:25-31).

7:13 "shekel" See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:18-23

[18]On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, presented *an offering*; [19]he presented as his offering one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [20]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [21]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [22]one male goat for a sin offering; [23]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:24-29

[24]On the third day *it was* Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the sons of Zebulun; [25]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [26]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [27]one young bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [28]one male goat for a sin offering; [29]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:30-35

[30]On the fourth day it *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the sons of Reuben; [31]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [32]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [33]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [34]one male goat for a sin offering; [35]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:36-41

[36]On the fifth day *it was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of Simeon; [37]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [38]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [39]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [40]one male goat for a sin offering; [41]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:42-47

[42]On the sixth day *it was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel, leader of the sons of Gad; [43]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels,

according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [44]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [45]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [46]one male goat for a sin offering; [47]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

7:42 "Deuel" See note at Num. 1:14. Some MSS have "Reuel," which is the "d" – "r" confusion.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:48-53

[48]On the seventh day *it was* Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the sons of Ephraim; [49]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [50]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [51]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [52]one male goat for a sin offering; [53]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:54-59

[54]On the eighth day *it was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the sons of Manasseh; [55]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [56]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [57]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [58]one male goat for a sin offering; [59]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:60-65

[60]On the ninth day *it was* Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the sons of Benjamin; [61]his offering *was* one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [62]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [63]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [64]one male goat for a sin offering; [65]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:66-71

[66]On the tenth day *it was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the sons of Dan; [67]his offering was one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [68]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [69]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [70]one male goat for a sin offering; [71]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:72-77

[72]On the eleventh day *it was* Pagiel the son of Ochran, leader of the sons of Asher; [73]his offering *was* one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [74]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [75]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [76]one male goat for a sin offering; [77]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This was the offering of Pagiel the son of Ochran.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:78-83

[78]On the twelfth day *it was* Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the sons of Naphtali; [79]his offering *was* one silver dish whose weight *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [80]one gold pan of ten *shekels*, full of incense; [81]one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old, for a burnt offering; [82]one male goat for a sin offering; [83]and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs one year old. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:84-88

[84]This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar from the leaders of Israel when it was anointed: twelve silver dishes, twelve silver bowls, twelve gold pans, [85]each silver dish *weighing* one hundred and thirty *shekels* and each bowl seventy; all the silver of the utensils *was* 2,400 *shekels*, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; [86]the twelve gold pans, full of incense, *weighing* ten *shekels* apiece, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, all the gold of the pans 120 *shekels*; [87]all the oxen for the burnt offering twelve bulls, *all* the rams twelve, the male lambs one year old with their grain offering twelve, and the male goats for a sin offering twelve; [88]and all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings 24 bulls, *all* the rams 60, the male goats 60, the male lambs one year old 60. This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar after it was anointed.

7:84-88 This is a summary of all twelve sacrifices and the amount of things given.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 7:89

[89]Now when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him.

7:89 "Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim, so He spoke to him" God symbolically dwelt between the wings of the *cherubim* over the ark of the covenant (cf. Exod. 25:21-22; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). This was God's footstool, though He, Himself, dwelt in heaven. See Special Topics: *Cherubim* at Num. 5:3, Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b, and Mercy Seat.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MERCY SEAT

This refers to the golden lid of the wooden box called "the ark of the covenant" (cf. Exod. 25:17-22; 37:6-9). It was a special place for "covering" sins (i.e., Leviticus 16). The symbolism seems to be

1. YHWH dwelt between the wings of the two angelic creatures (the rabbis said this was His footstool, cf. 1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7)
2. the ark contained the "ten words" (decalog)
3. the high priest, on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16), went into the Holy of Holies twice to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, once for his own sin and once for the non-premeditated sins of the nation as a whole (cf. Heb. 9:7)

For the NT usage of this platform for forgiveness, I have included my notes from Rom. 3:25:

NASB "as a propitiation in His blood"
NKJV "to be a propitiation by His blood"
NRSV "as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood"
TEV "so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven"
NJB "to sacrifice his life so as to win reconciliation"

In the Greco-Roman world this word carried the concept of a restoration of fellowship with an estranged deity by means of a price being paid. However, it is not used in this sense in the Septuagint. It was used in the Septuagint and in Heb. 9:5 to translate "mercy seat" (cf. Exod. 25:21-22; Lev. 16:12-15), which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant located in the Holy of Holies, the place where atonement was procured on behalf of the nation on the Day of Atonement (cf. Leviticus 16). Obviously Paul is using sacrificial metaphors from Israel's sacrificial system (i.e., Leviticus 1-7). These metaphors (i.e., propitiation, ransom, sacrifice) are understood only in connection with the OT oracles of God. Paul then must explain their relevance to all mankind. YHWH revealed Himself to Abraham/Israel to reveal Himself to all; all are in His image; all have rebelled; all can be saved through faith in Christ (Jewish Messiah).

This term must be dealt with in a way that does not lessen God's revulsion to sin, but affirms His positive, redemptive attitude toward sinners. A good discussion is found in James Stewart's *A Man in Christ*, pp. 214-224. One way to accomplish this is to translate the term so that it reflects God's work in Christ; "a propitiatory sacrifice," or "with propitiatory power."

▣ **"In His blood"** is an Hebraic way of referring to the substitutionary sacrifice of the innocent lamb of God (cf. John 1:29). To fully understand this concept Leviticus1-7 is crucial, as well as the Day of Atonement in chapter 16. Blood refers to a sinless life given on behalf of the guilty (cf. Isa. 52:13-53:12). One died for all (cf. 5:12-21)!

▣ **"Through faith**" Here again is the mechanism (cf. 1:17; 3:22,25,26,27,28,30) for anyone's and everyone's personal benefit available in Jesus' substitutionary death.

This phrase is omitted in the ancient uncial manuscript A from the 5th century (also the Greek text used by Chrysostom) and a 12th century uncial MS (2127). It is included in all other ancient Greek manuscripts. Some have the DEFINITE ARTICLE (cf. MSS P^{40}, B, C^3, D^3) with "faith" and some do not (cf. MSS א, C*, D*, F, G), however, this does not affect the meaning. The UBS^3 rates its inclusion as B (almost certain).

"to demonstrate His righteousness," God must be true to His character and His word (cf. Mal. 3:6). In the OT the soul that sins must die (cf. Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4,20). God said He would not acquit the guilty

(cf. Exod. 23:7). God's love for fallen mankind is so great He was willing to become a man, fulfill the Law, and die in fallen humanity's place (cf. Rom. 5:12-21). God's love and justice meet in Jesus (cf. Rom. 5:26).

▣ **"the voice"** This NOUN (BDB 876) means "voice" or "sound." It is often used

1. as a way of showing YHWH's will or law – Gen. 22:18; 26:5; Exod. 5:2; 15:26; 19:5; 23:21,22; Deut. 8:20; 9:23; 13:4,18; Jdgs. 1:2,20; 6:10; 1 Sam. 12:14,15; 15:1,19,20,22; Jer. 3:13,24; 7:23
2. as the sound of YHWH speaking (i.e., revealing Himself) – Exod. 19:19; 1 Kgs. 19:13; Isa. 6:8; Ezek. 10:5; Mic. 6:8
3. a theological way of asserting the non-physicalness but personality of Israel's Deity – Deut. 4:12

The rabbis later developed this into the *bath kol* (see full note online at Matt. 3:17), the way of finding God's will by a spoken voice from heaven (i.e., Jesus' baptism, Matt. 3:17; the transfiguration, Matt. 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17-18).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. This chapter is out of chronological order; where does it fit best?
2. Is there a theological difference between "anointing" and "consecrating"?
3. Why do all the tribes bring the same amount of gifts and sacrifices when they are different sizes?
4. Why does the family of Kohath not need a cart?
5. Where did the silver and gold items come from?
6. Does the peace offering imply a fellowship meal?
7. Where did YHWH dwell?

NUMBERS 8

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Offerings of the Leaders	Offerings of the Leaders	Offerings from the Tribal Leaders	The Offerings of the Leaders	Offering of Wagons
The Seven Lamps	Arrangement of the Lamps	The Consecration of the Levites	Placing the Lamps	The Lamps for the Lamp-Stand
8:1-4	8:1-4	8:1-4	8:1-4	8:1-2
				8:3-4
Cleansing the Levites	Cleansing and Dedication of the Levites		The Purification and Dedication of the Levites	The Levites Are Offered to Yahweh
8:5-13	8:5-19	8:5-13	8:5-12	8:5-11
				8:12-15a
			8:13-19	
8:14-19		8:14-19		
				8:15b-19
8:20-22	8:20-22	8:20-22	8:20-22	8:20-22
Retirement				The Duration of Their Ministry
8:23-26	8:23-26	8:23-26	8:23-26	8:23
				8:24-26

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:1-4

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you mount the lamps, the seven lamps will give light in the front of the lampstand.'" [3]Aaron therefore did so; he mounted its lamps at the front of the lampstand, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. [4]Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flowers it was hammered work; according to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

8:2-4 "When you mount the lamps" It is surprising that this detail about the lighting of the lampstand is placed just before the dedication of the Levites. They later became the teachers of the Law. This lampstand is described in detail in Exod. 35:31-40. It was made of solid gold, not wood overlaid with gold, like the other pieces of furniture. It was a seven-pronged lampstand which was meant to shed light on the Table of Showbread. See Special Topic: The Lampstand (*Menorah*) at Num. 1:50-51b.

8:4 "according to the pattern which the LORD shown Moses" There seems to be a heavenly pattern of which the earthly Tabernacle is a mere representation (cf. Exod. 25:40 and Heb. 8:5).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:5-13

[5]Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [6]"Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them. [7]Thus you shall do to them, for their cleansing: *sprinkle* purifying water on them, and let them use a razor over their whole body and wash their clothes, and they will be clean. [8]Then let them take a bull with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering. [9]So you shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, [10]and present the Levites before the LORD; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. [11]Aaron then shall present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the LORD. [12]Now the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls; then offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. [13]You shall have the Levites stand before Aaron and before his sons so as to present them as a wave offering to the LORD."

8:6 "Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them" There is a series of dedicatory sacrifices for the Levites, similar but not as intense, as those for the priests (cf. Leviticus 8). The Levites would help minister in the Tabernacle. See Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 358-371 and NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 772-777.

▣ "cleanse them"

1. Wash them in special purified water, probably from the Laver of water with the ashes of the red heifer in Numbers 19. It is called "the water of expiation."
2. Shave the entire body (see note at Num. 8:7). This would symbolize a new beginning, here, their beginning purification to serve in the Tabernacle.
3. Wash their clothes (cf. Nu. 8:21). Remember, the priests were given new clothes but the Levites just washed their clothes.

The summary of this dedicatory cleansing is Num. 8:21, but notice that the sacrifices (i.e., burnt and sin) are combined with #1 and 2.

There are several words used in this chapter to describe this cleansing and dedication of the Levites.

1. cleanse – BDB 372, KB 369, Num. 8:6,7 (twice), 15,21
2. wash – BDB 460, KB 459, Num. 8:21
3. purify – BDB 306, KB 305, Num. 8:21

8:7 "use a razor over their whole body" This is another instance which reflects the Egyptian culture. Egyptian priests were completely shaven (i.e., Herodotus, 2.37), but here only as an initiatory rite.

8:8 The dedication of the Levites for service in the Tabernacle required

1. a burnt offering – a bull (Levites laid their hands on its head, Num. 8:12)
2. a sin offering – a bull (Levites laid their hands on its head, Num. 8:12)

to make atonement (BDB 497, KB 493, cf. Num. 8:12,21). See Special Topic: Atonement at Num. 5:7b.

8:9 All Israel was involved in the dedication of the Levites.

1. general assembly at the Tabernacle, Num. 8:9
2. laying hands on their heads (probably by means of their leaders, this symbolized the Levites taking the place of Israel's firstborn children), Num. 8:10, see Special Topic: Laying On of Hands in the Bible
3. Aaron offers the Levites as a wave offering from the assembly to YHWH, Num. 8:11,13,15

SPECIAL TOPIC: LAYING ON OF HANDS IN THE BIBLE

This gesture of personal involvement is used in several different ways in the Bible.

1. oath taking (i.e., hand under thigh, cf. Gen. 24:2,9; 47:29)
2. passing on the family leadership (cf. Gen. 48:14,17,18)
3. identifying with the death of a sacrificial animal as a substitute
   a. priests (cf. Exod. 29:10,15,19; Lev. 16:21; Num. 8:12)
   b. laypersons (cf. Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8; 4:4,15,24; 2 Chr. 29:23)
4. setting persons aside to serve God in a special task or ministry (cf. Num. 8:10; 27:18,23; Deut. 34:9; Acts 6:6; 13:3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6)
5. participating in the judicial stoning of a sinner (cf. Lev. 24:14)
6. the hand on one's mouth denotes silence or acquiescence (cf. Jdgs. 18:19; Job 21:5; 29:9; 40:4; Micah 7:16)
7. the hand on one's own head means sorrow/grief (2 Sam. 13:19)
8. receiving a blessing for health, happiness, and godliness (cf. Matt. 19:13,15; Mark 10:16)
9. relating to physical healing (cf. Matt. 8:3; 9:18,20; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 8:23; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:17; 28:8)
10. receiving the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 8:17-19; 9:17; 19:6, note Deut. 34:9)

There is a surprising lack of uniformity in the passages that have been historically used to support the ecclesiastical installation of leaders (i.e., ordination, see Special Topic: Ordination).

1. In Acts 6:6 it is the Apostles who lay hands on the seven for local ministry.
2. In Acts 13:3 it is the prophets and teachers who lay hands on Barnabas and Paul for missionary service.
3. In 1 Tim. 4:14 it is the local elders who were involved in Timothy's initial call and installation.
4. In 2 Tim. 1:6 it is Paul who lays hands on Timothy.

This diversity and ambiguity illustrate the lack of organization in the first century church. The early church was much more dynamic and regularly used the spiritual gifts of believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 12 and 14). The NT is simply not written to advocate or delineate a governmental model (see the variety in Acts 15) or ordinational procedure. Church organizational traditions are necessary but not biblical. The godliness of the leadership is far more important then the form of the leadership (i.e., polity).

8:11 "shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering" In Num. 5:25; 6:20 a grain offering is "waved" before the Lord (see notes there), but here

1. it is metaphorical (BDB 632 I, *Hiphil* #4)
2. it is a different root, possibly Akkadian, "to offer" (see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 64, #2)

It was surely a sign that the Levites belonged to YHWH and were a "gift" to Aaron and the priests (Num. 8:19); Num. 3:9.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:14-19

[14]"Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. [15]Then after that the Levites may go in to serve the tent of meeting. But you shall cleanse them and present them as a wave offering; [16]for they are wholly given to Me from among the sons of Israel. I have taken them for Myself instead of every first issue of the womb, the firstborn of all the sons of Israel. [17]For every firstborn among the sons of Israel is Mine, among the men and among the animals;

on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for Myself. [18]But I have taken the Levites instead of every firstborn among the sons of Israel. [19]I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, to perform the service of the sons of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on behalf of the sons of Israel, so that there will be no plague among the sons of Israel by their coming near to the sanctuary."

8:14-19 The Levites took the place of the firstborn of Israel (cf. Exodus 12-13). See full note at Num. 3:12. The Levites did the hard work of the Tabernacle (i.e., transportation, supplying, and cleaning).

▣ **"that there will be no plague among the sons of Israel by their coming near to the sanctuary"** Plagues were often involved in breaking of the holiness of the Tabernacle (cf. Num. 1:53). The Levites were to guard the sanctity of the Tabernacle area.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:20-22

[20]Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the sons of Israel to the Levites; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the sons of Israel did to them. [21]The Levites, too, purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes; and Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the LORD. Aaron also made atonement for them to cleanse them. [22]Then after that the Levites went in to perform their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons; just as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

8:20 Israel's obedience to YHWH's commands is emphasized again and again (note Num. 1:54; 2:34; 3:16,51; 4:49; 5:4; 8:20; 9:5,23; 10:13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 8:23-26

[23]Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [24]"This is what *applies* to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. [25]But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more. [26]They may, however, assist their brothers in the tent of meeting, to keep an obligation, but they *themselves* shall do no work. Thus you shall deal with the Levites concerning their obligations."

8:24-25 "from twenty-five years old and upward" The Levites were to serve from the age of twenty-five to fifty. However, when one compares this with chapter 4, we see the age of thirty to fifty mentioned there. The only way to reconcile the difference in these ages is to accept the opinion of the rabbis that the Levites served a five-year apprenticeship before actually performing their tasks alone.

8:25 "at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more" They could help at certain times (i.e., annual festivals, special events, Num. 8:26), but they could not help with the hard labor which was required.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How is the dedication of the Levites in this chapter different from the dedication of Aaron and the priests in Leviticus 8-9?
2. Why does a paragraph about the lampstand begin this context?
3. How could Num. 8:10 have happened with so many people involved?
4. What was a "wave" offering?
5. How does this chapter relate to Exodus 12-13?
6. Why do the ages of Levites differ between Num. 8:24-25 and Num. 4:3?

NUMBERS 9

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Passover	The Second Passover	Other Events and Instructions (9:1-10:10)	The Second Passover	Date of the Passover
9:1-8	9:1-8	9:1-8	9:1-5	9:1
				9:2-3
				9:4-5
				Individual Cases
			9:6-7	9:6-8
			9:8	
9:9-14	9:9-14	9:9-14	9:9-13	9:9-13
			9:14	9:14
The Cloud On the Tabernacle	The Cloud and the Fire		The Fiery Cloud	The Cloud
9:15-23	9:15-23	9:15-23	9:15-23	9:15-16
				9:17-23

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:1-8

[1]Thus the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, [2]"Now, let the sons of Israel observe the Passover at its appointed time. [3]On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall observe it at its appointed time; you shall observe it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances." [4]So Moses told the sons of Israel to observe the Passover. [5]They observed the Passover in the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the sons of Israel did. [6]But there were *some* men who were unclean because of *the* dead person, so that they could not observe Passover on that day; so they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. [7]Those men said to him, "*Though* we are unclean because of *the* dead person, why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the sons of Israel?" [8]Moses therefore said to them, "Wait, and I will listen to what the LORD will command concerning you."

9:1 "in the wilderness of Sinai" See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b and Special Topic: The Location of Mt. Sinai at Num. 1:1-3.

▣ **"the first month of the second year"** They are going to observe their second Passover (see Special Topic: The Passover). It is described in detail in Exodus 12. It mentions that they will celebrate it in exactly

the same way, however, one wonders how they did this because they were living in tents at this time. See Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Num. 1:1d.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PASSOVER

I. Opening Statements
   A. The divine act of judgment of Egyptians and deliverance for Israel is the touchstone for YHWH's love and establishment of Israel as a nation (i.e., esp. for the Prophets).
   B. The exodus is a specific fulfillment of YHWH's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:12-21. The Passover commemorates the exodus.
   C. This is the last, most pervasive (geographically, i.e, Egypt and Goshen) and devastating (first born of humans and cattle killed) of the ten plagues sent by YHWH on Egypt through Moses.

II. The Term Itself (BDB 820, KB 947)
   A. Meaning of NOUN is uncertain
      1. connected to "plague," thereby "to strike a blow" (i.e., Exod. 11:1); YHWH's angel strikes the firstborn of humans and cattle
   B. Meaning of VERB
      1. "to limp" or "to hobble" (cf. 2 Sam. 4:4), used in sense of "jump over the marked homes" (i.e., Exod. 12:13,23,27, BDB 619, a popular etymology)
      2. "to dance" (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:21)
      3. Akkadian – "to appease"
      4. Egyptian – "to strike"
      5. parallel VERBS in Isa. 31:5, "to stand guard over" (cf. REB of Exod. 12:13)
      6. early Christian popular sound play between Hebrew *pasah* to Greek *paschō*, "to suffer"
   C. Possible historical precedents
      1. shepherd sacrifice for a new year
      2. Bedouin sacrifice and communal meal at the time of moving tents to spring pasture to ward off evil
      3. sacrifice to ward off evil from nomadic people
   D. The reasons it is so hard to not only be sure of the meaning of the word itself, but also its origins is that so many varied features of the Passover are also found in other ancient rituals.
      1. spring date
      2. etymology of NOUN uncertain
      3. connected to night watchings
      4. use of blood
      5. imagery of angels/demons
      6. special meal
      7. agricultural elements (unleavened bread)
      8. no priests, no altar, local focus

III. The Event
   A. The event itself is recorded in Exodus 11-12.
   B. The annual feast is described in Exodus 12 and is combined into an eight day festival with the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

1. originally it was a local event, cf. Exod. 12:21-23; Deut. 16:5 (cf. Numbers 9)
    a. no priest
    b. no special altar
    c. specialized uses of blood
2. it became an event at the central shrine
3. this combination of a local sacrifice (i.e., lamb's blood to commemorate the passing over of the death angel) and a harvest feast at the central sanctuary was accomplished by the close proximity of dates *Abib* or *Nisan* 14 and 15-21

C. The symbolic ownership of all of the firstborn of humans and cattle and their redemption is described in Exodus 13.

IV. Historical Accounts of Its Observance

A. the first Passover celebrated in Egypt, Exodus 12
B. at Mt. Horeb/Sinai, Numbers 9
C. the first Passover celebrated in Canaan (Gilgal), Jos. 5:10-12
D. at the time of Solomon's dedication of the temple, 1 Kgs. 9:25 and 2 Chr. 8:12 (probably, but not specifically stated)
E. the one during Hezekiah's reign, 2 Chronicles 30
F. the one during Josiah's reforms, 2 Kgs. 23:21-23; 2 Chr. 35:1-18
G. Notice 2 Kgs. 23:22 and 2 Chr. 35:18 mention Israel's neglect in keeping this annual feast

V. The Significance

A. This is one of three required annual feast days (cf. Exod. 23:14-17; 34:22-24; Deut. 16:16):
    1. Passover/Unleavened Bread
    2. Feast of Weeks
    3. Feast of Booths
B. Moses foreshadows the day it will be observed at the central sanctuary (as were the other two feasts) in Deuteronomy.
C. Jesus used the occasion of the annual Passover meal (or the day before) to reveal the New Covenant in the symbol of bread and wine, but did not use the lamb:
    1. communal meal
    2. redemptive sacrifice
    3. ongoing significance to later generations

9:2 "let the sons of Israel observe" Literally this is "do" (BDB 793, KB 889), which occurs often in Num. 9:2-5. Here, it is a *Qal* IMPERFECT but used in a JUSSIVE sense. This may also be true of the two *Qal* IMPERFECTS in 9:3.

▣ **"Passover"** The Passover feast described in Lev. 23:5-6 had become an eight-day feast as it was combined with the seven-day feast of Unleavened Bread.

9:3 "at twilight" Literally this is "between the evenings," cf. Num. 9:5,11. There has been much discussion about this difficult Hebrew phrase (i.e., Exod. 12:6). The Jews seem to interpret it as being sometime between the heat and cool of the day. That is why they offered the evening sacrifice in the Temple at 3 p.m. Others assume it is between sunset and dark, while still others believe it is from the moment the sun begins

to go below the horizon until it goes completely behind the horizon (cf. Deut. 16:6). For the Hebrews twilight was the beginning of a new day (cf. Genesis 1).

▣ **"statutes. . .ordinances"** See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation.

SPECIAL TOPIC: TERMS FOR GOD'S REVELATION (USING DEUTERONOMY AND PSALMS)

I. "Statutes," BDB 349, "an enactment, decree, or ordinance"

A. Masculine, חק, KB 346 – Deut. 4:1,5,6,8,14,40,45; 5:1; 6:1,24; 7:11; 11:32; 16:12; 17:19; 26:17; 27:10; Ps. 2:7; 50:16; 81:4; 99:7; 105:10,45; 148:6

B. Feminine, חקה, KB 347 – Deut. 6:2; 8:11; 10:13; 11:1; 28:15,45; 30:10,16; Ps. 89:31; 119:5, 8,12, 16,23,26,33, 48, 54,64, 68, 71,80,83,112,124,135, 145,155,171

II. "Law," BDB 435, KB 1710, "instruction"

– Deut. 1:5; 4:44; 17:11,18,19; 27:3,8,26; 28:58,61; 29:21,29; 30:10; 31:9; Ps. 1:2; 19:7; 78:10; 94:12; 105:45; 119:1,18, 29,34,44,51,53,55,61,70,72,77,85,92,97,109,113,126,136,142, 150,153,163,165,174

III. "Testimonies," BDB 730, KB 790, "divine laws"

A. PLURAL, עדה – Deut. 4:45; 6:17,20; Ps. 25:10; 78:56; 93:5; 99:7; 119:22,24, 46,59,79,95,119, 125, 138,146,152,167,168

B. עדות or עדת – Ps. 19:7; 78:5; 81:5; 119:2,14,31,36,88,99,111,129,144,157

IV. "Precepts," BDB 824, KB 959, "a charge"

– Ps. 19:8; 103:18; 111:7; 119:4,15,27,40,45,56,63,69,78, 87,93, 94,100,104,110, 128,134,141,159,168,173

V. "Commandments," BDB 846, KB 622

– Deut. 4:2,40; 5:29; 6:1,2,17,25; 8:1,2,11; 10:13; 11:13; 15:5; 26:13, 17; 30:11,16; Ps. 19:8; 119:6,10,19,21,32, 35,47,48,60, 66,73,86,96,98,115,127,131,143,151, 166,176

VI. "Judgments/ordinances," BDB 1048, KB651, "rulings" or "justice"

– Deut. 1:17; 4:1,5,8,14,45; 7:12; 16:18; 30:16; 33:10,21; Ps. 10:5; 18:22; 19:19; 48:11; 89:30; 97:8; 105:5,7; 119:7,13, 20,30, 39, 43,52,62,75,84,102,106,120,137,149,156,160,164; 147:19; 149:9

VII. "His ways," BDB 202, KB 231, YHWH's guidelines for His people's lifestyle

– Deut. 8:6; 10:12; 11:22,28; 19:9; 26:17; 28:9; 30:16; 32:4; Ps. 119:3, 5,37,59

VIII. "His words"

A. BDB 182, KB 211 – Deut. 4:10,12,36; 9:10; 10:4; Ps. 119:9,16,17,25, 28,42, 43,49, 57,65,74,81,89, 101,105,107,114,130,139, 147,160,161,169

B. BDB 57, KB 67

1. "word" – Deut. 33:9; Ps. 119:11,67,103,162,170,172
2. "promise" – Ps. 119:38,41,50,58,76,82,116,133,140,148,154

3. "command" – Ps. 119:158

All of these refer to God's special revelation of Himself to Israel. They are basically synonymous. See Special Topic: Inspiration.

9:6-14 Some of the men came to Moses to ask what those who were ceremonially unclean could do to fulfill the Passover requirements. This question would also apply to later periods when some Israelites would be (1) in exile or (2) too far away from the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. It is interesting that God makes an exception for these cases and allows them to fulfill the Passover exactly one month later (compare Num. 9:1 with 9:11).

9:8 "Wait, and I will listen to what the LORD will command concerning you" This is a very important passage because we realize that Moses was not just giving his opinion but was seeking YHWH's instructions related to all of these laws. Therefore, these laws are divine revelation, not the opinion of Moses.

"Wait" is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE (BDB 763, KB 840), followed by "listen," which is a *Qal* COHORTATIVE (BDB 1033, KB 1570). YHWH answers this specific question by the *Piel* IMPERATIVE, "speak" (BDB 180, KB 210) in Num. 9:10.

YHWH was willing to make exceptions for human need!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:9-14

[9]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [10]"Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If any one of you or of your generations becomes unclean because of a *dead* person, or is on a distant journey, he may, however, observe the Passover to the LORD. [11]In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall observe it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. [12]They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it. [13]But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and yet neglects to observe the Passover, that person shall then be cut off from his people, for he did not present the offering of the LORD at its appointed time. That man will bear his sin. [14]If an alien sojourns among you and observes the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its ordinance, so he shall do; you shall have one statute, both for the alien and for the native of the land.'"

9:10 Here are the two groups of people who would be excused from the Passover but must observe it a month later. Notice that in Num. 9:14 even the alien in the land must observe the Passover, just like the Jewish people. This shows that Israel had the right to legislate the religious practices of people within her borders. There was only one standard (Num. 9:14).

9:13 "cut off from his people" See note at ??

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 9:15-23

[15]Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. [16]So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night. [17]Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would then set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. [18]At the command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped. [19]Even when the cloud lingered

over the tabernacle for many days, the sons of Israel would keep the LORD's charge and not set out. [20]If sometimes the cloud remained a few days over the tabernacle, according to the command of the LORD they remained camped. Then according to the command of the LORD they set out. [21]If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or *if it remained* in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. [22]Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out. [23]At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD's charge, according to the command of the LORD through Moses.

9:15-23 This discusses the *shekinah* cloud (BDB 777; NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1052-1055), which led the children of Israel during the wilderness wandering period. It stayed over the ark of the covenant above the Tabernacle as a visible sign of YHWH's presence, cf. Exod. 13:21.

The cloud was a camp light by night and a protection from the sun by day. Once the Israelites crossed the Jordan under Joshua, the cloud dissipated and reappeared at special events (cf. 1 Kings 8).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Notice the date of Num. 1:1 and 9:1 vs. 10:11. Does this denote a new section of Numbers?
2. What does "at twilight" mean? Why was it the time for the Passover?
3. How does Num. 9:10 reflect a later period?
4. How does Num. 9:11 show YHWH's compassion?
5. How did the cloud reflect YHWH's leadership?

NUMBERS 10

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Silver Trumpets	The Silver Trumpets	Other Events and Instructions (9:1-10:10)	The Silver Trumpets	The Trumpets
10:1-10	10:1-10	10:1-10	10:1-8a	10:1-4
				10:5-8
			10:8b-10	
				10:9-10
The Tribes Leave Sinai	Departure From Sinai	Israel on the March	The Israelites Break Camp	The Order of March
10:11-16	10:11-13	10:11-16	10:11-12	10:11-12
			10:13-16	10:13-16
	10:14-17			
10:17-20		10:17-20	10:17	10:17
	10:18-21		10:18-20	10:18-20
10:21-24		10:21-24	10:21	10:21
	10:22-24		10:22-24	10:22-24
10:25-28	10:25-28	10:25-28	10:25-28	10:25-27
				10:28
				Moses' Proposal to Hobab
10:29-32	10:29-32	10:29-32	10:29	10:29-32
			10:30	
			10:31-32	
			The People Set Out	The Departure
10:33-34	10:33-36	10:33-34	10:33-34	10:33
				10:34-35 (35b)
10:35-36 (35b) (36b)		10:35-36 (35b) (36b)	10:35-36	
				10:36 (36b)

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:1-10

[1]The LORD spoke further to Moses, saying, [2]"Make yourself two trumpets of silver, of hammered work you shall make them; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for having the camps set out. [3]When both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the doorway of the tent of meeting. [4]Yet if *only* one is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall assemble before you. [5]But when you blow an alarm, the camps that are pitched on the east side shall set out. [6]When you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are pitched on the south side shall set out; an alarm is to be blown for them to set out. [7]When convening the assembly, however, you shall blow without sounding an alarm. [8]The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations. [9]When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies. [10]Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first *days* of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

10:2 "two trumpets of silver" We find the same kind of trumpets in Egypt. This proves the historicity of this account. The marching order of the Hebrew tribes, the wheeled ox-carts, the silver trumpets, and the shaving of the entire bodies of the priests are all elements of Egyptian culture (see Intro. to Numbers). From Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* 3.12.6; and from Arch of Titus we learn that these silver trumpets were straight in shape with a flared end and were about eighteen inches long.

These trumpets had several functions.

1. When both were blown together it signaled Israel to meet at the tent of meeting, Num. 10:2,3.
2. When only one was blown, the leaders gathered at the tent of meeting, Num. 10:4.
3. When they were blown the whole camp was to move out, Num. 10:2,5-6.
4. When they are blown it was time to prepare for battle, Num. 10:7,9.
5. They were blown at the beginning of feast days, Num. 10:10.

Remember that the camp of Israel was designed in the same way as Rameses II's army, so Israel was organized as an army and marched as an army.

There is Jewish tradition (Mishnah) that the silver trumpets were blown, not only one or two of them, but with different sounds.

1. a long blast
2. three different notes

See Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel. Josephus described the silver trumpets in *Antiq*. 3.12.6.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HORNS USED BY ISRAEL

There are four words in Hebrew associated with horns/trumpets:

1. "the ram's horn" (BDB 901, KB 1144)) – used as a wind instrument, cf. Jos. 6:5. This same word is used for the ram caught by his horns which Abraham substituted for Isaac in Gen. 22:13.
2. "trumpet" (BDB 1051) – from Assyrian term for wild sheep (ibex). This is the horn that was used in Exod 19:16,19 at Mt. Sinai/Horeb. #1 and #2 are parallel in Jos. 6:5. It was used to communicate
   a. times to worship (cf. Lev. 25:9)

b. times to fight (i.e., Jericho was both, cf. Jos. 6:4; Jdgs. 3:27; 6:34; 1 Sam. 13:3; Jer. 4:5; Hos. 5:8).
c. anointing a new king, 1 Kgs. 1:34,39
d. blown by God, Zech. 9:14

3. "ram's horn" (BDB 385, KB 398) – from Phoenician word for Ram (cf. Jos. 6:4,6,8,13). It also stands for the Year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25:13,28,40,50,52,54; 27:17,18,23,24).

These first three seem interchangeable with no distinction intended. The Mishnah (RH 3.2) allowed animal horns from sheep, goats, or antelope, but not from a cow.

4. "trumpets" (BDB 348, KB 344) – possibly from the VERB "stretch out," implying a straight bone (not curved as the animal horns). These were made of silver (after the shape and form of Egypt). These are used:
a. with worship rites (cf. Num. 10:2,8,10; Ezra 3:10; Neh. 12:35,41)
b. for military purposes (cf. Num. 10:9; 31:6; Hosea 5:8)
c. for royal purposes (cf. 2 Kgs. 11:14)

One of these metal horns is depicted on the Arch of Titus in Rome; also Josephus describes them in *Antiq*. 3.12.6.

10:5

NASB, NRSV	**"blow an alarm"**
NKJV	**"sound of the advance"**
TEV, JPSOA	**"short blasts"**
NJB	**"trumpet blast is accompanied by a battle cry"**
REB	**"a fanfare is sounded"**
LXX	**"trumpet a signal"**

This Hebrew term (BDB 929) can mean
1. a shout
2. a war cry (cf. Num. 10:9; 31:6; Josh. 6:5,20)
3. an alarm
4. a blast for march
5. a shout for joy

The exact differentiation between the signals the trumpets gave is uncertain (JPSOA footnote).

10:6 The MT does not list all the tribes but the LXX does.

10:8 "a perpetual statute" Notice its usage in Exod. 12:14,17; Lev. 3:17; 7:36. See Special Topic: Forever (*'olam*) and Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Num. 9:3b.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FOREVER (*'olam)*

The etymology of the Hebrew term *'olam*, עולם (BDB 761, KB 798) is uncertain (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 345). It is used in several senses (usually determined by context). The following are only selected examples.

1. ancient things
a. peoples, Gen. 6:4; 1 Sam. 27:8; Jer. 5:15; 28:8

b. places, Isa. 58:12; 61:4
c. God, Ps. 93:2; Pro. 8:23; Isa. 63:16
d. things, Gen. 49:26; Job 22:15; Ps. 24:7,9; Isa. 46:9
e. time, Deut. 32:7; Isa. 51:9; 63:9,11

2. future time
   a. one's life, Exod. 21:6; Deut. 15:17; 1 Sam. 1:22; 27:12
   b. hyperbole respect for a king, 1 Kgs. 1:31; Ps. 61:7; Neh. 2:3
   c. continuous existence
      (1) earth, Ps. 78:69; 104:5; Eccl. 1:4
      (2) heavens, Ps. 148:5
   d. existence of God
      (1) Gen. 21:33
      (2) Exod. 15:18
      (3) Deut. 32:40
      (4) Ps. 93:2
      (5) Isa. 40:28
      (6) Jer. 10:10
      (7) Dan. 12:7
   e. the covenant
      (1) Gen. 9:12,16; 17:7,13,19
      (2) Exod. 31:16
      (3) Lev. 24:8
      (4) Num. 18:19
      (5) 2 Sam. 23:5
      (6) Ps. 105:10
      (7) Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8
      (8) Jer. 32:40; 50:5
   f. special covenant with David
      (1) 2 Sam. 7:13,16,25,29; 22:51; 23:5
      (2) 1 Kgs. 2:33,45; 9:5
      (3) 2 Chr. 13:5
      (4) Ps. 18:50; 89:4,28,36,37
      (5) Isa. 9:7; 55:3
   g. God's Messiah
      (1) Ps. 45:2; 72:17; 89:35-36; 110:4
      (2) Isa. 9:6
   h. God's laws
      (1) Exod. 29:28; 30:21
      (2) Lev. 6:18,22; 7:34; 10:15; 24:9
      (3) Num. 18:8,11,19
      (4) Ps. 119:89,160

i. God's promises
   (1) 2 Sam. 7:13,16,25; 22:51
   (2) 1 Kgs. 9:5
   (3) Ps. 18:50
   (4) Isa. 40:8

j. Abraham's descendants and the Promised Land
   (1) Gen. 13:15; 17:19; 48:4
   (2) Exod. 32:13
   (3) 1 Chr. 16:17

k. covenantal feasts
   (1) Exod. 12:14,17,24
   (2) Lev. 23:14,21,41
   (3) Num. 10:8

l. eternity, everlasting
   (1) 1 Kgs. 8:13
   (2) Ps. 61:7-8; 77:8; 90:2; 103:17; 145:13
   (3) Isa. 26:4; 45:17
   (4) Dan. 9:24

m. what the Psalms say believers will do forever
   (1) give thanks, Ps. 30:12; 79:13
   (2) abide in His presence, Ps. 41:12; 61:4,7
   (3) trust in His mercy, Ps. 52:8
   (4) praise the LORD, Ps. 52:9
   (5) sing praises, Ps. 61:8; 89:1
   (6) declare His justice, Ps. 75:7-9
   (7) glorify His name, Ps. 86:12; 145:2
   (8) bless His name, Ps. 145:1

n. used in Isaiah to describe the new age
   (1) everlasting covenant, Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8
   (2) YHWH an everlasting Rock, Isa. 26:4
   (3) everlasting joy, Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 61:7
   (4) the Everlasting God, Isa. 40:28
   (5) an everlasting salvation, Isa. 45:17
   (6) everlasting lovingkindness (*Hesed*), Isa. 54:8
   (7) everlasting sign, Isa. 55:13
   (8) an everlasting name, Isa. 56:5; 63:12,16
   (9) an everlasting light, Isa. 60:19,20

   A negative-oriented use related to the eternal punishment of the wicked is found in Isa. 33:14, "an everlasting burning." Isaiah often uses "fire" to describe God's wrath (cf. Isa. 9:18,19; 10:16; 47:14), but only in Isa. 33:14 is it described as "everlasting."

3. both backward and forward in time ("from everlasting to everlasting")
    a. Ps. 41:13 (praise to God)
    b. Ps. 90:2 (God Himself)
    c. Ps. 103:17 (the lovingkindness of the LORD)

Remember, context determines the extent of the term's meaning. The everlasting covenants and promises are conditional (i.e., Jeremiah 7; see Special Topic: Covenant). Be careful of reading your modern view of time or your NT systematic theology into every OT usage of this very fluid word. Remember, the NT universalized OT promises (see Special Topic: OT Predictions of the Future vs. NT Predictions).

10:9 "be saved from your enemies" See Special Topic: Salvation (OT).

SPECIAL TOPIC: SALVATION (OT Term)

This term (BDB 447, KB 446, both a MASCULINE and FEMININE NOUN) which basically means "to be wide and spacious" or "to be free," has several connotations.

1. safety, 2 Sam. 22:3; Job 5:11; Ps. 12:5
2. welfare, prosperity, Job 30:15
3. divine salvation which encompasses both physical and spiritual deliverance
    a. Gen. 49:18
    b. Deut. 32:15
    c. 2 Sam. 23:5
    d. Ps. 3:2,8; 22:1; 35:3; 62:2; 69:29; 70:5; 78:22; 80:3; 89:26; 91:16; 106:4; 140:7
    e. Isa. 12:2; 33:2; 51:6,8; 52:7,10; 56:1; 59:11; 60:18; 62:1,11
4. the idea of both physical and spiritual deliverance is clearly present in Jonah 2:9-10
5. victory, Exod. 14:30; 15:2; 1 Sam. 14:45; Ps. 20:6; 21:5; 44:4-5; 68:19-20; 118:14,15,21; Isa. 12:2; Hab. 3:8
6. often "rejoicing" is related to YHWH's salvation, 1 Sam. 2:1; Isa. 25:9; 26:1; Ps. 9:14; 13:5; 21:1; 35:9; 118:15,21

Salvation involves the implementation of YHWH's original intended fellowship and society with His human creatures. It involves individual and societal wholeness!

10:10 "I am the LORD your God" This is covenant language. For "Lord" see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D. at Num. 1:1. For "God" see Special Topic: Names for Deity, C.

There is no VERB in this phrase, just the FIRST PERSON PRONOUN and two NOUNS (BDB 43 and 217).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:11-16

[11]Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; [12]and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. [13]So they moved out for the first time according to the commandment of the LORD through Moses. [14]The standard of the camp of the sons of Judah, according to their armies, set out first, with Nahshon the son of Amminadab, over its army, [15]and Nethanel the son of Zuar, over the tribal army of the sons of Issachar; [16]and Eliab the son of Helon over the tribal army of the sons of Zebulun.

10:11-21:35 A new literary unit which covers 38 years begins here.

1. Israel leaves Mt. Sinai and moves to Kadesh, Num. 10:11-12:16
2. Israel at Kadesh, Num. 13:1-20:13
3. Israel leaves Kadesh for the plains of Moab, Num. 20:14-21:35

10:11 "the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month" This is a very specific date. This would be nineteen days after the census of Num. 1:1.

The specificity is evidence of the historicity of the account. See Special Topics:

1. The OT As History at Intro. to Numbers, VIII. A.
2. OT Historiography Compared with Near Eastern Cultures at Intro. to Numbers, VIII. A.
3. OT Historical Narrative at Intro. to Numbers, VIII. A.

▣ **"the cloud"** This special physical symbol of YHWH's presence (cf. Num. 10:34) is described in Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19-28; 24:15-18; 40:34-5; Num. 9:15-22 (see the notes at these verses online). See Special Topic: Coming On the Clouds.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COMING ON THE CLOUDS
(Several Hebrew words but mostly "*anan*," BDB 777, KB 857)

This coming on the clouds was a very significant eschatological sign. It was used in three distinct ways in the OT.

1. to show God's physical presence, the *shekinah* cloud of Glory (cf. Exod. 13:21; 14:19,20,24; 16:10; 19:9; Num. 11:25; Neh. 9:19)
2. to cover His Holiness so that man would not see Him and die (cf. Exod. 33:20; Isa. 6:5)
3. to transport Deity (cf. Ps. 18:9; 104:3; Isa. 19:1; Nah. 1:3; Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:17)

In Daniel 7:13 clouds were used as the transportation of the divine, human Messiah (see Special Topic: Messiah). This prophecy in Daniel is alluded to over 30 times in the NT. This same connection of the Messiah with the clouds of heaven can be seen in Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9,11; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7.

▣ At the end of Num. 10:11 in the MT, the Samaritan Pentateuch inserts a text from Deut. 1:6-8.

10:12 "wilderness of Sinai. . .wilderness of Paran" See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b and Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai at Num. 1:1-3. The oasis of Kadesh-Barnea was in the wilderness of Paran.

10:13 "according to the commandment of the LORD" This theme of Israel's obedience is recurrent in Numbers (cf. Num. 1:54; 2:34; 5:4; 9:5,23; 10:13).

10:14 "the standard of the camp" See full note at Num. 2:2. Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 226, thinks this denotes a division of the army and not a banner.

▣ **"the sons of Judah"** This tribe moves out first in front as a way to show its preeminence.

1. because of the prophecy of Gen. 49:10
2. because of the sins of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi
3. because of the size of the tribe

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:17-20

[17]Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who were carrying the tabernacle, set out. [18]Next the standard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies, set out with Elizur the son of Shedeur, over its army, [19]and Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai over the tribal army of the sons of Simeon, [20]and Eliasaph the son of Deuel was over the tribal army of the sons of Gad.

10:17 "the tabernacle was taken down" See full note at Numbers 4. The priests packed it and the Levities carried it.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:21-24

[21]Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy *objects*; and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival. [22]Next the standard of the camp of the sons of Ephraim, according to their armies, was set out, with Elishama the son of Ammihud over its army, [23]and Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur over the tribal army of the sons of Manasseh; [24]and Abidan the son of Gideoni over the tribal army of the sons of Benjamin.

10:21

NASB, REB	**"the holy *objects*"**
NKJV, NRSV, LXX	**"the holy things"**
TEV, JPSOA	**"the sacred objects"**
NJB, Peshitta	**"the sanctuary'**

The UBS Text Project, p. 222, says "the sanctuary" (BDB 874) has an "A" rating (i.e. high probability). But, in its clarifying note it asserts that it refers to the tabernacle furnishing in this context.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:25-28

[25]Then the standard of the camp of the sons of Dan, according to their armies, *which formed* the rear guard for all the camps, set out, with Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai over its army, [26]and Pagiel the son of Ochran over the tribal army of the sons of Asher; [27]and Ahira the son of Enan over the tribal army of the sons of Naphtali. [28]This was the order of march of the sons of Israel by their armies as they set out.

10:25 "the rear guard" The tribe of Dan was the last. It formed a military unit known as "the rear guard." While Israel traveled through the wildernesses she had to always be on guard for attack. Her camp and marching order were designed after Rameses II's army camp. Moses was trained in Egypt's military schools.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:29-32

[29]Then Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out to the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you'; come with us and we will do you good, for the LORD has promised good concerning Israel." [30]But he said to him, "I will not come, but rather will go to my *own* land and relatives." [31]Then he said, "Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will be as eyes for us. [32]So it will be, if you go with us, that whatever good the LORD does for us, we will do for you."

10:29 "Hobab the son of Reuel" See full note on this man online at Exodus 18. He is known by several names.

1. Jether – Exod. 4:18
2. Ruel – Exod. 2:18 (Num. 10:29)
3. Hobab – Num. 10:29; Jdgs. 4:11
4. Jethro – Exod. 18:1

See a good brief note in the NET Bible, p. 297.

Several groups joined Israel in their journey to Canaan.

1. Moses' father-in-law (Midianite or Kenite) – Num. 10:29-32
2. a mixed multitude – Exod. 12:38
3. the rabble (possibly the same as #2) – Num. 4:1

10:31 Moses pleads with this father-in-law to change his mind and come with Israel to the land of Canaan (the IMPERFECT of Num. 10:31 is used in a JUSSIVE sense).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:33-34

[33]Thus they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD journeying in front of them for the three days, to seek out a resting place for them. [34]The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

10:33 "the mount of the LORD" This refers to

1. Mt. Sinai
2. Mt. Horeb

In later passages this descriptive title is used for Mt. Zion, which is a collective term for Jerusalem and especially Mt. Moriah, the site of the Temple.

▣ **"the ark of the covenant"** See Special Topics: Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b and Covenant.

The ark was normally in the Holy of Holies within the inner shrine, but when Israel traveled it was taken to the front! YHWH went before His people in guidance and protection.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

The OT term *berith* (BDB 136, BDB 157), "covenant," is not easy to define. There is no matching VERB in Hebrew. All attempts to derive an etymological or cognate definition have proved unconvincing. Possibly the best guess is "to cut" (BDB 144), denoting the animal sacrifice that accompanied covenants (cf. Gen. 15:10,17). However, the obvious centrality of the concept has forced scholars to examine the word's usage in an attempt to determine its functional meaning.

Covenant is the means by which the one true God (see Special Topic: Monotheism) deals with His human creation. The concept of covenant, treaty, or agreement is crucial in understanding the biblical revelation. The tension between God's sovereignty and human free-will is clearly seen in the concept of covenant. Some covenants are based exclusively on God's character and actions.

1. creation itself (cf. Genesis 1-2)
2. the preservation and promise to Noah (cf. Genesis 6-9)
3. the call of Abraham (cf. Genesis 12)
4. the covenant with Abraham (cf. Genesis 15)

However, the very nature of covenant demands a response.

1. by faith Adam must obey God and not eat of the tree in the midst of Eden
2. by faith Noah must build a huge boat far from water and gather the animals
3. by faith Abraham must leave his family, follow God, and believe in future descendants
4. by faith Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt to Mt. Sinai and received specific guidelines for religious and social life with promises of blessings and cursings (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 27-28)

This same tension involving God's relationship to humanity is addressed in the "new covenant" (cf. Jer 31:31-34; Heb. 7:22; 8:6,8,13; 9:15; 12:24). The tension can be clearly seen in comparing Ezek. 18:31 with Ezek. 36:27-38 (YHWH's action). Is the covenant based on God's gracious actions or a mandated human response? This is the burning issue between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The goals of both are the same: (1) the restoration of fellowship with YHWH lost in Genesis 3 and (2) the establishment of a righteous people who reflect God's character.

The new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 solves the tension by removing human performance as the means of attaining acceptance. God's law becomes an internal desire instead of an external legal code. The goal of a godly, righteous people remains the same, but the methodology changes. Fallen mankind proved themselves inadequate to be God's reflected image. The problem was not God's covenant, but human sinfulness and weakness (cf. Genesis 3; Romans 7; Galatians 3).

The same tension between OT unconditional and conditional covenants remains in the NT. Salvation is absolutely free in the finished work of Jesus Christ, but it requires repentance and faith (both initially and continually; see Special Topic: Believe in the NT). Jesus calls His new relationship with believers "a new covenant" (cf. Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). It is both a legal pronouncement (forensic) and a call to Christlikeness (cf. Matt. 5:48; Rom. 8:29-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 4:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3,7; 5:23; 1 Pet. 1:15), an indicative statement of acceptance (Romans 4) and an imperative call to holiness (Matt. 5:48)! Believers are not saved <u>by</u> their performance, but <u>unto</u> obedience (cf. Eph. 2:8-<u>10</u>; 2 Cor.3:5-6). Godly living becomes <u>the</u> <u>evidence</u> of salvation, <u>not</u> <u>the</u> <u>means</u> of salvation (i.e., James and 1 John). However, eternal life has observable characteristics! This tension is clearly seen in warnings in the NT (see Special Topic: Apostasy).

▣ **"a resting place"** Here, this (BDB 629) refers to a proper camping site (TEV, NJB). This term also has the connotation of peace, security, and rest because of YHWH's presence with His people.

The term is used of the "Promised Lane" (i.e., Canaan) in Deut. 12:9; Ps. 95:11. In Isaiah 32:18 it has an eschatological connotation.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 10:35-36

[35]Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said,

"Rise up, O LORD!

And let Your enemies be scattered,

And let those who hate You flee before You."

[36] When it came to rest, he said,

"Return, O LORD,

To the myriad thousands of Israel."

10:35-36 This is a poetic structure (see Special Topic: Hebrew Poetry at Num. 21:18). Numbers 10:35 was spoken when the cloud lifted and the people set out.

1. rise – BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* IMPERATIVE; Israel's Deity dwelt above the *cherubim* on the ark
2. LORD – this is the covenant name for God; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Num. 1:1
3. let Your enemies be scattered – BDB 806, KB 918, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense (i.e., a prayer); note Israel's enemies are YHWH's enemies
4. let those who hate you flee before you – BDB 630, KB 684, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

The MT marks vv. 35-36 with an inverted *nun* (i.e., Hebrew letter), which was their way to assert that the text was out of place. The LXX has vv. 35,36 and v. 34. Remember, the MT added many interpreted features to the consonantal text but these additions by the Massoretic scholars in the A.D. period are not inspired.

10:38 These are Moses' words when the cloud stopped and Israel camped.

1. return – BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERATIVE; it is used in the sense of a prayer asking YHWH to dwell again in the Holy of Holies
2. thousands – see Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*) at Num. 1:16c
   Here, this term may denote "Lord of Hosts." See Special Topic: Lord of Hosts. This would be imagery of YHWH as the Divine Warrior fighting for Israel (i.e., 1 Sam. 17:45; Isa. 1:24; 21:10; Zeph. 2:19). See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 545-549, for a good summary of YHWH as Israel's Divine Warrior.

SPECIAL TOPIC: LORD OF HOSTS

This Divine title, "LORD of Hosts" (cf. 1 Sam. 1:3,11, as first use of several hundred occurrences) is made up of

A. the covenant name for God, YHWH. See Special Topic: Names For Deity
B. the military term "hosts" (BDB 838, KB 994) can denote
   1. angels in general (cf. Neh. 9:6)
   2. the heavenly army of angels (cf. 1 Sam. 17:45; Dan. 8:10; Luke 2:13)
   3. the angelic council (cf. 1 Kgs. 22:19; Dan. 7:10)
   4. the people of YHWH (cf. Exod. 12:41, which reflects Exod. 3:8,10 as referring to all Israel, cf. 2 Sam. 7:27)
   5. human army (i.e., Gen. 21:22,32; Num. 2:4,6; Jdgs. 8:6; 9:29)
   6. the lights in the night sky (i.e., "hosts," Gen. 2:1; Isa. 45:12) thought to be spiritual powers (i.e., Babylonian astral worship, cf. Deut. 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs. 17:16; 21:3,5; 23:4-5; 2 Chr. 33:3,5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13)
   7. It became a title for YHWH in Amos 4:13; 5:27 (with ARTICLE in Amos 3:13; 6:14; 9:5 and without ARTICLE in Amos 5:14,15,16; 6:8; 1 Kgs. 19:10,14). It denoted YHWH's fighting on Israel's behalf.
   8. There is a specialized use in Jos. 5:14-15 which may refer to Michael, the angelic guardian of Israel. This is in some way parallel to the Angel of the Lord as a representation of Deity Himself.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. List the items that show Israel's historical links to Egypt.
2. In how many ways were the silver trumpets used?
3. Why do scholars assert a contextual break at Num. 10:11?
4. Why does Moses want Hobab to come with him?
5. Was the ark in the midst of the camp or at the front?
6. Why does Moses pray YHWH will return in Num. 10:36?

NUMBERS 11

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The People Complain	The People Complain	Israel's Complaining in the Wilderness	The Place Named Taberah	Taberah
11:1-3	11:1-3	11:1-3	11:1-3	11:1-3
			Moses Chooses Seventy Leaders	Kibroth-hattaavah, the People Complain
11:4-6	11:4-9	11:4-6	11:4-6	11:4-6
11:7-9		11:7-9	11:7-9	11:7-9
The Complaint of Moses				The Prayer of Moses
11:10-15	11:10-15	11:10-15	11:10-15	11:10-11a
				11:11b-15
Seventy Elders to Assist	The Seventy Elders			Yahweh Replies
11:16-23	11:16-23	11:16-23	11:16-20	11:16-17
				11:18-20
			11:21-22	11:21-23
			11:23	The Spirit Given to Elders
11:24-25	11:24-25	11:24-25	11:24-25	11:24-25
11:26-30	11:26-30	11:26-30	11:26-27	11:26-30
			11:28	
			11:29-30	
The Quail and the Plague	The LORD Sends Quail		The LORD Sends Quail	The Quails
11:31-35	11:31-35	11:31-35	11:31-34	11:31-33
				11:34
			11:35	11:35

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:1-3

[1]Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the LORD; and when the LORD heard *it*, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed *some* of the outskirts of the camp. [2]The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD and the fire died out. [3]So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them.

11:1 "those who complain" The book of Numbers could be called "the book of griping"! It is a recurrent theme (cf. Num. 14:2; 16:11,41; 17:5,10; 1 Cor. 10:10). It demonstrates a lack of faith in

1. YHWH's presence and leadership
2. Moses and Aaron

▣ **"in the hearing of the LORD"** This phrase, like v. 18 (i.e., "in the ears of the Lord"), is very anthropomorphic. See Special Topic: God Described As Human at Num. 3:16.

One wonders if this verse implies

1. they were grumbling in their tents (cf. Num. 11:10)
2. they were grumbling near the Tabernacle or at a worship service

▣ **"His anger. . .the fire of the LORD"** This is another anthropomorphic reference. YHWH was serious about His covenant requirements. Violating His revealed will resulted in judgment (Num. 11:10,33). See Special Topic: Fire.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRE (BDB 77, KB 92)

Fire has both positive and negative connotations in Scripture.

A. Positive
   1. warms (cf. Isa. 44:15; John 18:18)
   2. lights (cf. Isa. 50:11; Matt. 25:1-13)
   3. cooks (cf. Exod. 12:8; Isa. 44:15-16; John 21:9)
   4. purifies (cf. Num. 31:22-23; Pro. 17:3; Isa. 1:25; 6:6-8; Jer. 6:29; Mal. 3:2-3)
   5. God's holiness (cf. Gen. 15:17; Exod. 3:2; 19:18; Ezek. 1:27; Heb. 12:29)
   6. God's leadership (cf. Exod. 13:21; Num. 14:14; 1 Kgs. 18:24)
   7. God's empowering (cf. Acts 2:3)
   8. God's protection (cf. Zech. 2:5)

B. Negative
   1. burns (cf. Jos. 6:24; 8:8; 11:11; Matt. 22:7)
   2. destroys (cf. Gen. 19:24; Lev. 10:1-2)
   3. anger (cf. Num. 21:28; Isa. 10:16; Zech. 12:6)
   4. punishment (cf. Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Jos. 7:15)
   5. false eschatological sign (cf. Rev. 13:13)

C. God's anger against sin is often expressed in fire imagery
   1. His anger burns (cf. Hos. 8:5; Zeph. 3:8)
   2. He pours out fire (cf. Nah. 1:6)
   3. eternal fire (cf. Jer. 15:14; 17:4; Matt. 25:41; Jude v. 7)
   4. eschatological judgment (cf. Matt. 3:10; 5:22; 13:40; John 15:6; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2 Pet. 3:7-10; Rev. 8:7; 16:8; 20:14-15)

D. Fire often appears in theophanies.
   1. Gen. 15:17
   2. Exod. 3:2
   3. Exod. 19:18
   4. Ps.18:7-15; 29:7

5. Ezek. 1:4,27; 10:2
6. Heb. 1:7; 12:29

E. Like so many metaphors in the Bible (i.e., leaven, lion) fire can be a blessing or a curse depending on the context.

▣ **"the outskirts of the camp"** Possibly "the rabble" of v. 4 lived farthest from the Tabernacle. YHWH's judgment started with this "mixed multitude" (cf. Exod. 12:38), who were probably not Israelite or perhaps only half-Israelite.

11:2 "Moses prayed to the LORD" Moses was often called on to intercede between YHWH and His disobedient covenant people. See Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer.

SPECIAL TOPIC: INTERCESSORY PRAYER

I. Introduction
   A. Prayer is significant because of Jesus' example
      1. personal prayer, Mark 1:35; Luke 3:21; 6:12; 9:29; 22:31-46
      2. cleansing of the Temple, Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46
      3. Model Prayer, Matt. 6:5-13; Luke 11:2-4
   B. Prayer is putting into tangible action our belief in a personal, caring God who is present, willing, and able to act on our behalf and others, through our prayers.
   C. God has personally limited Himself to act on the prayers of His children in many areas (cf. James 4:2)
   D. The major purpose of prayer is our fellowship and time with the Triune God.
   E. The scope of prayer is anything or anyone that concerns believers. We may pray once, believing, or over and over again as the thought or concern returns.
   F. Prayer can involve several elements
      1. praise and adoration of the Triune God
      2. thanksgiving to God for His presence, fellowship, and provisions
      3. confession of our sinfulness, both past and present
      4. petition of our sensed needs or desires
      5. intercession where we hold the needs of others before the Father
   G. Intercessory prayer is a mystery. God loves those for whom we pray much more than we do, yet our prayers often effect a change, response, or need, not only in ourselves, but in them.

II. Biblical Material
   A. Old Testament
      1. Some examples of intercessory prayer:
         a. Abraham pleading for Sodom, Gen. 18:22ff
         b. Moses' prayers for Israel
            (1) Exodus 5:22-23
            (2) Exodus 32:31ff

(3) Deuteronomy 5:5
(4) Deuteronomy 9:18,25ff

c. Samuel prays for Israel
(1) 1 Samuel 7:5-6,8-9
(2) 1 Samuel 12:16-23
(3) 1 Samuel 15:11

d. David for his child, 2 Samuel 12:16-18

2. God is looking for intercessors, Isaiah 59:16

3. Known, unconfessed sin or an unrepentant attitude affects our prayers
a. Psalm 66:18
b. Proverbs 28:9
c. Isaiah 59:1-2; 64:7

B. New Testament

1. The Son and Spirit's intercessory ministry
a. Jesus
(1) Romans 8:34
(2) Hebrews 7:25
(3) 1 John 2:1

b. Holy Spirit, Romans 8:26-27

2. Paul's intercessory ministry
a. Prays for the Jews
(1) Romans 9:1ff
(2) Romans 10:1

b. Prays for the churches
(1) Romans 1:9
(2) Ephesians 1:16
(3) Philippians 1:3-4,9
(4) Colossians 1:3,9
(5) 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
(6) 2 Thessalonians 1:11
(7) 2 Timothy 1:3
(8) Philemon, v. 4

c. Paul asked the churches to pray for him
(1) Romans 15:30
(2) 2 Corinthians 1:11
(3) Ephesians 6:19
(4) Colossians 4:3
(5) 1 Thessalonians 5:25
(6) 2 Thessalonians 3:1

3. The church's intercessory ministry
a. Pray for one another

(1) Ephesians 6:18
(2) 1 Timothy 2:1
(3) James 5:16

b. Prayer requested for special groups
(1) our enemies, Matt. 5:44
(2) Christian workers, Hebrews 13:18
(3) rulers, 1 Timothy 2:2
(4) the sick, James 5:13-16
(5) backsliders, 1 John 5:16

III. Conditions for answered prayer

A. Our relationship to Christ and the Spirit
1. Abide in Him, John 15:7
2. In His name, John 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23-24
3. In the Spirit, Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20
4. According to God's will, Matthew 6:10; 1 John 3:22; 5:14-15

B. Motives
1. Not wavering, Matthew 21:22; James 1:6-7
2. Humility and repentance, Luke 18:9-14
3. Asking amiss, James 4:3
4. Selfishness, James 4:2-3

C. Other aspects
1. Perseverance
a. Luke 18:1-8
b. Colossians 4:2
2. Kept on asking
a. Matthew 7:7-8
b. Luke 11:5-13
c. James 1:5
3. Discord at home, 1 Peter 3:7
4. Free from known sin
a. Psalm 66:18
b. Proverbs 28:9
c. Isaiah 59:1-2
d. Isaiah 64:7

IV. Theological Conclusion

A. What a privilege. What an opportunity. What a duty and responsibility.
B. Jesus is our example. The Spirit is our guide. The Father is eagerly waiting.
C. It could change you, your family, your friends, and the world.

11:3 "Taberah" This place name (BDB 129) is related to the VERB "to burn" (BDB 128). It occurs only here and Deut. 9:22.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:4-6

[4]The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat? [5]We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic, [6]but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."

11:4 "the rabble" This DESCRIPTIVE NOUN (BDB 63, very rare, only here in the OT, from the word "gather" or "assembly") describes the non-Israelite or half-Israelite people who left Egypt during the exodus (cf. Exod. 12:38). They were the source of much of Israel's problems.

▣

NASB	**"had greedy desires"**
NKJV	**"yielded to intense craving"**
NRSV, TEV, Peshitta	**"had a strong craving"**
NJB	**"pains of hunger"**
JPSOA	**"felt a gluttonous craving"**
REB	**"began to be greedy for better things"**
LXX	**"craved with desire"**

The MT has a VERB and a NOUN from the same root, "desired a desire" (BDB 16, KB 20, *Hithpael* PERFECT).

It was not just food (cf. Num. 11:5) they desired but a return to Egypt (cf. Exod. 16:3). It was a gesture of lack of trust in YHWH!

11:6-9 "manna" See Special Topic: Manna.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MANNA

A. It was a supernatural provision by YHWH to sustain His people during the exodus and wilderness wandering period.

B. It is called "the bread which the LORD has given you to eat" (cf. Neh. 9:15; John 6:31,49,51,53,58), Exod. 16:15. The popular name, "manna" (Exod. 31:1) comes from the question about it, asked by the people in Exod. 16:15 (i.e., "What is it?" from Hebrew "*man hu*," BDB 577 and BDB 214).

C. It came with the dew every morning (cf. Exod. 16:13,21; Num. 11:9), as the sun rose and burned off the dew (cf. Exod. 16:14), a layer of white powder remained for a brief period, then the sun burned it all away (cf. Exod. 16:21).

They were to gather it, every family, every day, enough for all in the family to have enough to eat (cf. Exod. 16:16-18), but only enough for one day at a time (cf. Exod. 16:20). There was a special provision made to gather twice as much on Friday so that no work (i.e., gathering or cooking, cf. Exod. 16:23) would be done on the Sabbath (cf. Exod. 16:5, i.e., Friday night at

twilight until Saturday night at twilight). On this special day the manna would remain edible for two days (cf. Exod. 16:22,24). There was also a jar of manna kept in the ark that remained normal (cf. Exod. 16:33; Heb. 9:4).

D. Manna was a fine flake-like item, fine as the hoarfrost on the ground (cf. Exod. 16:14). It was white, like coriander seed, and tasted like wafers with honey (cf. Exod. 16:31; Num. 11:7-8).

E. This special provision of YHWH's ceased when Israel crossed the Jordan River into Canaan (cf. Jos. 5:10-12). The pillar of cloud also ceased when they crossed into Canaan.

11:6 "our appetite is gone" This is literally "but now our soul is dried up." This is a usage of *nephesh* (BDB 659), used of one's appetite, because its etymology is from the word "throat."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:7-9

[7]Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. [8]The people would go about and gather *it* and grind *it* between two millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, and boil *it* in the pot and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil. [9]When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:10-15

[10]Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each man at the doorway of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly, and Moses was displeased. [11]So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me? [12]Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their fathers'? [13]Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!' [14]I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me. [15]So if You are going to deal thus with me, please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness."

11:10-15 Moses grows weary of leading Israel. He appeals to YHWH for either help or death (Num. 11:15, emphatic in Hebrew). Moses reminds YHWH that the exodus was His prophecy and plan (i.e., Gen. 15:12-22).

Moses' exasperation with the people will become the source of his public disobedience to YHWH that will result in his not being allowed to enter Canaan (cf. Numbers 20; 27:14; Deut. 1:37; 3:26-27; 34).

11:11 "Your servant" This was an honorific title. See Special Topic: My Servant.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MY SERVANT

This is a honorific title used of the Messiah in the "Servant Songs" of Isaiah (cf. Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Some have seen all of these as referring to Israel (cf. Isa. 41:8-9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:21), but Isa. 52:13-53:12 refers to an individual ideal Israelite (note Isa. 53:8). The servant cannot die for the sins

of the servant! Notice how Isa. 53:9 is quoted in Matt. 27:38,59. God is in control of history, men, nations, and even Satan; all may be used to accomplish His redemptive purposes! He used Christ (cf. Isa. 53:10; see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan).

The footnote of the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 545, is very helpful as it outlines the different usages of the title "My Servant."

1. a servant of God as a prophet, cf. Num. 12:7-8; Neh. 1:7; Dan. 9:11
   a. Moses
   b. Daniel, cf. Dan. 9:17
2. a servant of God as a military leader (i.e., Joshua), cf. Jos. 24:29; Jdgs. 2:8
3. a servant of God as King (i.e., David), cf. 2 Sam. 7:5,8; Psalm 18; 36; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24
4. a servant of God as administrator
   a. Nehemiah, cf. Neh. 1:6
   b. Zerubbabel, cf. Hag. 2:23
5. all Israel (or Jacob), cf. Isa. 41:8,9; 42:1,19; 43:10; 44:1,21; 49:3; Ezek. 28:25; 37:25
6. the remnant of Israel, cf. Isa. 41:8-10
7. a godly individual, cf. Job 1:8; 2:3; 42:8
8. unbelieving rulers who serve YHWH's purposes
   a. Cyrus, Isa. 44:28; 45:1
   b. Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. 25:9; 27:6; 43:10

11:12 This verse has feminine imagery to refer to YHWH (cf. Deut. 32:11,18b; Isa. 42:14; 49:15; 66:9-13; Hos. 11:4b,c, with one change in Hebrew text; see note online). See full note at Deut. 32:11 and the Special Topic: Human Sexuality.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HUMAN SEXUALITY

I. Introductory Remarks
   A. Christians have been unduly influenced by Greek asceticism, which makes both the human body and its normal activities evil.

      The Bible affirms the goodness of physical creation (cf. Gen. 1:31), but acknowledges the results of human rebellion (cf. Genesis 3). One day this curse shall be removed (cf. Rom. 8:18-22).

   B. Maleness and femaleness are God's idea! Human sexuality is part of God's creation and plan for human beings made in His image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Sex is not something we do; it is something we are. Every area of our thoughts and lives is affected by sexual orientation, as interpreted by our cultures.

II. Biblical Insights (selected examples)
   A. From Genesis
      1. There was an original mutuality between men and women (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; see sord study on "helpmate" at Gen. 1:18 online).
      2. Children were a mandate from God (i.e., Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7).
      3. All creation is affirmed as "very good" in Gen. 1:31, including human sexual activity.
      4. Women are not opposites, but complements, to men (i.e., Gen. 2:18).

5. Eve and Adam's open-eyed rebellion has affected all of us and our world, including sexuality (cf. Gen. 3:7,16; Rom. 5:12-21).

B. Physical love is affirmed in Scripture, even after the Fall.
   1. Proverbs 5:15-23 affirms life-long monogamy and regular sexual activity.
   2. Ecclesiastes 9:7-9, enjoy life in all its aspects while you can.
   3. Song of Songs is an affirmation of physical love.
   4. God is an eternal spirit without a body, yet "He" uses human sexual metaphors to describe Himself (i.e., Hosea 1-3,11).

III. God-given boundaries for expressing human sexuality
   A. Marriage
      1. the norm in the OT and NT
      2. used as an example of the "Spirit filled life," Eph. 5:15-6:9
      3. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5, sex is more than procreation
         a. the body belongs to God, 1 Cor. 6:19-20
         b. the body belongs to one's spouse, 1 Cor. 7:4
   B. Human sexuality used to illustrate God and His love.
      1. Galatians 3:28, summary of the new age, the gospel and its across-the-board availability and equality
      2. Ephesians 5:21-31, the Christian home becomes an example of the relationship between Christ and His church (as Hosea 1-3 used Hosea's marriage as a way to explain God's love for Israel)
   C. God Himself is described as both male and female.
      1. male, so common
         a. Father, Deut. 1:31; 32:5; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4,19; 31:9; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 3:17
         b. husband, Hos. 11:3-4
      2. female
         a. Gen. 1:2, Spirit of God brooded over the waters
         b. Gen 17:1, *El Shaddai* may have feminine connotations (i.e., Arabic root)
         c. Deut. 32:18, God as mother bird
         d. Exod. 19:4, God as mother eagle
         e. Isa. 49:14-15; 66:9-13, God compared to a nursing mother

IV. Mankind's perversions of God-given human sexuality
   A. Pre-marital (fornication) and extra-marital (adultery)
   B. Some selected texts
      1. 1 Cor. 6:15-20
      2. Gal. 5:19-21
      3. Heb. 13:4
   C. Sex (in both thought and act, cf. Matt. 5:27-28) can become a license to use people as things for personal gratification.
   D. Divorce
      1. always second best

2. allowed in the OT, Deut. 24:1-4, but restricted by Jesus, Matt. 5:27-32; 19:3-12
3. hear audio tapes online in "Controversial and Difficult Texts," #2130 and 2131

E. Homosexuality (see Special Topic: Homosexuality)
1. never the will of God
a. Lev. 20:13
b. Rom. 1:26-27
c. 1 Cor. 6:9-11
2. It is serious because it is a lifestyle sin, but no worse than other lifestyle sexual sins (fornication or adultery or lust). It is not the "unpardonable sin" (which is unbelief).
3. All fallen humans struggle with human sexuality. This powerful, persistent, pervasive desire, instinct, and appetite must be dealt with daily by all of us!
4. Many believers were homosexual partners to pagan temple prostitution, but after salvation they were not slaves to it any more, 1 Cor. 6:9,11

V. Concluding remarks
A. Sexuality is God's plan for a completely populated earth.
B. Sexuality is only for time, not eternity, Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36.
C. Sexuality has been affected by the Fall. Every one of us is naturally a self-centered, selfish person.
D. Sexuality is meant to help us as redeemed people to become more self-controlled (the capstone of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:23).
E. Christians bear a primary role in helping families, communities, and nations deal with this powerful and pervasive issue. It can be a drag or a ladder. We are models of divine grace. The best sex education is two parents who love each other selflessly!
F. Sex can be wonderful or awful. It was meant to
1. fill the earth
2. bond two people
3. form the family and communities
4. be enjoyed

▣ **"to the land which You did swear to their fathers"** The first mention of this promise is to Abraham in Genesis 12 (cf. Exod. 13:5,11). See Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs.

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT PROMISES TO PATRIARCHS

This initial promise of a special covenant relationship was made to
1. Abraham, Gen. 12:1-3
a. land, Gen. 12:7; 13:4-15; 15:18-21
b. people, Gen. 13:16; 15:4-5; 17:2-6; 22:18
c. blessing to the world, Gen. 18:18; 22:18
2. Isaac, Gen. 26:2-4
a. land
b. people

c. blessing to the world

3. Jacob, Gen. 28:2-4,13; 35:9-12; 48:3-4
   a. land
   b. people
4. the nation of Israel (a land), Exod. 3:8,17; 6:8; 13:5; 33:1-3; Deut. 1:7-8,35; 4:31; 9:3; 11:25; 31:7; Josh. 1:6

11:13 This verse clearly states the large number of people involved in the exodus. The exact number is uncertain because of the many connotations of "thousand" (see Special Topic: Thousand at Num. 10:36), but it was a large number, too large for the desert/wilderness to naturally sustain.

11:15

NASB, NKJV,
JPSOA **"let me not see my wickedness"**
NRSV **"and do not let me see my misery"**
TEV **"so that I won't have to endure your cruelty any longer"**
NJB **"be spared the sight of my misery"**
REB **"spare me this trouble afflicting me"**
LXX **"so that I may not see my suffering"**

Some scholars think that the Masoretic scholars changed this phrase from "that I may not see Your evil (i.e., judgment)." This was done because the Masoretes did not want to assert that "evil" came from YHWH. The Jerusalem Targum asserted "the evil" was not from YHWH but referred to "the evil people."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:16-23

16The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put *Him* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear *it* all alone. 18Say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, "Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat. 19You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"'" 21But Moses said, "The people, among whom I am, are 600,000 on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.' 22Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them?" 23The LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."

11:16-18 YHWH provides some gifted (Num. 11:17) helpers (i.e., the seventy elders, cf. Exod. 18:25).

For the biblical use of the number 70 see Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #8.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SYMBOLIC NUMBERS IN SCRIPTURE

A. Certain numbers functioned both as numerals and symbols.
   1. One – God (e.g., Deut. 6:4; Eph. 4:4-6)
   2. Four – the whole earth (i.e., four corners, four winds, e.g., Isa. 11:12; Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; Matt. 24:31; Mark 13:27; Rev. 7:1)
   3. Six – human imperfection (one less than 7, e.g., Rev. 13:18)
   4. Seven – divine perfection (the seven days of creation). Notice the symbolic usages in Revelation:
      a. seven candlesticks, Rev. 1:12,20; 2:1
      b. seven stars, Rev. 1:16,20; 2:1
      c. seven churches, Rev. 1:20
      d. seven spirits of God, Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
      e. seven lamps, Rev. 4:5
      f. seven seals, Rev. 5:1,5
      g. seven horns and seven eyes, Rev. 5:6
      h. seven angels, Rev. 8:2,6; 15:1,6,7,8; 16:1; 17:1
      i seven trumpets, Rev. 8:2,6
      j. seven thunders, Rev. 10:3,4
      k. seven thousand, Rev. 11:13
      l. seven heads, Rev. 13:1; 17:3,7,9
      m. seven plagues, Rev. 15:1,6,8; 21:9
      n. seven bowls, Rev. 15:7; 21:9
      o. seven kings, Rev. 17:10
   5. Ten – completeness
      a. use in Gospels
         (1) Matt. 20:24; 25:1,28
         (2) Mark 10:41
         (3) Luke 14:31; 15:8; 17:12,17; 19:13,16,17,24,25
      b. use in Revelation
         (1) Rev. 2:10, ten days of tribulation
         (2) Rev. 12:3; 17:3,7,12,16, ten horns
         (3) Rev. 13:1, ten crowns
      c. multiples of 10 in Revelation
         (1) 144,000 = 12x12x1000, cf. Rev. 7:4; 14:1,3
         (2) 1,000 = 10x10x10, cf. Rev. 20:2,3,6
   6. Twelve – human organization
      a. twelve sons of Jacob (i.e., twelve tribes of Israel, Gen. 35:22; 49:28)
      b. twelve pillars, Exod. 24:4
      c. twelve stones on breastplate of High Priest, Exod. 28:21; 39:14
      d. twelve loaves, for table in Holy Place (symbolic of God's provision for the twelve tribes), Lev. 24:5; Exod. 25:30

e. twelve spies, Deut. 1:23
f. twelve rock carriers, Jos. 3:22; 4:2,3,4,8,9,20
g. twelve apostles, Matt. 10:1
h. use in Revelation
(1) twelve thousand sealed, Rev. 7:5-8
(2) twelve stars, Rev. 12:1
(3) twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve tribes, Rev. 21:12
(4) twelve foundation stones, names of the twelve apostles, Rev. 21:14
(5) New Jerusalem was twelve thousand stadia squared, Rev. 21:16
(6) twelve gates made of twelve pearls, Rev. 21:21
(7) tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit, Rev. 22:2

7. Forty – number for time
a. sometimes literal (exodus and wilderness wanderings, e.g., Exod. 16:35); Deut. 2:7; 8:2
b. can be literal or symbolic
(1) flood, Gen. 7:4,17; 8:6
(2) Moses on Mt. Sinai, Exod. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9,11,18,25
(3) divisions of Moses life:
(a) forty years in Egypt
(b) forty years in the desert
(c) forty years leading Israel
(4) Jesus fasted forty days, Matt. 4:2; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2
c. Note (by means of a Concordance) the number of times this number appears in time designation in the Bible!

8. Seventy – round number for people
a. Israel, Exod. 1:5
b. seventy elders, Exod. 24:1,9
c. eschatological, Dan. 9:2,24
d. mission team, Luke 10:1,17
e. forgiveness (70x7), Matt. 18:22

B. Good references
1. John J. Davis, *Biblical Numerology*
2. D. Brent Sandy, *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks*

11:17
NASB, NKJV,
LXX **"of the Spirit"**
NRSV, TEV,
NJB, REB **"of the spirit"**
JPSOA **"the spirit"**

This is the term *ruah* (see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible), which has a wide semantical field. In the OT the term is a way of referring to YHWH's active will to accomplish His purposes. But in the NT, the full personality of the Spirit is revealed.

See Special Topics:

1. The Personhood of the Spirit
2. The Trinity

YHWH gifted certain artisans with the Spirit to

1. make Aaron's priestly garments – Exod. 28:3
2. make the gold and silver pieces for the Tabernacle – Exod. 31:3; 35:31
3. Joshua's leadership – Deut. 34:9
4. military boldness – Jdgs. 6:34; 11:29; 13:25

This "spirit" is described as

1. in wisdom
2. in understanding
3. in knowledge
4. in all craftsmanship

SPECIAL TOPIC: SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE

I. Old Testament (*ruah*, BDB 924, KB 1197; see Special Topic: Breath, Wind, Spirit [OT])
   A. The actions of the monotheistic God (i.e., Spirit, used about 90 times in the OT)
      1. positive, Genesis 1:2
      2. negative, 1 Sam. 16:14-16,23; 1 Kgs. 22:21-22; Isa. 29:10
   B. The God-given life force in humanity (i.e., God's breath, cf. Gen. 2:7)
   C. The Septuagint translates *ruah* by *pneuma* (used about 100 times in the LXX)
   D. In later rabbinical writings, apocalyptic writing and the Dead Sea Scrolls, influenced by Zoroastrianism, *pneuma* is used of angels and demons

II. The Greek terms
   A. *pneō*, to blow
   B. *pnoē,* wind, breath
   C. *pneuma***,** spirit, wind
   D. *pneumatik*os**,** pertaining to the spirit
   E. *pneumatikōs,* spiritually

III. Greek philosophical background (*pneuma*)
   A. Aristotle used the term as the life force that develops from birth until self-discipline
   B. The Stoics used the term as synonymous to *psuchē*, (soul) even *nous* (mind) in the sense of the five physical senses and the human intellect.
   C. In Greek thought the term became equivalent to divine action (i.e., divination, magic, occult, prophecy, etc.).

IV. New Testament (*pneuma*; see Special Topic: Spirit in the NT)
   A. God's special presence, power, and equipping
   B. The Spirit is connected to God's activity in the church (mostly in John)
      1. prophecy
      2. miracles
      3. boldness to proclaim the gospel
      4. wisdom (i.e., the gospel)
      5. joy

6. brings in the new age
7. conversion (i.e., wooing and indwelling)
8. Christlikeness
9. special gifts of ministry
10. prays for believers

The Spirit awakens mankind's desire for fellowship with God, for which they were created. This fellowship is possible because of the person and work of Jesus, God's Messiah (see Special Topic: Messiah). The new spiritual awakening leads to Christlike living, serving, and trusting.

C. It can best be understood as a spiritual continuum with the Holy Spirit on one end and mankind as a physical creature of this planet, but also a spiritual creature in God's image, at the other end.

D. Paul is the NT author who develops a theology of the Spirit/spirit.
1. Paul uses Spirit to contrast flesh (i.e., sin nature)
2. Paul uses spirit to contrast the physical
3. Paul uses Spirit/spirit to contrast human thinking, knowing, and being

E. Some examples from 1 Corinthians
1. the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:3
2. the power and wisdom of God conveyed through the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:4-5
3. God's actions in the believer
   a. new mind-set, 1 Cor. 2:12; 14:14,32
   b. new temple, 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19-20
   c. new life (i.e., morality), 1 Cor. 6:9-11
   d. new life symbolized in baptism, 1 Cor. 12:13
   e. one with God (i.e., conversion), 1 Cor. 6:17
   f. God's wisdom, not the world's wisdom, 1 Cor. 2:12-15; 14:14,32,37
   g. spiritual giftedness of every believer for ministry, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14
4. the spiritual in contrast to the physical, 1 Cor. 9:11; 10:3; 15:44
5. spiritual realm in contrast to physical realm, 1 Cor. 2:11; 5:5; 7:34; 15:45; 16:18
6. a way of referring to a human's spiritual/inner life as distinct from one's physical body, 1 Cor. 7:34

F. Humans live in two realms by creation (i.e., the physical and the spiritual). Mankind fell from intimacy with God (Genesis 3). Through Christ's life, teachings, death, resurrection, and promised return, the Spirit woos fallen humans to exercise faith in the gospel (i.e., John 6:44,65), at which point they are restored to fellowship with God. The Spirit is that personal part of the Trinity which characterizes the New Age of righteousness. The Spirit is God the Father's agent and the Son's Advocate in this "age" (see Special Topic: Jesus and the Spirit). A problem exists because the new age has occurred in time, while the old age of sinful rebellion still exists. The Spirit transforms the old into the new, even while they both exist.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PERSONHOOD OF THE SPIRIT

In the OT "the Spirit of God" (i.e., *ruach*) was a force which accomplished YHWH's purpose, but there is little hint that it was personal (i.e., OT monotheism, see Special Topic: Monotheism). However, in the NT the full personality and personhood of the Spirit is revealed:

1. He can be blasphemed (cf. Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29)
2. He teaches (cf. Luke 12:12; John 14:26)
3. He bears witness (cf. John 15:26)
4. He convicts, guides (cf. John 16:7-15)
5. He is called "who" (i.e., *hos*) (cf. Eph. 1:14)
6. He can be grieved (cf. Eph. 4:30)
7. He can be quenched (cf. 1 Thess. 5:19)
8. He can be resisted (cf. Acts 7:51)
9. He advocates for believers (cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7)
10. He glorifies the son (cf. John 16:14)

Trinitarian texts (here are three of many, see Special Topic: Trinity) also speak of three persons.

1. Matt. 28:19
2. 2 Cor. 13:14
3. 1 Pet. 1:2

Although the Greek word spirit" (*pneuma*) is NEUTER when referring to the Spirit, the NT often uses MASCULINE DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE (cf. John 16:8,13-14).

The Spirit is linked to human activity.

1. Acts 15:28
2. Rom. 8:26
3. 1 Cor. 12:11
4. Eph. 4:30

At the very beginning of Acts the Spirit's role is emphasized (as in the Gospel of John). Pentecost was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. Jesus always had the Spirit. His baptism was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. The Spirit is the effective means of the Father's purpose for the restoration of all humans made in His image (see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan)!

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY

Notice the activity of all three Persons of the Trinity in unified contexts. The term "trinity," first coined by Tertullian, is not a biblical word, but the concept is pervasive.

A. the Gospels
   1. Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19 (and parallels)
   2. John 14:26
B. Acts – Acts 2:32-33, 38-39
C. Paul
   1. Rom. 1:4-5; 5:1,5; 8:1-4,8-10
   2. 1 Cor. 2:8-10; 12:4-6

3. 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 13:14
4. Gal. 4:4-6
5. Eph. 1:3-14,17; 2:18; 3:14-17; 4:4-6
6. 1 Thess. 1:2-5
7. 2 Thess. 2:13
8. Titus 3:4-6

D. Peter – 1 Pet. 1:2

E. Jude – vv. 20-21

A plurality in God is hinted at in the OT.

A. Use of PLURALS for God
   1. Name *Elohim* is PLURAL (see Special Topic: Names for Deity), but when used of God always has a SINGULAR VERB
   2. "Us" in Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7

B. "The Angel of the Lord" (see Special Topic: The angel of the LORD) was a visible representative of Deity
   1. Genesis 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16
   2. Exodus 3:2,4; 13:21; 14:19
   3. Judges 2:1; 6:22-23; 13:3-22
   4. Zechariah 3:1-2

C. God and His Spirit are separate, Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 104:30; Isa. 63:9-11; Ezek. 37:13-14

D. God (YHWH) and Messiah (*Adon*) are separate, Ps. 45:6-7; 110:1; Zech. 2:8-11; 10:9-12

E. The Messiah and the Spirit are separate, Zech. 12:10

F. All three are mentioned in Isa. 48:16; 61:1

The Deity of Jesus and the personality of the Spirit caused problems for the strict, monotheistic (see Special Topic: Monotheism), early believers.

1. Tertullian – subordinated the Son to the Father
2. Origen – subordinated the divine essence of the Son and the Spirit
3. Arius – denied Deity to the Son and Spirit
4. Monarchianism – believed in a successive, chronological manifestation of the one God as Father, then Son, and then Spirit

The Trinity is a historically developed formulation informed by the biblical material

1. the full Deity of Jesus, equal to the Father, was affirmed in A.D. 325 by the Council of Nicea (cf. John 1:1; Phil. 2:6; Titus 2:13)
2. the full personality and Deity of the Spirit equal to the Father and Son was affirmed in A.D. 381 by the Council of Constantinople
3. the doctrine of the Trinity is fully expressed in Augustine's work *De Trinitate*

There is truly mystery here. But the NT affirms one divine essence (monotheism) with three eternal personal manifestations (Father, Son, and Spirit).

▣ Obviously there is a spiritual giftedness involved in leadership of God's people. It is not just human talent but spiritual provision!

11:18 The particular issue of this chapter is "meat." YHWH will show His character (see Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God [OT] at Intro. to Numbers VIII. B. 4).

His provision is a natural, annual occurrence (i.e., migration of quail) but with supernatural timing, ??, and locality (see notes on the plagues of Egypt online).

▣ **"For we were well-off in Egypt"** This is, of course, a false statement since they were mistreated slaves in Egypt. How the mind and time do trick the mind!

It is possible that the rabble (Num. 11:4) were not poor slaves but members of Egyptian society who left Egypt with Israel for unknown reasons, possibly the miracles of the plagues.

▣ **"Consecrate yourselves"** This is a *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE (BDB 872, KB 1073). JPSOA translation footnote has "i.e., as for a sacrificial meal." This is a reverse sacrifice. Usually Israelites give YHWH sacrificial gifts (i.e., peace offering) but here YHWH gives meat to them!

11:20 YHWH was tired of their griping and bad attitude. He gave them what they wanted until they were sick (figuratively and literally) of it!

11:21 "600,00" the number seems far too large (cf. Exod. 12:37). It is not a question of God's ability but of the size of contemporary armies. If Israel was this large, why were they afraid? Most scholars attribute the number hyperbole to the term "thousand," which could denote a much smaller military unit, similar to the Roman legions, centurions. See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*) at Num. 1:16c.

11:22 Most herdsmen are very reluctant to kill their animals.

The statement about "fish" is obviously hyperbolic, for effect.

11:23 The question, "Is the Lord's power limited?" is a Hebrew anthropomorphic idiom, "Is the Lord's hand too short" (cf. Isa. 50:2; 59:1). "Hand" was used as a symbol of power. See Special Topic: Hand. Questioning the numbers of Scripture is not doubting YHWH's power but trying to address the historical setting.

This verse is relating to the month's provision of quail (i.e., Num. 11:18-20).

SPECIAL TOPIC: HAND (ILLUSTRATED FROM EZEKIEL)

The word "hand" (BDB 388, KB 386) has several connotations and usages.

1. literal (i.e., hand of a human)
   a. symbol of the entire person, Ezek. 3:18; 18:8,17; 33:6,8
   b. symbol of human weakness, Ezek. 7:17,27; 21:7; 22:14
   c. symbol of foreign enemies, Ezek. 7:21; 11:9; 16:39; 21:31; 23:9,28; 28:10; 30:12; 34:27; 38:12; 39:23
   d. literal hand, Ezek. 8:11; 12:7; 16:11; 37:17,19,20
   e. symbol of false leaders' power, Ezek. 13:21,22,23; 34:10
   f. symbol of a nation, Ezek. 23:31,37,42,45; 25:14; 27:15; 28:9; 30:10,22,24,25; 31:11; 39:3

2. anthropomorphic of deity
    a. YHWH's giving of revelation, Ezek. 1:3; 3:14,22; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1 (2:9 is other imagery of revelation – scroll on a hand)
    b. YHWH's power in judgment, Ezek. 6:14; 13:9; 14:9,13; 16:27; 20:33; 25:7,13,16; 35:3; 39:21
    c. YHWH Himself (His personal Presence), Ezek. 20:22
    d. YHWH's power to deliver, Ezek. 20:34 (possibly key usage from Exodus, cf. 3:20; 4:17; 6:1; 7:19; 13:3)
3. anthropomorphic of Cherubim, Ezek. 1:8; 8:3; 10:7,8,12,21
4. anthropomorphic of destroying angels, Ezek. 9:1-2; 21:11
5. symbol of a pledge or oath, Ezek. 17:18; 20:5 (twice), 6,15,23,28; 36:7; 44:12; 47:14
6. symbol of joy, Ezek. 25:6
7. anthropomorphic of an angel, Ezek. 40:3,5; 47:3

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:24-25

[24]So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. [25]Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed *Him* upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do *it* again.

11:25 "the LORD came down in the cloud" This special cloud was a physical symbol of YHWH's presence and guidance.

▣ **"prophesied"** This VERB (BDB 612, KB 659, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT with *waw*) denotes speaking under an ecstatic state.

1. Saul – 1 Sam. 10:5,6,10,13
2. Saul's messengers – 1 Sam. 19:20,21,23,24

See Special Topic: Prophecy (OT).

SPECIAL TOPIC: OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

I. INTRODUCTION
    A. Opening Statements
        1. The believing community does not agree on how to interpret prophecy. Other truths have been established as to an orthodox position throughout the centuries, but not this one.
        2. There are several well defined stages of OT prophecy
            a. premonarchial
                (1) individuals called prophets
                    (a) Abraham – Gen. 20:7
                    (b) Moses – Num. 12:6-8; Deut. 18:15; 34:10
                    (c) Aaron – Exod. 7:1 (spokesman for Moses)
                    (d) Miriam – Exod. 15:20

(e) Medad and Eldad – Num. 11:24-30
(f) Deborah – Jdgs. 4:4
(g) unnamed – Jdgs. 6:7-10
(h) Samuel – 1 Sam. 3:20

(2) references to prophets as a group – Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22
(3) prophetic group or guild – 1 Sam. 10:5-13; 19:20; 1 Kgs. 20:35,41; 22:6,10-13; 2 Kgs. 2:3,7; 4:1,38; 5:22; 6:1, etc.
(4) Messiah called prophet – Deut. 18:15-18

b. non-writing monarchial (they address the king):
(1) Gad – 1 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:11; 1 Chr. 29:29
(2) Nathan – 2 Sam. 7:2; 12:25; 1 Kgs. 1:22
(3) Ahijah – 1 Kgs. 11:29
(4) Jehu – 1 Kgs. 16:1,7,12
(5) unnamed – 1 Kgs. 18:4,13; 20:13,22
(6) Elijah – 1 Kings 18 - 2 Kings 2
(7) Micaiah – 1 Kings 22
(8) Elisha – 2 Kgs. 2:9,12-13

c. classical writing prophets (they address the nation as well as the king): Isaiah – Malachi (except Daniel)

B. Biblical Terms

1. *Ro'eh* = "seer" (BDB 906, KB 1157), 1 Sam. 9:9. This reference itself shows the transition to the term *nabi*. *Ro'eh* is from the general term "to see." This person understood God's ways and plans and was consulted to ascertain God's will in a matter.
2. *Hozeh* = "seer" (BDB 302, KB 301), 2 Sam. 24:11. It is basically a synonym of *Ro'eh*. It is from a rarer term "to see." The PARTICIPLED form is used most often to refer to prophets (i.e., "to behold").
3. *Nabi'* = "prophet" (BDB 611, KB 661), cognate of Akkadian VERB *Nabu* = "to call" and Arabic *Naba'a* = "to announce." This is the most common term in the Old Testament to designate a prophet. It is used over 300 times. The exact etymology is uncertain but "to call" at present seems the best option. Possibly the best understanding comes from YHWH's description of Moses' relationship to Pharaoh through Aaron (cf. Exod. 4:10-16; 7:1; Deut. 5:5. A prophet is someone who speaks for God to His people (Amos 3:8; Jer. 1:7,17; Ezek. 3:4)
4. All three terms are used of the prophet's office in 1 Chr. 29:29; Samuel – *Ro'eh*; Nathan – *Nabi'* and Gad – *Hozeh*.
5. The phrase, *'ish ha – 'elohim*, "Man of God," is also a broader designation for a speaker for God. It is used some 76 times in the OT in the sense of "prophet."
6. The term "prophet" is Greek in origin. It comes from: (1) *pro* = "before" or "for" and (2) *phemi* = "to speak."

II. DEFINITION OF PROPHECY

A. The term "prophecy" had a wider semantic field in Hebrew than in English. The history books of Joshua through Kings (except Ruth) are labeled by the Jews as "the former prophets." Both

Abraham (Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15) and Moses (Deut. 18:18) are designated as prophets (also Miriam, Exod. 15:20). Therefore, beware of an assumed English definition!

B. "Propheticism may legitimately be defined as that understanding of history which accepts meaning only in terms of divine concern, divine purpose, divine participation," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 896.

C. "The prophet is neither a philosopher nor a systematic theologian, but a covenant mediator who delivers the word of God to His people in order to shape their future by reforming their present, "Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 13 p. 1152.

III. PURPOSE OF PROPHECY

A. Prophecy is a way for God to speak to His people, providing guidance in their current setting and hope in His control of their lives and world events. Their message was basically corporate. It is meant to rebuke, encourage, engender faith and repentance, and inform God's people about Himself and His plans. They hold God's people to fidelity to God's covenants. To this must be added that often it is used to clearly reveal God's choice of a spokesman (Deut. 13:1-3; 18:20-22). This, taken ultimately, would refer to the Messiah.

B. Often, the prophet took a historical or theological crisis of his day and projected this into an eschatological setting. This end-time view of history is unique in Israel and its sense of divine election and covenant promises.

C. The office of prophet seems to balance (Jer. 18:18) and usurp the office of High Priest as a way to know God's will. The Urim and Thummim transcend into a verbal message from God's spokesman. The office of prophet seems to also have passed away in Israel after Malachi. It does not reappear until 400 years later with John the Baptist. It is uncertain how the New Testament gift of "prophecy" relates to the Old Testament. New Testament prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 1 Cor. 12:10,28-29; 14:29,32,37; Eph. 4:11) are not revealers of new revelation or Scripture, but forth-tellers and foretellers of God's will in covenant situations.

D. Prophecy is <u>not</u> exclusively or primarily predictive in nature. Prediction is one way to confirm his office and his message, but it must be noted "less than 2% of OT prophecy is Messianic. Less than 5% specifically describes the New Covenant Age. Less than 1% concerns events yet to come." (Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth*, p. 166).

E. Prophets represent God to the people, while Priests represent the people to God. This is a general statement. There are exceptions like Habakkuk, who addresses questions to God.

F. One reason it is difficult to understand the prophets is because we do not know how their books were structured. They are not chronological. They seem to be thematic but not always the way one would expect. Often there is no obvious historical setting, time frame or clear division between oracles. These books are difficult (1) to read through in one sitting; (2) to outline by topic; and (3) to ascertain the central truth or authorial intent in each oracle.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF PROPHECY

A. In the Old Testament there seems to be a development of the concept of "prophet" and "prophecy." In early Israel there developed a fellowship of prophets, led by a strong charismatic leader such as Elijah or Elisha. Sometimes the phrase, "the sons of the prophets," was used to designate this group (2 Kings 2). The prophets were characterized by forms of ecstasy (1 Sam. 10:10-13; 19:18-24).

B. However, this period passed rapidly into individual prophets. There were those prophets (both true and false) who identified with the King, and lived at the palace (Gad, Nathan). Also, there were those who were independent, sometimes totally unconnected with the status quo of Israeli society (Amos). They include both male and female (2 Kgs. 22:14.)

C. The prophet was often a revealer of the future, conditioned on man's immediate response. Often the prophet's task was an unfolding of God's universal plan for His creation which is not affected by human response. This universal eschatological plan is unique among the prophets of the Ancient Near East. Prediction and Covenant fidelity are twin foci of the prophetic messages (cf. Fee and Stuart, p. 150). This implies that the prophets are primarily corporate in focus. They usually, but not exclusively, address the nation.

D. Most prophetic material was orally presented. It was later combined by means of theme, chronology, or other patterns of Near Eastern Literature which are lost to us. Because it was oral it is not as structured as written prose. This makes the books difficult to read straight through and difficult to understand without a specific historical setting.

E. The prophets use several patterns to convey their messages.

1. Court Scene – God takes His people to court, often it is a divorce case where YHWH rejects his wife (Israel) for her unfaithfulness (Hosea 4; Micah 6).
2. Funeral dirge – the special meter of this type of message and its characteristic "woe" sets it apart as a special form (Isaiah 5; Habakkuk 2).
3. Covenant Blessing Pronouncement – the conditional nature of the Covenant is emphasized and the consequences, both positively and negatively, are spelled out for the future (Deuteronomy 27-28).

V. HELPFUL GUIDELINES FOR INTERPRETING PROPHECY

A. Find the intent of the original prophet (editor) by noting the historical setting and the literary context of each oracle. Usually it will involve Israel breaking the Mosaic Covenant in some way.

B. Read and interpret the whole oracle, not just a part; outline it as to content. See how it relates to surrounding oracles. Try to outline the whole book.

C. Assume a literal interpretation of the passage until something in the text itself points you to figurative usage; then put the figurative language into prose.

D. Analyze symbolic action in light of historical setting and parallel passages. Be sure to remember this Ancient Near Eastern literature is not western or modern literature.

E. Treat prediction with care.

1. Are they exclusively for the author's day?
2. Were they subsequently fulfilled in Israel's history?
3. Are they yet future events?
4. Do they have a contemporary fulfillment and yet a future fulfillment?
5. Allow the authors of the Bible, not modern authors, to guide your answers.

F. Special concerns

1. Is the prediction qualified by conditional response?
2. Is it certain to whom the prophecy is addressed (and why)?
3. Is there a possibility, both biblically and/or historically, for multiple fulfilment?

4. The NT authors, under inspiration, were able to see the Messiah in many places in the OT that are not obvious to us. They seem to use typology or word play. Since we are not inspired we best leave this approach to them.

VI. HELPFUL BOOKS

A. *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy* by Carl E. Amending and W. Ward Basque
B. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart
C. *My Servants the Prophets* by Edward J. Young
D. *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks: Rethinking the Language of Biblical Prophecy and Apocalyptic* by D. Brent Sandy
E. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 4, pp. 1067-1078

▣

NASB, NRSV	**"But they did not do *it* again"**
Targum Onkelos, Vulgate	**"they did not cease to do it"**
TEV	**"but not for long"**
NJB	**"but only once"**
JPSOA	**"but did not continue"**
REB	**"for the first and only time"**
LXX	**"and they no longer added"**
Peshitta	**"and then they ceased to complain"**

As you can see from the different translations, this is a difficult phrase. The REB catches the essence of the meaning. This was a one-time visible manifestation of YHWH's delegation of leadership, even to two persons outside the seventy elders.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:26-30

[26]But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. [27]So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." [28]Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." [29]But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" [30]Then Moses returned to the camp, *both* he and the elders of Israel.

11:26-30 These men were part of the seventy elders, yet they remained in the camp, and also manifested the same charismatic sign. Joshua was bothered by this but Moses was not.

Numbers 11:29 shows the humility and spirituality of Moses.

It has always been questioned whether Moses spoke to YHWH

1. in front of the ark in the Tabernacle in the midst of the camp, Exod. 25:8; Num. 2:2,17; 5:3
2. at a special tent set up away from the camp; this option fits this context best (cf. v. 30), Exod. 33:7-11

It is never stated why these two of the seventy stayed in the camp. Obviously for whatever reason, it did not offend YHWH and they, too, participated in the blessing/responsibility of leadership.

11:29 This verse speaks to the essence of Exod. 19:5-6; Joel 2:28-32; and Eph. 5:18. All believers are meant to be God-called, God-gifted ministers (cf. Eph. 4:11-12). All humans were made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26-27). See Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan.

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

I must admit to you the reader that I am biased at this point. My systematic theology is not Calvinism or Dispensationalism, but it is Great Commission evangelicalism (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8). I Ezekiel 18; 36:22-39; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29; Rom. 3:9-18,19-20,21-31), all those created in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). The covenants are united in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:28-29; Col. 3:11). Jesus is the mystery of God, hidden but now revealed (cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13)! The NT gospel, not Israel, is the key to Scripture.

This pre-understanding colors all my interpretations of Scripture. I read all texts through it! It is surely a bias (all interpreters have them!), but it is a Scripturally-informed presupposition.

The focus of Genesis 1-2 is YHWH creating a place where He and His highest creation, mankind, can fellowship (cf. Gen. 1:26,27; 3:8). Physical creation is a stage for this interpersonal divine agenda.

1. St. Augustine characterized it as a divine-shaped hole in every person that can be filled only by God Himself.
2. C. S. Lewis called this planet "the touched planet," (i.e., prepared by God for humans).

The OT has many hints of this divine agenda.

1. Genesis 3:15 is the first promise that YHWH will not leave mankind in the terrible mess of sin and rebellion. It does not refer to Israel because there is no Israel, or covenant people, until the call of Abraham in Genesis 12.
2. Genesis 12:1-3 is YHWH's initial call and revelation to Abraham which will become the covenant people, Israel. But even in this initial call, God had an eye to the whole world. Notice verse 3!
3. In Exodus 20 (Deuteronomy 5) YHWH gave His law to Moses to guide His special people. Notice that in Exod. 19:5-6 YHWH reveals to Moses the unique relationship Israel will have. But also notice that they were chosen, like Abraham, to bless the world (cf. Exod. 19:5, "for all the earth is Mine"). Israel was to be a mechanism for the nations to know YHWH and be attracted to Him. Tragically they failed (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38).
4. In 1 Kings 8 Solomon dedicates the temple so all can come to YHWH (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:43,60)
5. In the Psalms – 22:27-28; 66:4; 86:9 (Rev. 15:4)
6. Through the prophets YHWH continued to reveal His universal redemptive plans.
   a. Isaiah – 2:2-4; 12:4-5; 25:6-9; 42:6,10-12; 45:22; 49:5-6; 51:4-5; 56:6-8; 60:1-3; 66:18,23
   b. Jeremiah – 3:17; 4:2; 16:19
   c. Micah 4:1-3
   d. Malachi 1:11

This universal emphasis is facilitated by the emergence of the "new covenant" (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38), which focuses on the mercy of YHWH, not the performance of fallen humans. There is a "new heart," a "new mind," and a " new spirit." Obedience is crucial but it is internal, not an eternal code only (cf. Rom. 3:21-31).

The NT clearly reinforces the universal redemptive plan in several ways.

1. The Great Commission – Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8
2. God's eternal plan (i.e., predestined) – Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; 13:29

3. God wants all humans to be saved – John 3:16; 4:42; Acts 10:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2; 4:14
4. Christ unites the OT and NT – Gal. 3:28-29; Eph. 2:11-3:13; Col. 3:11. All human barriers and distinctions are removed in Christ. Jesus is the "mystery of God," hidden but now revealed (Eph. 2:11-3:13).

The NT focuses on Jesus, not Israel. The gospel, not a nationality or geographical region, is central. Israel was the first revelation but Jesus is the ultimate revelation (cf. Matt. 5:17-48).

I hope you will take a moment to read the Special Topic: Why Do OT Covenant Promises Seem So Different from NT Covenant Promises. You can find it online at www.freebiblecommentary.org.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 11:31-35

[31]Now there went forth a wind from the LORD and it brought quail from the sea, and let *them* fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits *deep* on the surface of the ground. [32]The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. [33]While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very severe plague. [34]So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy. [35]From Kibroth-hattaavah the people set out for Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth.

11:31-35 These verses describe the coming of the quail and the people's gluttonous reaction. This is the second occurrence of YHWH providing quail (cf. Exodus 16; Ps. 78:20,27; 106:13-15).

11:30 "a wind" This is one of the possible meanings of *ruah* (BDB 924; see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17.

▣ **"cubits"** See Special Topic: Cubit. There are two options:

1. there were a lot of quail!
2. the birds flew low to the ground and could easily be gathered (Rashi)

SPECIAL TOPIC: CUBIT

There are two cubits (BDB 52, KB 61) in the Bible. The regular cubit is the distance between an average man's longest finger and his elbow, usually around 18 inches (e.g., Gen. 6:15; Exod. 25:10,17,23; 26:2,8,13,16; 27:1,9,12,13,14,16,18; Num. 35:4,5; Deut. 3:11). There is also a longer cubit (royal cubit) used in construction (i.e., Solomon's temple), which was common in Egypt (i.e., 21 fingers), Palestine (i.e., 24 fingers), and sometimes Babylon (i.e., 30 fingers). It was 21 inches long (cf. 2 Chr. 3:3; Ezek. 40:5; 43:13).

The ancients used parts of the human body for measurement. The people of the Ancient Near East used:

1. out stretched arms
2. length from elbow to middle finger (cubit)
3. width from outstretched thumb to little finger (span, cf. Exod. 28:16; 39:9; 1 Sam. 17:4)

4. length between all four fingers of a closed hand (handbreadth, cf. Exod. 25:25; 37:12; 1 Kgs. 7:26; 2 Chr. 4:5)
5. length of middle joint of finger (fingerbreadth, Jer. 52:21)

11:32 "homers" See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

▣ **"they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp"** The VERB "spread out" (BDB 1008, KB 1474) is found in this verse in both the *Qal* IMPERFECT and INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE. The thrust is that every person gathered far more than they needed and did not trust YHWH's word of providing the birds for a full month (cf. v. 20). They apparently plucked, gutted, and laid out the carcasses to dry all around the camp. They were attempting to preserve the meat, not trusting YHWH's daily provision, just like the gathering of the manna (see Special Topic: Manna at Num. 11:6-9).

11:33 This verse reflects YHWH's prediction in Num. 11:20, which may refer to some kind of plague (cf. Ps. 106:13-15). They were greedy, self-seeking people.

11:34 "Kibroth-hattaavah" This is a Hebrew phrase, "the graves of desire" (BDB 869, cf. Num. 33:16,17; Deut. 9:22).

What a tragedy; YHWH's wonderful provision turned into greed and selfishness which demanded a divine judgment. The rabble (v. 7) is being eliminated!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How can we reconcile YHWH's love and compassion with His anger and judgment?
2. Who were "the rabble" (v. 4)?
3. Define "manna." What was its purpose?
4. Explain Num. 11:15:
   a. "please kill me"
   b. "do not let me see my wretchedness"
5. Is the Spirit of the OT the same as the Spirit of the NT? Why, why not.
6. What is the implication of v. 20, when compared with Ps. 106:13-15?
7. How is Num. 11:23 related to Isa. 55:9-11?
8. Where was the tent where YHWH descended in Num. 11:25 (i.e., in the camp or outside the camp)?
9. Define "prophesied" (v. 26). What was its purpose in this context?
10. What is the theological implication of Num. 11:29?
11. Why was YHWH angry about how the Israelites received His gift of meat?

NUMBERS 12

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Murmuring of Miriam and Aaron	Dissension of Aaron and Miriam	A Dispute Over Moses' Authority As Leader	Miriam Is Punished	Miriam and Aaron Criticize Moses
12:1-8	12:1-8	12:1-9	12:1-3	12:1-3
				God's Answer
			12:4-8	12:4-8
(6-8)	(6-8)	(6-8)		(6-8)
12:9-15	12:9-13		12:9-12	12:9-10
		12:10-16		The Prayer of Moses
				12:11-12
			12:13	12:13
	12:14-16		12:14-16	12:14
				12:15-16
12:16				

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Notice how so many people are grumbling about things.
   1. the people, Num. 11:1
   2. the rabble, Num. 11:4
   3. Moses, Num. 11:10-15
   4. Joshua, Num. 11:28
   5. Miriam and Aaron, Num. 12:1-2
   6. the 10 spies, Numbers 13
   7. the whole congregation, Num. 14:1-4

B. There are several theological issues alluded to in this context.
   1. the desired giftedness of all God's people (Num. 11:29)
   2. the non-problem of interracial marriage (Num. 12:1; Ruth, and Jewish tradition about Rahab of Jericho)
   3. the obvious editorial addition in Num. 12:3. The Pentateuch is an historical editorial process of some kind. See Special Topic: Pentateuch Source Criticism (J.E.P.D. at Intro. to Numbers, VII. C. 1).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:1-8

[1]Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman); [2]and they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only

through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?" And the LORD heard it. [3](Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.) [4]Suddenly the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, "You three come out to the tent of meeting." So the three of them came out. [5]Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, [6]He said,

"Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision.
I shall speak with him in a dream.
[7]Not so, with My servant Moses,
He is faithful in all My household;
[8]With him I speak mouth to mouth,
Even openly, and not in dark sayings,
And he beholds the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

12:1 "because of the Cushite woman" The ADJECTIVE "Cushite" (BDB 469, KB 467) usually refers to a dark skinned person from Nubia or Ethiopia (cf. 2 Chr. 12:3; 14:9,11,12; 16:8; Jer. 13:23; 38:7,10,12; 39:16; Dan. 11:43; Amos 9:7, and in Acts 8:27). Moses married a black lady!

Apparently Aaron and Miriam joined the complainers, questioning Moses' and, thereby, YHWH's leadership.

12:2 This same argument is repeated by Korah in Num. 16:3. It is a half-truth.

1. YHWH does call all His people "a kingdom of priests" (Exod. 19:4-5; Jer. 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32)
2. YHWH does choose some to lead His people (Moses was surely YHWH's special leader, cf. Num. 12:6-8)

Apparently the spiritual empowering of the seventy elders threatened Aaron's and Miriam's position, at least in their minds and hearts.

▣ **"And the LORD heard it"** Be careful of attacking God's leaders!

See Special Topic: Anthropomorphic Language to Describe God at Num. 6:24-26**.**

12:3 Rarely are people in the Bible called "humble" (BDB 776).

1. Moses – here
2. eschatological Messianic king – Zech. 9:9
3. Jesus – Matt. 11:29

12:4 "come out to the tent of meeting" See full note about the location of this tent at Num. 11:26-30.

12:5 "a pillar of cloud" See notes at Exod. 13:21-22; 27:10-17; 33:10; Num. 12:5; 14:14. This was a special physical sign of YHWH's presence but veiled so as not to kill unholy, fallen humans!

See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1052-1055.

12:6 "If there is. . ." The NASB follows the LXX. The MT has literally, "If your prophet was YHWH." The LXX emends the MT.

▣ **"a prophet"** Notice the two ways YHWH communicates His message to them.

1. vision – BDB 909 I, cf. Gen. 46:2; 1 Sam. 3:10,15,21; Ezek. 1:1; 8:1-3; 11:24; 40:2; 43:3; Dan. 8:1,2; 10:11; Joel2:28
2. dream – BDB 321, cf. Gen. 28:12; 37:5,6,9,10; Joel 2:28; false dreams in Deut. 13:2,4,6; Jer. 23:25; 29:8; Zech. 10:2

In Jer. 18:18 three types/persons involved in revelation.

1. law – priests
2. wise counsel – sages
3. message – prophets

See Special Topic: Prophecy (OT) at Num. 11:25.

12:7-8 Moses had a unique intimate relationship with YHWH.

1. he was most faithful (cf. Heb. 3:2,5)
2. YHWH spoke to him mouth to mouth (Hebrew idiom for personally, cf. Deut. 34:10; Jer. 32:4; 34:3)
3. YHWH did not speak to him in dark sayings (i.e., riddles, hard to understand imagery)
4. he had seen YHWH (cf. Exod. 24:9-11; somehow this does not contradict Exod. 33:20)

To speak against Moses was to speak against YHWH!

12:7 "faithful" See Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness (OT).

SPECIAL TOPIC: BELIEVE, TRUST, FAITH, AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. Opening Statement

It needs to be stated that the use of this theological concept, so crucial to the NT, is not as clearly defined in the OT. It is surely there, but demonstrated in key selected passages and persons.

The OT blends

A. the individual and the community

B. the personal encounter and covenant obedience

Faith is both personal encounter and daily lifestyle! It is easier to describe in a person than in a lexical form (i.e., word study). This personal aspect is best illustrated in

A. Abraham and his seed

B. David and Israel

These men met/encountered God and their lives were permanently changed (not perfect lives, but continuing faith). Testing revealed weaknesses and strengths of their faith encounter with God, but the intimate, trusting relationship continued through time! It was tested and refined, but it continued as evidenced by their devotion and lifestyle.

II. Main root used

A. אמן (BDB 52)

1. VERB

a. *Qal* stem – to support, to nourish (i.e., 2 Kgs. 10:1,5; Esther 2:7, the non-theological usage)

b. *Niphal* stem – to make sure or firm, to establish, to confirm, to be faithful or trustworthy
   (1) of men, Isa. 8:2; 53:1; Jer. 40:14
   (2) of things, Isa. 22:23
   (3) of God, Deut. 7:9; Isa. 49:7; Jer. 42:5
c. *Hiphil* stem – to stand firm, to believe, to trust
   (1) Abraham believed God, Gen. 15:6
   (2) the Israelites in Egypt believed, Exod. 4:31; 14:31 (negated in Deut. 1:32)
   (3) Israelites believed YHWH spoke through Moses, Exod. 19:9; Ps. 106:12,24
   (4) Ahaz did not trust in God, Isa 7:9
   (5) whoever believes in it/him, Isa. 28:16
   (6) believe truths about God, Isa. 43:10-12

2. NOUN (MASCULINE) – faithfulness (i.e., Deut. 32:20; Isa. 25:1; 26:2)
3. ADVERB – truly, verily, I agree, may it be so (cf. Deut. 27:15-26; 1 Kgs. 1:36; 1 Chr. 16:36; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 11:5; 28:6). This is the liturgical use of "amen" in the OT and NT.

B. אמת (BDB 54) FEMININE NOUN, firmness, faithfulness, truth
1. of men, Isa. 10:20; 42:3; 48:1
2. of God, Exod. 34:6; Ps. 117:2; Isa. 38:18,19; 61:8
3. of truth, Deut. 32:4; 1 Kgs. 22:16; Ps. 33:4; 98:3; 100:5; 119:30; Jer. 9:5; Zech. 8:16

C. אמונה (BDB 53), firmness, steadfastness, fidelity
1. of hands, Exod. 17:12
2. of times, Isa. 33:6
3. of humans, Jer. 5:3; 7:28; 9:2
4. of God, Ps. 40:11; 88:11; 89:1,2,5,8; 119:138

III. Paul's use of this OT concept

A. Paul bases his new understanding of YHWH and the OT on his personal encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (cf. Acts 9; 22; 26).

B. He found OT support for his new understanding in two key OT passages which use the root אמן.
1. Gen. 15:6 – Abram's personal encounter initiated by God (Genesis 12) resulted in an obedient life of faith (Genesis 12-22). Paul alludes to this in Romans 4 and Galatians 3.
2. Isa. 28:16 – those who believe in it (i.e., God's tested and firmly placed cornerstone) will never be
   a. Rom. 9:33, "put to shame" or "be disappointed"
   b. Rom. 10:11, same as above
3. Hab. 2:4 – those who know the faithful God should live faithful lives (cf. Jer. 7:28). Paul uses this text in Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11 (also note Heb. 10:38).

IV. Peter's use of the OT concept

A. Peter combines
1. Isa. 8:14 – 1 Pet. 2:8 (stumbling block)
2. Isa. 28:16 – 1 Pet. 2:6 (cornerstone)

3. Ps. 118:22 – 1 Pet 2:7 (rejected stone)

B. He turns the unique language that describes Israel, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" from

1. Deut. 10:15; Isa. 43:21
2. Isa. 61:6; 66:21
3. Exod. 19:6; Deut. 7:6

and now uses it for the church's faith in Christ

V. John's use of the concept

A. Its NT usage

The term "believe" is from the Greek term *pisteuō*, which can also be translated "believe," "faith," or "trust." For example, the NOUN does not occur in the Gospel of John, but the VERB is used often. In John 2:23-25 there is uncertainty as to the genuineness of the crowd's commitment to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Other examples of this superficial use of the term "believe" are in John 8:31-59 and Acts 8:13, 18-24. True biblical faith is more than an initial response. It must be followed by a process of discipleship (cf. Matt. 13:20-22,31-32).

B. Its use with PREPOSITIONS

1. *eis* means "into." This unique construction emphasizes believers putting their trust/faith in Jesus
   a. into His name (John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 1 John 5:13)
   b. into Him (John 2:11; 3:15,18; 4:39; 6:40; 7:5,31,39,48; 8:30; 9:36; 10:42; 11:45, 48; 12:37,42; Matt. 18:6; Acts 10:43; Phil. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:8)
   c. into Me (John 6:35; 7:38; 11:25,26; 12:44,46; 14:1,12; 16:9; 17:20)
   d. into the Son (John 3:36; 9:35; 1 John 5:10)
   e. into Jesus (John 12:11; Acts 19:4; Gal. 2:16)
   f. into Light (John 12:36)
   g. into God (John 14:1)
2. *ev* means "in" as in John 3:15; Mark 1:15; Acts 5:14
3. *epi* means "in" or "upon," as in Matt. 27:42; Acts 9:42; 11:17; 16:31; 22:19; Rom. 4:5, 24; 9:33; 10:11; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Pet. 2:6
4. the DATIVE CASE with no PREPOSITION as in Gal. 3:6; Acts 18:8; 27:25; 1 John 3:23; 5:10
5. *hoti,* which means "believe that," gives content as to what to believe
   a. Jesus is the Holy One of God (John 6:69)
   b. Jesus is the I Am (John 8:24)
   c. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Him (John 10:38)
   d. Jesus is the Messiah (John 11:27; 20:31)
   e. Jesus is the Son of God (John 11:27; 20:31)
   f. Jesus was sent by the Father (John 11:42; 17:8,21)
   g. Jesus is one with the Father (John 14:10-11)
   h. Jesus came from the Father (John 16:27,30)
   i. Jesus identified Himself in the covenant name of the Father, "I Am" (John 8:24; 13:19)

j. We will live with Him (Rom. 6:8)
k. Jesus died and rose again (1 Thess. 4:14)

VI. Conclusion

A. Biblical faith is the human response to a divine word/promise. God always initiates (i.e., John 6:44,65), but part of this divine communication is the need for humans to respond.
1. repentance
2. faith/trust
3. obedience
4. perseverance

B. Biblical faith is
1. a personal relationship (initial faith)
2. an affirmation of biblical truth (faith in God's revelation, i.e., Scripture)
3. an appropriate obedient response to it (daily faithfulness)

Biblical faith is not a ticket to heaven or an insurance policy. It is a personal relationship. This is the purpose of creation, humans being made in the image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) of God. The issue is "intimacy." God desires fellowship, not a certain theological standing! But fellowship with a holy God demands that the children demonstrate the "family" characteristics (i.e., holiness, cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). The Fall (cf. Genesis 3) affected our ability to respond appropriately. Therefore, God acted on our behalf (cf. Ezek. 36:27-38), giving us a "new heart" and "new spirit," which enables us through faith and repentance to fellowship with Him and obey Him!

All three are crucial. All three must be maintained. The goal is to know God (both Hebrew and Greek senses) and to reflect His character in our lives. The goal of faith is not heaven someday, but Christlikeness every day!

C. Human faithfulness is the result (NT), not the basis (OT) for a relationship with God: human's faith in His faithfulness; human's trust in His trustworthiness. The heart of the NT view of salvation is that humans must respond initially and continually to the initiating grace and mercy of God, demonstrated in Christ. He has loved, He has sent, He has provided; we must respond in faith and faithfulness (cf. Eph. 2:8-9 and 10)!

The faithful God wants a faithful people to reveal Himself to a faithless world and bring them to personal faith in Him.

12:8 "My servant" See Special Topic: My Servant at Num. 11:11.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:9-15

[9]So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed. [10]But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam *was* leprous, as *white as* snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, she *was* leprous. [11]Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account *this* sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. [12]Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!" [13]Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!" [14]But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up

for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again." [15]So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.

12:10 Apparently Miriam was upset over

1. Moses marrying
2. Moses marrying outside of Israel
3. Moses marrying a black woman

If #3 is correct, it is ironic that YHWH's judgment (cf. Deut. 24:9) was to turn Miriam "white." She had to get Moses to pray for her skin to be pigmented again.

12:11-12 Moses prays for her (two JUSSIVES), and by implication, Aaron.

1. do not account *this* sin to us (notice the PLURALS referring to both Aaron and Miriam), Num. 12:11
2. do not let her be like one dead, Num. 12:12 (the rest of v. 12 is unusual and uncertain in meaning. It is one of the ten texts that the Masoretic scholars altered, apparently to protect the reputation of Moses', Aaron's, and Miriam's mother)

12:13 Moses continues his prayer (*Qal* IMPERATIVE) in v. 13. He prays specifically for YHWH to heal (BDB 950, KB 1272, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) her. See Special Topics:

1. Healing
2. Intercessory Prayer at Num. 11:2

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEALING

It is shocking to me that <u>not</u> all those healed in the NT were simultaneously "saved" (i.e., trust Christ and have eternal life). Physical healing is a poor substitute for spiritual salvation. Miracles are only truly helpful if they bring us to God. All humans live in a fallen world. Bad things happen. God often chooses not to intervene, but this says nothing about His love and concern. Be careful of demanding that God act miraculously for every need in this current evil age. He is sovereign and we do not know the full implications of any given situation.

At this point I would like to add my commentary notes from 2 Tim. 4:20 about Paul and physical healing (see <u>www.freebiblecommentary.org</u>):

> "There are so many questions we would like to ask the NT writers. One subject all believers think about is physical healing. In Acts (cf. 19:12; 28:7-9) Paul is able to heal, but here and in 2 Cor. 12:7-10 and Phil. 2:25-30, he seems unable. Why are some healed and not all, and is there a time window connected to healing which has closed?
>
> I surely believe in a supernatural, compassionate Father who has and does heal physically as well as spiritually, but why is this healing aspect seemingly present and then noticeably absent? I do not think that it is connected to human faith, for surely Paul had faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 12). I feel that healing and believing miracles affirmed the truthfulness and validity of the gospel, which it still does in areas of the world where it is first proclaimed. However, I feel that God wants us to walk by faith and not by sight. Also, physical illness is often allowed in believer's lives
>
> 1. as temporal punishment for sin
> 2. as consequences of life in a fallen world

3. to help believers mature spiritually

My problem is that I never know which one is involved! My prayer for God's will to be done in each case is not a lack of faith but a sincere attempt to allow the gracious, compassionate God to work His will in each life."

Here are my conclusions:

1. Healing was a significant aspect of the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles.
2. It was intended primarily to confirm the radically new message about God and His kingdom.
3. It shows the heart of God for hurting people.
4. God has not changed (Mal. 3:6) and He still acts in love in healing (all the spiritual gifts continue, cf. 1 Cor. 12:9,28,30).
5. There are examples where the healing of those with great faith did not take place (a booklet that has helped me in this area is Gordon Fee, "The Disease of the Health, Wealth Gospel").
   a. Paul, 2 Cor. 12:7-10
   b. Trophimus, 2 Tim. 4:20
6. Sin and sickness were associated in rabbinical thought (cf. John. 9:2; James 5:13-18).
7. Healing is not a guarantee of the New Covenant. It is not part of the atonement described in Isaiah 53:4-5 and Psalm 103:3, where healing is imagery for forgiveness (see Isa. 1:5-6, where sickness is a metaphor for sin).
8. There is true mystery about why some are healed and some are not.
9. It is possible that although healing is present in every age, there was a significant increase during Jesus' lifetime; this increase will occur again just before His return.

The modern author who has helped me realize that my own denominational tradition has depreciated the work of the Spirit, especially the miraculous ones, is Gordon Fee. He has several books but the two I like that deal with this area are:

1. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*
2. *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit and the Letters of Paul*

Like most biblical issues, these are two extremes. We must all walk in the light we have in love, but always be open to more light from the Bible and the Spirit.

▣ **"God"** This is the general name for deity in the ANE, *El*. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, A. at Num. 1:1.

The NET Bible, p. 303, mentions that some scholars see *El* (God) as "al" (not), making the phrase "Please, not this! Pray, heal her!"

12:14-15 Miriam's verbal attack on Moses (Num. 12:1) angered YHWH. The rabbis say YHWH struck Miriam because she vocalized the complaint (FEMININE VERB in v. 1 and her name, surprisingly, occurs first). It truly was a sin (Num. 12:11). Sin has consequences even when forgiven. Miriam must remain isolated outside the camp for seven days. One wonders why Aaron's verbal attack (12:1) is not specifically mentioned.

12:14 "spit in her face" This is an emphatic construction of an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a PERFECT VERB of the same root (BDB 439, KB 440). This was a cultural act/gesture of rejection (cf. Deut. 25:9).

▣ **"shame"** See Special Topic: Shame.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SHAME (several Hebrew and Greek words) IN ITS THEOLOGICAL SENSE

"Shame" denotes the judgment of God on sin (i.e., Gen. 2:25, no guilt compared to Gen. 3:10, fear, guilt, and a sense of disfellowship). Note the antithetical parallelism of Psalm 31:17a compared with 31:17b. Shame is associated with judgment in 2 Chr. 32:21; Ps. 53:5; 119:1-8,80; Dan. 12:2.

Shame is not just injury to one's reputation or pride, but a serious violation of covenant requirements and loss of fellowship with God. It is often used of idolaters (cf. Exod. 32:25; Ps. 97:7; Isa. 42:17; 44:9,11; 45:16; Jer. 50:2; 51:17).

For people of the ANE "shame" was a horrible condition. It affected the very core of one's being (cf. Ps. 69:20).

The great promise of no shame for those who put their trust in YHWH (cf. Ps. 25:2-3,20; 31:1,17; 119:6,31,46; Isa. 49:23; Joel 2:27) is repeated in the NT in Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6; 1 John 2:28.

The "cross" of Christ is called a "shame" (cf. Heb. 6:6; 12:2). Those who oppose the gospel will have their "glory" turned to shame!

▣ **"seven"** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4 at Num. 11:16-18.

▣ **"outside the camp"** This is a requirement of how to protect the community from disease (cf. Lev. 13:45-52; Num. 5:1-4).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 12:16

[16]Afterward, however, the people moved out from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why were Aaron and Miriam angry?
2. Why is Miriam mentioned first in Num. 12:1?
3. Define "Cushite."
4. Why does Num. 12:3 imply a later editor?
5. In Num. 12:4, where is the tent of meeting?
6. How does one reconcile Num. 12:8c with Exod. 33:20?
7. Why is Miriam's being turned white irony?

NUMBERS 13

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Spies View the Land	Spies Sent Into Canaan	The Reconnaissance of the Land	The Spies	The Reconnaissance in Canaan
13:1-16	13:1-16	13:1-16	13:1-15	13:1-2
				13:3-4
				13:5
				13:6
				13:7
				13:8
				13:9
				13:10
				13:11
				13:12
				13:13
				13:14
				13:15
			13:16	13:16
13:17-20	13:17-20	13:17-20	13:17-20	13:17-20a
				13:20b-24
13:21-22	13:21-25	13:21-24	13:21-24	
13:23-24				
The Spies' Reports				The Expedition's Report
13:25-29		13:25-29	13:25-29	13:25-26
	13:26-29			
				13:27-29
13:30-33	13:30-33	13:30-33	13:30	13:30-33
			13:31-33	

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This is an important historical event in the life of the people of God (cf. Deut. 1:19-46; Joesphus, *Antiq.* 3.14-6.2)

B. This was another of God's tests of faith for His newly formed nation. Like the others, it was a miserable failure. See Special Topic: God Tests His People.

C. The geographical categorizations of the Canaanite tribes are based on Num. 13:29. "The Amorites" (BDB 57) is usually used as a collective term for all of the tribes of Canaan, but when it is not, they are located in the highlands.

Another collective term for all of the tribes of Canaan is "Canaanites" (BDB 489 I), but at other times this refers to those who live on the flat, coastal plains or the flatland next to the Jordan.

D. This literary unit (Numbers 13-14) demonstrates the spiritual priority of Joshua and Caleb. The lives of these two men will be developed in later historical accounts of the wilderness wandering period.

E. The intercession of Moses, found in Num. 14:13-19, is a classical passage on God's development of a leader (see Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer at Num. 11:2).

SPECIAL TOPIC: GOD TESTS HIS PEOPLE (OT)

The term "test" (BDB 650, KB 702, *Piel* PERFECT; Gen. 22:1) is used in the sense of "to try." It is used in the sense of bringing someone to the place whereby they recognize and act on their own stated priorities. It is obvious from Genesis 12 through 22 that God is presenting Abraham with a series of situations (the rabbis say ten) in order to focus his love and trust in God and God alone (possibly Job). These tests were not so much for God's sake, but for Abraham's sake and his understanding of the God who called him out of Ur of the Chaldees. Abraham is asked to give up family, home, friends, inheritance, tradition and even the future (his promised son in Genesis 22) to follow God by faith. God tests all of His children in the area of their priority (cf. Matt. 4:lff; Heb. 5:8; 12:5-13).

God tests (BDB 650) in order to know (BDB 393, see Special Topic: Know). Israel often tested God by their disobedience and God proved to be true to His word. Now God will give Israel and her people a chance to demonstrate their spoken allegiance and faith.

1. God tested His people corporately
   a. Exod. 15:25; 16:4; 20:20
   b. Deut. 8:2,16; 13:3
   c. Jdgs. 2:22; 3:1,4
2. God tested individual Israelites
   a. Abraham, Gen. 12:1-12
   b. Hezekiah, 2 Chr. 32:31
3. The Psalm writers cry out for God to test them so as to remove any hidden flaws (cf. Ps. 26:2; 139:23)
4. The NT people of God are also tested, as was Jesus (Matthew 4; Luke 4; Heb. 5:8, see Special Topic: Greek Terms for Testing and Their Connotations).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:1-16

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, [2]"Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them." [3]So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran

at the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the sons of Israel. [4]These then were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; [5]from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; [6]from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; [7]from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; [8]from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; [9]from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; [10]from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; [11]from the tribe of Joseph, from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; [12]from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; [13]from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; [14]from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; [15]from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. [16]These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.

13:1 "Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying" When one compares Num. 13:1 with Deut. 1:22, there seems to be an obvious discrepancy. In Numbers 13 it is God who instructs Moses to send out the spies, while in Deuteronomy 1 it is the people who ask to send out the spies under the auspices of the military reconnoitering of the land. It is possible that God instructed Moses after the people brought the request.

13:2 "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel" Both accounts seem to begin very positively. There is no sense of the lack of faith which will manifest itself in the upcoming verses. Again, this verse reemphasizes that this is the historical culmination of the promise to Abraham and his descendants, especially Gen. 15:12-22.

The VERB "spy out" or "reconnoiter" (BDB 1064, KB 1707, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense) occurs almost exclusively in chapters 13-14.

1. Num. 13:2,16,17,21,25,32
2. Num. 14:6,7,34,36,38

▣ **"you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them"** The tribe of Levi is not included here. Therefore, this would involve twelve different representatives because Joseph has divided his inheritance between his two children, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The term "leader," here, is the Hebrew word for "prince" (BDB 672). There has been some confusion because the list of the representatives (cf. vv. 4-15) is different from the list of princes of the tribes found in both Numbers 1 and 2 as well as Numbers 7. Many assume that the early lists were of older men and the list here was uniquely of men of military age (i.e., 20-50 years).

13:3 "So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran" It is assumed that this locality is Kadesh-Barnea, the famous, large oasis to the south of Beer-Sheba. However, the location of these geographical units within the book of Numbers is extremely difficult to ascertain. See Special Topic: The Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

13:6 "Caleb" Caleb's origin is uncertain but he became a member of the tribe of Judah. See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 456.

13:16 "but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua" Hoseha, the son of Nun, is mentioned in Deut. 32:44. Joshua is the Hebrew term for "salvation" (BDB 448; NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 808-810), which in the OT, means "physical deliverance" (see Special Topic: Salvation [OT] at Num. 10:9). However, in Exod. 17:9, he is already called Joshua. It is uncertain if this verse is the official naming of Joshua and the Exodus account is simply an anachronism. It is significant that the covenant name for God, which was revealed uniquely at Mt. Sinai (cf. Exod. 3:14; 6:3), is prefixed in Joshua's name. This is the Hebrew form of the Aramaic name "Jesus." It can be translated: "YHWH saves," "YHWH is salvation," "YHWH is the One saving us," etc.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:17-20

[17]When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. [18]See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong *or* weak, whether they are few or many. [19]How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are *they* like *open* camps or with fortifications? [20]How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

13:17 "Go up there into the Negev" This is a term (BDB 616) which literally means "the dryness" and is used to describe the semi-arid desert on the southern border of Judea.

▣ **"the hill country"** Usually this phrase is linked to a particular location, like "the hill country of Judah," but in this context, because a city in the far north of Canaan is mentioned (13:21), it probably refers to the low, rounding hill between the coastal plain and the river valley of the Jordan through the south to north length of Canaan.

13:18 "See what the land is like" There seem to be two basic purposes for sending the spies: (1) to check out the agricultural aspects of the land (cf. Num. 13:20) and (2) to check out the military fortifications of the land (cf. Num. 13:18-19; Deut. 1:22).

Notice the phrases.

1. whether the people who live there are strong or weak
2. whether they are few or many
3. whether the land is good or bad
4. what kind of cities (i.e., walled or unwalled)
5. whether the land is fat or lean (i.e., fruit trees)

13:20

NASB	**"Make an effort then to get"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"Be of good courage"**
NRSV, NJB	**"Be bold"**
TEV	**"Be sure to bring. . ."**
JPSOA	**"Take pains to bring back. . ."**
REB	**"Go boldly in"**
LXX	**"you shall persevere"**

The form of this VERB is described differently.

1. *OT Parsing Guide*, p. 115, has a *Hithpael* PERFECT with *waw*
2. *Analytical Key to the OT*, p. 632, has a *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE

The term (BDB 304, KB 302) in the *Hithpael* can mean

1. strengthen oneself
2. put forth strength or use one's strength; the BDB lists Num. 13:20 under this meaning

▣ **"Now the time was the time of the first grapes"** This would have been about two months after they left Mt. Sinai (cf. Num. 10:11). It would be around the time of our late July.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:21-22

[21]So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath. [22]When they had gone up into the Negev, they came to Hebron where Ahiman, Sheshai

and Talmai, the descendants of Anak were. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

13:21 "the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, at Lebo-hamath" The wilderness of Zin forms the southern boundary to the Promised Land (see Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 9:1), while Lebo-hamath is north of the Syrian capital of Damascus (cf. Josh. 13:5). For more detail on the geographical limits of the Promised Land, see Num. 34:1-12. Although this account majors on the events around Hebron, it seems to imply a journey far to the north which took thirty days.

13:22 "the descendants of Anak" The term "Anak" seems to mean "long necked" (BDB 778 I, KB 859 II). Apparently they are a group of what we would call giants. Another name for this group is the *Nephilim* (BDB 658, KB 709), which is found in v. 33. It is uncertain if v. 33 is a true description of Anak and his descendants or if this was a mythological conclusion which was meant to reinforce the report of the fearful spies. The term *Nephilim* seems to come from Gen. 6:4, where it could mean "the fallen ones." It is translated in KJV as "giants" and they seem to be the result of angels copulating with human women. This, however, is simply one interpretation of this passage. However, this is the opinion of the very influential book of I Enoch. We encounter these extremely tall men several times in the Bible, i.e., Og of Bashan and Goliath.

See Special Topics: Terms Uses for Tall/Powerful Warriors of People Groups (Giants) and "sons of God" in Genesis 6.

SPECIAL TOPIC: TERMS USED FOR TALL/POWERFUL WARRIORS OR PEOPLE GROUPS (GIANTS)

These large/tall/powerful people are called by several names.

1. *Nephilim* (giants, BDB 658, KB 709) – Gen. 6:4 (see Special Topic: Sons of God in Genesis 6); Num. 13:33
2. *Rephaim* (giants, BDB 952 II, KB 1274) – Gen. 14:5; 15:20; Deut. 2:11,20; 3:11,13; Jos. 12:4; 13:12; 2 Sam. 21:16,18,20,22; 1 Chr. 20:4,6,8
3. *Zamzummin* (BDB 273), *zuzim* (BDB 265, KB 266) – Gen. 14:5; Deut. 2:20
4. *Emim* (BDB 34) – Gen. 14:5; Deut. 2:10-11
5. *Anakim* (sons of *Anak*, the long-necked ones, BDB 778 I, KB 859 II) – Num. 13:33; Deut. 1:28; 2:10-11,21; 9:2; Jos. 11:21-22; 14:12,15; 15:14; Jdgs. 1:20

Notice how Gen. 14:5 mentions three of this group of large men (cf. LXX, Vulgate). The term "*Rephaim*" is also used of those living in *Sheol* (cf. Job 26:5; Ps. 88:10-11; Isa. 26:14,19).

SPECIAL TOPIC: "the sons of God" in Genesis 6

A. There is great controversy over the identification of the phrase "the sons of God." There have been three major interpretations
   1. the phrase refers to the godly line of Seth (cf. Genesis 5)
   2. the phrase refers to a group of angelic beings
   3. the phrase refers to the kings or tyrants of Cain's line (cf. Genesis 4)

B. Evidence for the phrase referring to Seth's line

1. the immediate literary context of Genesis 4 and 5 shows the development of the rebellious line of Cain and the godly line of Seth. Therefore, contextual evidence seems to favor the godly line of Seth.
2. the rabbis have been divided over their understanding of this passage. Some assert that it refers to Seth (but most to angels).
3. the phrase, "the sons of God," though most often used for angelic beings, rarely refers to human beings
   a. Deut. 14:1, "sons of YHWH your God"
   b. Deut. 32:5, "His sons"
   c. Exod. 21:16; 22:8-9, possibly Levitical Judges, cf. Ps. 82:1
   d. Psalm 73:15, "Thy children"
   e. Hosea 1:10, "sons of the Living God"

C. Evidence for the phrase referring to angelic beings

1. this has been the most common traditional understanding of the passage. The larger context of Genesis could support this view as another example of supernatural evil trying to thwart God's will for mankind (the rabbis say out of jealousy)
2. the phrase ("sons of God") is used overwhelmingly in the OT for angels
   a. Job 1:6
   b. Job 2:1
   c. Job 38:7
   d. Psalm 29:1
   e. Psalm 89:6,7
   f. Daniel 3:25
3. the intertestamental book of I Enoch, which was very popular among believers in the NT period, along with the *Genesis Apocryphon* from the Dead Sea Scrolls and *Jubilees* 5:1, interprets these as rebellious angels (I Enoch 12:4; 19:1; 21:1-10).
4. the immediate context of Genesis 6 seems to imply that "the mighty men who were of old, men of renown" came from this improper mixing of the orders of creation
5. I Enoch even asserts that Noah's Flood came to destroy this angelic/human union which was hostile towards YHWH and His plan for creation (cf. I Enoch 7:1ff; 15:1ff; 86:1ff)

D. Evidence for the phrase referring to kings or tyrants of Cain's line

1. there are several ancient translations that support this view
   a. Targum or Onkelos (second century A.D.) translates "sons of God" as "sons of nobles"
   b. Symmachus (second century A.D.) Greek translation of the OT, translated "sons of God" as "the sons of the kings"
   c. he term *elohim* is sometimes used of Israelite leaders (cf. Exod. 21:6; 22:8; Ps. 82:1,6, note NIV and Net Bible)
   d. *Nephilim* is linked to *Gibborim* in Gen 6:4. *Gibborim* is plural of *Gibbor* meaning "a mighty man of valor; strength; wealth or power"
2. this interpretation and its evidence is taken from *Hard Sayings of the Bible,* pp. 106-108.

E. Historical evidence of the advocates of both usages

1. the phrase refers to Sethites

a.	Cyril of Alexandria	e.	Calvin
b.	Theodoret	f.	Kyle
c.	Augustine	g.	Gleason Archer
d.	Jerome	h.	Watts

2. the phrase refers to angelic beings

a.	writers of the Septuagint	f.	Tertullian	k.	Olford
b.	Philo	g.	Origen	l.	Westermann
c.	Josephus (*Antiquities* 1.3.1)	h.	Luther	m.	Wenham
d.	Justin Martyr	i.	Delitzsch	n.	NET Bible
e.	Clement of Alexandria	j.	Hengstenberg		

F. How are the *Nephilim* of Gen. 6:4 related to the "sons of God" and "the daughters of men" of Gen. 6:1-2? Note the three theories:

1. They are the giants that resulted from the union between angels and human women (cf. Num. 13:33).
2. They do not relate at all. They are simply mentioned as being on the earth in the days of the events of Gen. 6:1-2 and also afterwards.
3. R. K. Harrison in *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 557, has the following cryptic quote, "to miss entirely the invaluable anthropological insights into the interrelation of *Homo sapiens* and pre-Adamic species which the passage contains, and which are amenable to those scholars who are equipped to pursue them."

   This implies to me that he sees these two groups as representing differing groups of humanoids. This would imply a later special creation of Adam and Eve, but also an evolutionary development of *Homo erectus*.

G. It is only fair to disclose my own understanding of this controversial text. First, let me remind all of us that the text in Genesis is brief and ambiguous. Moses' first hearers must have had additional historical insight or Moses used oral or written tradition from the Patriarchal period that he himself did not fully understand. This issue is not a crucial theological subject. We are often curious about things the Scriptures only hint at. It would be very unfortunate to build an elaborate theology out of this and similar fragments of biblical information. If we needed this information God would have provided it in a more clear and complete form. I personally believe it was angels and humans because:

1. the phrase "sons of God" is used consistently, if not exclusively, for angels in the OT
2. the Septuagint (Alexandrian) translates (late first century B.C.) "sons of God" as "angels of God"
3. the pseudepigraphal apocalyptic book of I Enoch (possibly written about 200 B.C.) is very specific that it refers to angels (cf. chapters 6-7)
4. 2 Peter 2 and Jude speak of angels who sinned and did not keep their proper abode

   I know that to some this seems to contradict Matt. 22:30, but these specific angels are neither in heaven nor earth, but in a special prison (*Tartarus*).

5. I think that one reason many of the events of Genesis 1-11 are found in other cultures (i.e., similar creation accounts, similar flood accounts, similar accounts of angels taking women) is because all humans were together and had some knowledge of YHWH during this period, but after the tower of Babel's dispersion this knowledge became corrupted and adapted to a polytheistic model.

   A good example of this is Greek mythology where the half human/half superhuman giants called Titans are imprisoned in *Tartarus*, this very name used only once in the Bible (2 Peter 2) for the holding place of the angels that kept not their proper abode. In rabbinical theology Hades was divided into a section for the righteous (paradise) and a section for the wicked (*Tartarus*).

▣ **"(Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt)"** This is either an editorial addition or Moses is trying to link these two cities together historically. Many use this as a way to show Mosaic authorship because he was familiar with the historical site of Zoan (cf. Ps. 78:12,43). Both cities were apparently built by Egyptians, possibly the Hyksos of the 1700 B.C. period or the rebuilding of the 1100's B.C. Zoan was the capital of northern Egypt, also called "Tannis," which was near the land of Goshen in the delta region and probably was the capital during the time of Joseph. See Special Topic: Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch at the end of the Introduction to Numbers.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:23-24

[23]Then they came to the valley of Eshcol and from there cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes; and they carried it on a pole between two *men*, with some of the pomegranates and the figs. [24]That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the sons of Israel cut down from there.

13:23-24 "Then they came to the valley of Eshcol" This means "cluster" (BDB 79). It is uncertain if this valley always had this name or if it was simply named this by the Hebrews (cf. Gen. 14:13,24).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:25-29

[25]When they returned from spying out the land, at the end of forty days, [26]they proceeded to come to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh; and they brought back word to them and to all the congregation and showed them the fruit of the land. [27]Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. [28]Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. [29]Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

13:25 "forty days" In the Bible this number refers to a long, indefinite period of indefinite. This is an estimate of the time it would take to spy out the land, which was 250 miles north, as the description of v. 21 implies. See Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

13:27 "it certainly does flow with milk and honey" The spies were affirming that God's description of the Promised Land was not over-exaggerated (cf. Exod. 3:8,17). Later on the land of Canaan will be called

the "land of milk and honey" in the official documents of the Persian Empire. The "honey" was probably not from bees but from fruit, like dates (cf. Jewish Study Bible, p. 310).

13:28-29 This is the summary of the report of ten of the spies. It lists several of the tribes of Canaan in an attempt to discourage the people in their possessing, militarily, the Promised Land. They are going to focus on the city of Hebron.

For a description of the tribes of Canaan see Special Topic: Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PRE-ISRAELITE INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE

A. There are several lists of peoples.

1. Genesis 15:19-21 (10)
   a. Kenite
   b. Kenizzite
   c. Kadmonite
   d. Hittite
   e. Perizzite
   f. Rephaim
   g. Amorite
   h. Canaanite
   i. Girgashite
   j. Jebusite
2. Exodus 3:17 (6)
   a. Canaanite
   b. Hittite
   c. Amorite
   d. Perizzite
   e. Hivite
   f. Jebusite
3. Exodus 23:28 (3)
   a. Hivites
   b. Canaanites
   c. Hittites
4. Deuteronomy 7:1 (7)
   a. Hittites
   b. Girgashites
   c. Amorites
   d. Canaanites
   e. Perizzites
   f. Hivites
   g. Jebusites
5. Joshua 24:11 (7)
   a. Amorite
   b. Perizzite
   c. Canaanite
   d. Hittite
   e. Girgashite
   f. Hivite
   g. Jebusite

B. The origin of the names is dubious because of lack of historical data. Genesis 10:15-19 includes several of them as related to Canaan, a son of Ham.

C. Brief descriptions of the peoples mentioned

1. Kenite
   – BDB 884, KB 1098
   – non-Israelite
   – name related to "forger" or "smith," which could refer to metal working or music (cf. Gen. 4:19-22)
   – connected to the area of Sinai north to Hebron
   – name connected to Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (cf. Jdgs. 1:16; 4:11)

2. Kenizzite – BDB 889, KB 1114
   - relative of Jews
   - a clan of Edom (cf. Gen. 15:19)
   - lived in Negev
   - possibly absorbed into Judah (cf. Num. 32:12; Jos. 14:6,14)
3. Kadmonite – BDB 870 II, KB 1071 II
   - non-Israelite, possibly a descendant of Ishmael (cf. Gen. 25:15)
   - name relates to "easterner"
   - lived in Negev
   - possibly related to "the men of the east" (cf. Job 1:3)
4. Hittite – BDB 366, KB 363
   - non-Israelite
   - descendant of Heth
   - from kingdom of Anatolia (Asia Minor, Turkey)
   - were present very early in Canaan (cf. Genesis 23; Jos. 11:3)
5. Perizzite – BDB 827, KB 965
   - non-Israelite, possibly Hurrians
   - lived in forested area of Judah (cf. Gen. 34:30; Jdgs. 1:4; 16:10)
6. Rephaim – BDB 952, KB 1274
   - non-Israelite, possibly giants (cf. Gen. 14:5; Num. 33:33; Deut. 2:10-11,20)
   - lived on eastern bank of Jordan (cf. Gen. 15:20; Jos. 12:4; 13:12; Deut. 2:8-11,20; 3:13) or western bank (cf. Jos. 15:8; 17:15; 2 Sam. 5:18,22; 23:13; 1 Chr. 20:4)
   - line of warriors/heroes
7. Amorite – BDB 57, KB 67
   - northwestern Semitic people-group from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16)
   - became general designation for inhabitants of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16; Deut. 1:7; Jos. 10:5; 24:15; 2 Sam. 21:2)
   - the name may mean "the west"
   - the ISBE, vol. 1, p. 119, says the term denotes
     a. the inhabitants of Palestine generally
     b. the population of the hill country as opposed to the coastal plain
     c. a specific people group with their own king
8. Canaanite – BDB 489, KB 485
   - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:15)
   - general designation of all the tribes in Canaan west of the Jordan
   - meaning of Canaan uncertain, possibly "merchant" or "red-purple dye"
   - as a people group they dwelt along the coastal plain (cf. Num. 13:29)
9. Girgashite – BDB 173, KB 202
   - from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16) or at least "from a son of [i.e., the country of] Canaan," ISBE, vol. 2, p. 1232)

10. Jebusite – BDB 101, KB 382
   – from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:16)
   – from city of Jebus/Salem/Jerusalem (cf. Jos. 15:63; Jdgs. 19:10)
   – Ezek. 16:3,45 asserts they were a mixed race from Amorite and Hittite

11. Hivites – BDB 295, KB 297
   – from Ham (cf. Gen. 10:17)
   – translated by LXX as Horite (cf. Gen. 34:2; 36:20-30; Jos. 9:7)
   – possibly from the Hebrew word "cave," therefore, cave dwellers
   – they lived in the highlands of Lebanon (cf. Jos. 11:3; Jdgs. 3:3). In 2 Sam. 24:6-7 they are listed next to Tyre and Sidon

13:28 "Nevertheless" This is a very strong Hebrew ADVERSATIVE. Although they assert that the land flows with milk and honey, they purposely omit the characteristic phrase "that the Lord swore to give to them," for the ten spies are going to make a negative report about the possibility of occupying the land.

▣ **"the cities are fortified"** This (BDB 130, KB 148, *Qal* PARTICIPLE) means they had a protective, surrounding wall (see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 648-649).

13:29 "Amalek is living in the land of the Negev" Amalek is a group of nomadic Arabs, the sons of Esau (cf. Gen. 36:12). Israel had already encountered them in Exodus 17. In the OT they become a metaphor for wickedness and evil. They are a constant thorn in the side of Israel until they are finally eliminated. See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 371-372.

▣ **"the Hittites"** We learn that this group of non-Semitic inhabitants lived near the city of Hebron. There are three groups of Hittites mentioned in the Bible.

1. one in Mesopotamia
2. one in central Turkey
3. this group in Canaan

The exact relationship of the groups is uncertain. The group in central Turkey was a large and powerful civilization for centuries.

▣ **"the Jebusites"** These are the descendants of the city of Jebus, which will later become Jerusalem. Many Bible scholars believe that this city was originally called Salem and was the city of Melchizedek (cf. Genesis 14). See Special Topic: Moriah, Salem, Jebus, Jerusalem, and Zion.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MORIAH, SALEM, JEBUS, ZION, JERUSALEM
(taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Gen 22:2)

This term (Moriah, BDB 599, KB 635) has been translated many ways.

1. the Vulgate and the Samaritan Pentateuch have "visions"
2. the Targums translate it as "worship"
3. the Septuagint has "high"
4. the Peshitta has "of the Amonites"
5. some scholars translate it as "shown of YHWH"

6. others "the chosen"
7. still others "the place of appearing"

It seems that "the place of appearing" might be the best possible translation based on the other use of this term in 2 Chr. 3:1, which mentions that the temple was built on Mt. Moriah, the place where God appeared to David. This can either refer to 2 Sam. 24:16 or more probably, 1 Chr. 21:18-30. The mention of Abraham offering Isaac in that context is either omitted because it was so well known or it was unknown to the author of 1 Chronicles. Also, Moriah seems to relate to the city of Melchizedek, Salem (Gen. 14:18), later called Jebus, which became Jerusalem.

1. "Moriah" is linked to Abraham's offering of Isaac in Gen. 22:2, which later became the site of the temple (cf. 2 Chr. 3:1).
2. "Salem" (BDB 1024 II, KB 1539, cf. Gen. 14:18; Ps. 76:2; Heb. 7:1,2), the site of a Canaanite city of Melchizedek.
3. Later it became the Canaanite city of "Jebus" (BDB 101, KB 382, from "Jebusites," cf. Gen. 10:16; 15:21; Exod. 3:8,17; Jos. 18:16,18; Jdgs. 19:10-11), which was captured by David (cf. 1 Chr. 11:4-5).
4. The name was changed to "Jerusalem" (BDB 436, KB 437), probably after David's capture. It is difficult to be certain because the name is used in Joshua 10; 12; 15. The name "Jerusalem" has an uncertain etymology, possibly "possession of peace" or "foundation of peace."
5. Often the capital is designated "Zion" (BDB 851, KB 816), which was the name of one of the seven hills on which Jerusalem was built. The title is used often in Psalms and Isaiah. It became a way of referring to the Jewish people.

The term's meaning is uncertain but the suggestions are (AB, vol. 6, p. 1096):

a. Hebrew root "to erect"
b. Hebrew root "to be dry"
c. Hurrian root "brook," "stream," "wadi"
d. Arabic root "hill crest," "ridge"
e. hypothetical root from Hebrew "shield," "fortress"

▣ **"the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan"** These two tribes are often used as a collective term for all of the tribes of Canaan. Here, they are given specific geographical regions. It is interesting that the Philistines are not mentioned in this list. They apparently had already landed on the southern coast of Palestine but possibly, as yet, had not begun their infiltration and domination of the land. One more note on these tribes: some OT scholars see the term "Canaanites" here as a reference not to the tribes of southern Canaan but to the Phoenicians in the north. Canaan is mentioned in Gen. 10:15 as related to the city of Sidon.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 13:30-33

[30]Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it." [31]But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." [32]So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size. [33]There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

13:30 "Caleb" The term "Caleb" means "dog" (BDB 477). He was apparently not part of the tribe of Judah but had been incorporated into it. He is called a Kenizzite (cf. Num. 32:12; Josh. 15:17; Jdgs. 1:13). It is not certain if this refers to the Edomite family mentioned in Gen. 36:11 and 1 Chr. 1:53 or to the Phoenicians in the north. Canaan is mentioned in Gen. 10:15 as related to the city of Sidon.

▣ **"We should by all means go up. . .we will surely overcome it"** Both of these phrases are emphatic (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB of the same root).

1. BDB 748, KB 828
2. BDB 407, KB 410

13:31 "for they are too strong for us" The problem with this statement is (1) it was numerically and militarily inaccurate and (2) it totally overlooked the promise and provision of God.

13:32 "a land that devours its inhabitants" This may mean that it had many internal wars or that it had some harsh natural conditions (cf. Lev. 26:38 and Ezek. 36:13).

▣ **"and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size"** This is obviously an overstatement. The sons of Anak were geographically localized around Hebron. This was an attempt by the ten spies to make their case stronger by exaggeration.

13:33 "also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak. . .)" See note at Num. 13:22.

▣ **"and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight"** Here is the problem—it was a self devaluation. They forgot to take into account the presence and promises of YHWH.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How do you reconcile the same account in Deut. 1:22-23? Here, it is YHWH who initiates the mission but in Deuteronomy, it is Moses.
2. Why is the list of tribal leaders different here from the list in Numbers 1?
3. How far north did the spies journey?
4. What does the phrase in Num. 13:32, "a land that devours its inhabitants," mean?
5. Who are the *Anakim* (13:28) or *Nephilim* (v. 33)?

NUMBERS 14

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The People Rebel	Israel Refuses to Enter Canaan	Decision to Attack	The People Complain	The Rebellion of Israel
14:1-4	14:1-5	14:1-4	14:1-4	14:1-4
14:5-10		14:5-10a	14:5-10	14:5-9
	14:6-10			14:10-11a
Moses Pleads for the People	Moses Intercedes for the People	14:10b-12	Moses Prays for the People	Yahweh's Anger. Moses Intercedes
14:11-12	14:11-12		14:11-12	14:11b-12
14:13-19	14:13-19	14:13-19 (18)	14:13-19	14:13-19
The LORD Pardons and Rebukes				Pardon and Punishment
14:20-25	14:20-25	14:20-25	14:20-25	14:20-25
		Death Sentence on the Rebels		The LORD Punishes the People for Complaining
14:26-35	14:26-38	14:26-35	14:26-35	14:26
				14:27-35
14:36-38		14:36-38	14:36-38	14:36–38
Israel Repulsed	A Futile Invasion Attempt		The First Attempt to Invade the Land	An Abortive Attempt by the Israelites
14:39-45	14:39-45	14:39-45	14:39-40	14:39-45
			14:42-43	
			14:44-45	

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:1-4

[1]Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. [2]All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! [3]Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" [4]So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

14:1 The crying in Num. 14:1 is related to the spies "bad" report. The crying in 14:39 is related to YHWH's judgment on Israel. This judgment is accentuated by the military defeat in v. 45 because "the LORD was not with them" (vv. 42,43).

14:2-3 What shocking statements.

1. wish we had died in Egypt
2. wish we had died in the wilderness
3. but not be slaughtered by the Canaanite armies

This shows a total lack of faith in YHWH and His promises (i.e., Genesis 12; 15; 22; etc; see Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Num. 11:12b.

They will get their wish (i.e., #2) because YHWH will judge that generation to die in the wilderness (cf. Num. 14:28-29).

14:2 "All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses" This could almost be the characteristic phrase of the book of Numbers (cf. vv. 26,36; see full note at Num. 11:1). It is shocking what these people say to Moses. Every one of their statements not only rejects Moses', but also YHWH's leadership. YHWH will remember this when He judges their unbelief. Many of the things that they were afraid of will happen to them.

14:4 "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt" This was the height of rebellion against YHWH and His promises (similar to Exodus 32, the golden calf). In looking at Israel's history one can almost assume that Satan is attempting to stop the ministry of the Messiah by trying to subvert YHWH's plan for the Jewish nation. See Special Topics:

1. Satan
2. Personal Evil
3. YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29

The speech of the rebels is expressed by two *Qal* COHORTATIVES.

1. Let us appoint a leader – BDB 678, KB 733
2. Let us return to Egypt – BDB 996, KB 1427

YHWH had His plans but faithless Israel, even after all that YHWH had done in their presence, had their own plans.

One wonders how much "the rabble" of Num. 11:4 were the chief instigators of this rebellion.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SATAN

This is a very difficult subject for several reasons.

1. The OT does not reveal an archenemy of good, but a servant of YHWH (see A. B. Davidson, *OT Theology*, pp. 300-306), who offers mankind an alternative and also accuses mankind of unrighteousness. There is only one God (see Special Topic: Monotheism), one power, one cause in the OT—YHWH (cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6).
2. The concept of a personal archenemy of God developed in the interbiblical (non-canonical) literature under the influence of Persian dualistic religion (*Zoroastrianism*). This, in turn, greatly influenced rabbinical Judaism and the Essene community (i.e., Dead Sea Scrolls).
3. The NT develops the OT themes in surprisingly stark, but selective, categories.

   If one approaches the study of evil from the perspective of biblical theology (each book or author or genre studied and outlined separately), then very different views of evil are revealed.

   If, however, one approaches the study of evil from a non-biblical or extra-biblical approach of world religions or eastern religions, then much of the NT development is foreshadowed in Persian dualism and Greco-Roman spiritism.

   If one is presuppositionally committed to the divine authority of Scripture (as I am!), then the NT development must be seen as progressive revelation. Christians must guard against

allowing Jewish folklore or western literature (Dante, Milton) to further influence the concept. There is certainly mystery and ambiguity in this area of revelation. God has chosen not to reveal all aspects of evil, its origin (see Special Topic: Lucifer), its development, its purpose, but He has revealed its defeat!

In the OT the term "satan" or "accuser" (BDB 966, KB 1317) can relate to three separate groups.

1. human accusers (cf. 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kgs. 11:14,23,25; Ps. 109:6)
2. angelic accusers (cf. Num. 22:22-23; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1)
3. demonic accusers (cf. 1 Chr. 21:1; 1 Kgs. 22:21; Zech. 13:2)

Only later in the intertestamental period is the serpent of Genesis 3 identified with Satan (cf. *Book of Wisdom* 2.23-24; *II Enoch* 31:3), and even later does this become a rabbinical option (cf. *Sot* 9b and *Sanh.* 29a). The "sons of God" of Genesis 6 become angels in *I Enoch* 54:6. I mention this, not to assert its theological accuracy, but to show its development. In the NT these OT activities are attributed to angelic, personified evil (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9).

The origin of personified evil is difficult or impossible (depending on your point of view) to determine from the OT. One reason for this is Israel's strong monotheism (see Special Topic: Monotheism; also note 1 Kgs. 22:20-22; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). All causality (cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6) was attributed to YHWH to demonstrate His uniqueness and primacy (cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:6,8,24; 45:5-6,14,18,21,22).

Sources of possible information are (1) Job 1-2, where Satan is one of the "sons of God" (i.e., angels) or (2) Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, where prideful near-eastern kings (Babylon and Tyre) are possibly used to illustrate the pride of Satan (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6). I have mixed emotions about this approach. Ezekiel uses Garden of Eden metaphors, not only for the king of Tyre as Satan (cf. Ezek. 28:12-16), but also for the king of Egypt as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Ezekiel 31). However, Isaiah 14, particularly vv. 12-14, seems to describe an angelic revolt through pride. If God wanted to reveal to us the specific nature and origin of Satan, this is a very oblique way and place to do it. We must guard against the trend of systematic theology of taking small, ambiguous parts of different testaments, authors, books, and genres and combining them as pieces of one divine puzzle.

I agree with Alfred Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendices XIII [pp. 748-763] and XVI [pp.770-776]) that rabbinical Judaism has been overly influenced by Persian dualism and demonic speculation. The rabbis are not a good source for truth in this area. Jesus radically diverges from the teachings of the Synagogue in this area. I think that the concept of an archangelic enemy of YHWH developed from the two high gods of Iranian dualism, *Ahkiman* and *Ormaza*, and were then developed by the rabbis into a biblical dualism of YHWH and Satan.

There is surely progressive revelation in the NT as to the personification of evil, but not as elaborate as the rabbis. A good example of this difference is the "war in heaven." The fall of Satan is a logical necessity, but the specifics are not given (see Special Topic: Fall of Satan and His Angels). Even what is given is veiled in apocalyptic genre (cf. Rev. 12:4,7,12-13). Although Satan is defeated in Jesus and exiled to earth, he still functions as a servant of YHWH (cf. Matt. 4:1; Luke 22:31-32; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

We must curb our curiosity in this area. There is a personal force of temptation and evil, but there is still only one God and we are still responsible for our choices. There is a spiritual battle, both before and after salvation. Victory can only come and remain in and through the Triune God. Evil has been defeated and will be removed (cf. Rev. 20:10)!

SPECIAL TOPIC: PERSONAL EVIL

I. SATAN IS A DIFFICULT SUBJECT

A. The OT does not reveal an arch enemy to good, but a servant of YHWH who offers mankind an alternative and accuses mankind of unrighteousness (A. B. Davidson, *A Theology of the OT*, pp. 300-306).

B. The concept of a personal arch enemy of God developed in inter-biblical (non-canonical) literature under the influence of Persian religion (*Zoroastrianism*). This, in turn, greatly influenced rabbinical Judaism (i.e., Israel's exile in Babylon, Persia).

C. The NT develops the OT themes in surprisingly stark, but selective, categories.

If one approaches the study of evil from the perspective of biblical theology (each book or author or genre studied and outlined separately) then very different views of evil are revealed.

If, however, one approaches the study of evil from a non-biblical or extra-biblical approach of world religions or eastern religions then much of the NT development is foreshadowed in Persian dualism and Greco-Roman spiritism.

If one is presuppositionally committed to the divine authority of Scripture (as I am!), then the NT development must be seen as progressive revelation. Christians must guard against allowing Jewish folk lore or English literature (i.e., Dante, Milton) to further clarify the concept. There is certainly mystery and ambiguity in this area of revelation. God has chosen not to reveal all aspects of evil, its origin (see Special Topic: Lucifer), its purpose, but He has revealed its defeat!

II. SATAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the OT the term "Satan" (BDB 966, kb 1317) or "accuser" seems to relate to three separate groups.

A. human accusers (1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kgs. 5:41; 11:14,23,25; Ps. 109:6)

B. angelic accusers (Num. 22:22-23; Zech. 3:1)

1. the Angel of the Lord – Num. 22:22-23
2. Satan – 1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1

C. demonic accusers (1 Chr. 21:1; 1 Kgs. 22:21; Zech. 13:2)

Only later in the intertestamental period is the serpent of Genesis 3 identified with Satan (cf. Book of Wisdom 2:23-24; II Enoch 31:3), and even later does this become a rabbinical option (cf. *Sot* 9b and *Sanh*. 29a). The "sons of God" of Genesis 6 become the evil angels in I Enoch 54:6. They become the origin of evil in rabbinical theology. I mention this, not to assert its theological accuracy, but to show its development. In the NT these OT activities are attributed to angelic, personified evil (i.e., Satan) in 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9.

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III. SATAN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Alfred Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendices XIII [pp. 748-763] and XVI [pp. 770-776]) says that Rabbinical Judaism has been overly influenced by Persian dualism and demonic speculation. The rabbis are not a good source for truth in this area. Jesus radically diverges from the teachings of the Synagogue. I think that the rabbinical concept of angelic mediation (cf. Acts 7:53) and opposition in the giving of the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai opened the door to the concept of an arch-angelic enemy of YHWH as well as mankind. There were two high gods of Iranian dualism (Zoroastrianism).

A. *Ahura Mazda*, later called *Ohrmazd*, who was the creator god, the good god

B. *Angra Mainyu*, later called *Ahriman*, the destroying spirit, the evil god.

They battle for supremacy with the earth as the battleground. This dualism developed into a Judaic limited dualism of YHWH and Satan.

There is surely progressive revelation in the NT as to the development of evil, but not as elaborate as the rabbis claim. A good example of this difference is the "war in heaven." The fall of Satan is a logical necessity, but the specifics are not given (see Special Topic: Fall or Satan and His Angels). Even what is given is veiled in apocalyptic genre (cf. Rev. 12:4,7,12-13). Although Satan is defeated and exiled to earth, he still functions as a servant of YHWH (cf. Matt. 4:1; Luke 22:31-32; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

We must curb our curiosity in this area. There is a personal force of temptation and evil, but there is still only one God and mankind is still responsible for his/her choices. There is a spiritual battle, both before and after salvation. Victory can only come and remain in and through the Triune God. Evil has been defeated and will be removed (cf. Rev. 20:10)!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:5-10

[5]Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. [6]Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; [7]and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. [8]If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. [9]Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them." [10]But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

14:5 "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly" This usually means an act of worship, but in Numbers it is usually used for judgment (cf. Num. 16:4,22,45; 20:6). This revolt of unbelief and rebellion is summarized in Hebrews 3:7-19.

14:6 "Joshua. . .Caleb. . .tore their clothes" Joshua and Caleb, like Moses and Aaron, recognized the terrible rebellion! This was a sign of mourning or blasphemy. See Special Topic: Grieving Rites.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GRIEVING RITES

The Israelites expressed sorrow for the death of a loved one and for personal repentance, as well as corporate crimes, in several ways:

1. tear outer robe, Gen. 37:29,34; 44:13; Jdgs. 11:35; 2 Sam. 1:11; 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Job 1:20

2. put on sackcloth, Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Kgs. 21:27; Jer. 48:37
3. take off shoes, 2 Sam. 15:30; Isa. 20:3
4. put hands on head, 2 Sam. 13:19; Jer. 2:37
5. put dust on head, Jos. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Neh. 9:1
6. sit on the ground, Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 26:16 (lie on the ground, 2 Sam. 12:16); Isa. 47:1
7. beat the breast, 1 Sam. 25:1; 2 Sam. 11:26; Nah. 2:7
8. cut the body, Deut. 14:1; Jer. 16:6; 48:37
9. fast, 2 Sam. 1:12; 12:16,21; 1 Kgs. 21:27; 1 Chr. 10:12; Neh. 1:4
10. chant a lament, 2 Sam. 1:17; 3:31; 2 Chr. 35:25
11. baldness (hair pulled out or shaved), Jer. 48:37
12. cut beards short, Jer. 48:37
13. cover head or face, 2 Sam. 15:30; 19:4

These were outward signs of inner feelings.

14:7

NASB, NKJV, NRSV, JPSOA, Peshitta **"an exceedingly good land"**
TEV **"an excellent land"**
REB **"a very good land indeed"**
LXX **"is very, very good"**

The MT has an emphatic structure.

1. the ADJECTIVE "good" – BDB 373 III
2. the ADVERB "exceedingly" twice (Hebrew idiom, cf. Gen. 7:19; 30:43; 1 Kgs. 7:47; 2 Kgs. 10:4; Ezek. 37:10)

YHWH was telling the truth about the fertility of the Promised Land (i.e., Canaan). The phrase in Num. 13:32, "a land that devours its inhabitants," may refer to the battle over different groups possessing this agricultural abundance.

▣ **"If the LORD is pleased with us"** Note this conditional element (BDB 49). God had promised this land to them but not to this particular generation. All of God's covenants are unconditional in His faithfulness, but they are conditional on our response! See Special Topic: Covenant at Num. 10:33b.

▣ **"a land which flows with milk and honey"** See full note at Num. 13:27.

14:9 "Their protection has been removed from them" This is literally the term "shadow," which is a common metaphor to describe God's protection and care for His people. See Special Topic: Shadow.

Both Joshua and Caleb tried to encourage Israel not to rebel.

1. do not rebel – BDB 597, KB 632, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense
2. do not fear them (twice) – BDB 431, KB 432, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

The LXX translations did not understand the imagery of "shadow" and translated "for the right time has departed from them."

The Peshitta has "their strength has left them." The usage of this term in the ANE implies the protection of their fertility gods has been removed. This is not meant to assert the reality of these gods but of the overpowering presence of YHWH's will.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SHADOW (using several related phrases)

This is a Hebraic idiom for "shadow" as

1. protection
   a. of YHWH – Isa. 16:3-4
   b. of Egypt – Isa. 30:2-3
   c. of YHWH's Messiah – Lam. 4:20
2. "shadow of the hand," also of YHWH's protection – Ps. 121:5; Isa. 49:2; 51:16 (also note Exod. 33:22)
3. "shadow of my roof," another idiom for protection – Gen. 19:8
4. "shadow of YHWH's special cloud during the wilderness wandering period" (i.e., shade by day, light by night guided them) – Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19,20,24; Isa. 4:6; 25:4-5; 32:1-2
5. "shadow of the wing," Hebrew idiom of God as mother bird – Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 91:1,4; Isa. 31:5 (same imagery in Deut. 32:10-11; Ruth 2:12; Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34)
6. "shadow of a tree"
   a. parable in connection with Abimelech – Jdgs. 9:15
   b. parable of eagle and vine – Ezek. 17:23
   c. parable of Egypt – Ezra 31:6,17
   d. dream of Nebuchadnezzar – Dan. 4:12
   e. imagery of Israel's captivity – Hosea 14:7

Shade was a powerful, life-saving metaphor for desert people.

▣ **"for they will be our prey"** This word "prey" in NASB is literally "bread." This is Hebrew imagery for Joshua and Caleb's assessment of the Israeli conquest of Canaan, which is found only here.

14:10 "But all the congregation said to stone them with stones" It is amazing to see this rebellion of the people of God. Death by stoning in the OT was for a religious violation or covenant breaking (see Special Topic: Stone to Death). They were accusing Moses and Aaron of this very sin! But it was their sin!

Even though the INFINITIVE "stone" (BDB 920, KB 1187, *Qal* INFINITIVE) is not the same root as the NOUN "stones" (BDB 6), I agree with the NET Bible, p. 306, #1, that it functions like a COGNATE ACCUSATIVE (emphatic grammatical feature).

SPECIAL TOPIC: STONE TO DEATH (taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Deut. 13:10)

The MT has the VERB for "stoning to death" (BDB 709, KB 768, *Qal* PERFECT) and the term for "stone" (BDB 6), which literally would be "stone him with stones." Stoning was a capital punishment which was done by the whole covenantal community (cf. Lev. 20:2,27; 24:13-23; Num. 15:32-36; Deut. 13:10; 21:21; Jos. 7:22-26) to rid itself of evil.

This is not the regular term used for judicial capital punishment. This term speaks of the urgency of immediate, radical purging of evil (cf. Exod. 32:27; Lev. 20:15,16; Num. 25:5; Deut. 13:10; Ezek. 9:6).

Persons were stoned by the community for:

1. idolatry, Lev. 20:2-5 (also possibly 6-8); Deut. 13:1-5; 17:2-7
2. blasphemy, Lev. 24:10-23; 1 Kings 11-14; Luke 4:29; Acts 7:58 (both reflect Exod. 22:28); also note John 8:59; 10:31; 11:8
3. rejection of parental authority, Deut. 21:18-21 (possibly Lev. 20:9)

4. marital unfaithfulness, Deut. 22:22,23-27 (possibly Lev. 20:10-16)
5. treason (known disobedience to YHWH), Joshua 7

▣ **"the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting"** For a full description of the *shekinah* cloud, see Num. 14:14. See Special Topic: Glory (*kabod*, OT); and NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 597-586.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GLORY (OT)

I. Its basic meaning

There are over twenty Hebrew words translated "glory" (*doxa*) by the LXX, but the most significant is *kabod* (BDB 458-459, KB 455-458). Its basic meaning is that which is heavy. It was a commercial term used in transacting purchases (i.e., scales). It came to have a wide semantic field where the concept of heavy developed into the weight, worth of persons, places, and things.

II. Used of YHWH
   A. It became a way of describing YHWH's personal presence. It combined His power, majesty (i.e., transcendence) with His personhood and presence in physical reality (immanence).
   B. It denoted YHWH in creation, cf. Ps. 19:1; 29:3,9; 104:31
   C. It was used of His theophanies connected to the formation of His covenant people. He is the "glory of Israel," cf. 1 Sam. 15:29
      1. the exodus from Egypt, cf. Num. 14:22 (predicted in Gen. 15:12-21)
      2. in the special cloud of glory that led and accompanied the people, cf. Exod 16:7,10
      3. the giving of His law on Mt. Sinai, cf. Exod. 24:16,17
      4. His acts of provision and judgment during the wilderness wandering period
         a. initial rebellion related to the report of the twelve spies, cf. Num. 14:9-10
         b. Moses' intercession on their behalf, cf. Num. 14:20-21
         c. Korah's rebellion, cf. Num. 16:19
         d. crisis over no water, cf. Num. 26:6
   D. Moses' request to see YHWH, cf. Exod. 33:18-23
   E. It was used of YHWH Himself (i.e., His essence)
      1. 1 Chr. 29:11
      2. Ps. 106:20; Jer. 2:11; Hos. 4:7; Rom. 1:23
      3. Isa. 42:8; 43:7; 48:11; 58:8; 60:1-2,19 (Rev. 21:23; 22:5)
      4. Zech. 2:5,10
   F. It was used in connection to YHWH's presence at/in the
      1. Tabernacle, cf. Exod. 16:7,10; 29:43; 40:34-35; Lev. 9:6,23
      2. Temple, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:11; 2 Chr. 5:14; 7:1-3; Isa. 6:3; Hag. 2:3,9
      3. Ark of the Covenant, cf. 1 Sam. 4:22; Ps. 63:2; 78:61
   G. It was used of YHWH's kingship, cf. 1 Chr. 29:12-13; Ps. 24:7-10; 45:3
   H. It was used of YHWH's ethical nature (i.e., righteousness), cf. Ps. 29:3; 97:6; Isa. 42:8; 48:11; 58:8; Hab. 2:14

III. Used of humans and nations
   A. human

1. parallel to "soul" (i.e., *nephesh*), cf. Gen. 49:6; Ps. 16:9; 108:1
2. wealth, cf. Gen. 31:1; Ps. 49:16,17; Isa. 10:3; 61:6; 66:11-12
3. honor, cf. Gen. 45:13; Ps. 8:6; Hag. 2:7
4. reputation, cf. Job 19:9; 29:20; Ps. 4:2; 49:17
5. splendor, cf. 1 Chr. 29:12,28; 2 Chr. 17:5; 18:13; 32:27

B. nations
1. Egypt, cf. ??
2. Ephraim, cf. Hos. 9:11
3. Samaria, cf. Hos. 10:5

C. kings
1. Ahasuerus, cf. Esther 1:4
2. Israel, cf. Ps. 21:6
3. Antiochus IV, cf. Dan. 11:39

D. national armies
1. Assyria, cf. Isa. 8:7
2. Israel, cf. Isa. 17:4
3. Kedar, cf. Isa. 21:16

IV. Used in description of the last days (eschatology)
A. YHWH will return to His new temple, cf. Ezek. 43:2,4,5; 44:4
B. YHWH will bring the world to Himself, cf. Isa. 40:5; 59:19; 60:1-3; 66:18-19
C. YHWH will bring the "new" Jerusalem, cf. Isa. 66:10; Zech. 12:7

V. The purpose of creation is to glorify YHWH
A. created for His glory, cf. Isa. 43:7
B. glory is due Him, cf. 1 Chr. 16:29
C. sing/praise His glory, cf. Ps. 66:2; 96:8; 115:1
D. all we do we do unto Him, for His glory, cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 4:15; Eph. 5:22; 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:12
E. first statement of the Westminster Shorter Catechism

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:11-12

[11]The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst? [12]I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."

14:11 "How long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst" The sin of Israel was all the more shameful because they had seen and experienced the power of YHWH in the exodus and wilderness! They "spurned" (BDB 610, KB 658, *Piel* IMPERFECT) Him in the presence of great light. This is analogous to the "unpardonable sin" of the Gospels. See Special Topic: The Unpardonable Sin.

SPECIAL TOPIC: EXEGETICAL PROCEDURES FOR INTERPRETING "THE UNPARDONABLE SIN"

A. Remember that the Gospels reflect a Jewish setting
   1. Two kinds of sins (see Special Topic: Unintentional Sins [OT], cf. Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15,17-19; Num. 15:27-31; Deut. 1:43; 17:12-13)
      a. unintentional
      b. intentional
   2. Pre-Pentecostal Jewish setting (i.e., the fulfillment of the gospel (i.e., death, resurrection, ascension) and the special endowment Spirit have not yet occurred)

D. Note the literary context of Mark 3:22-30
   1. The unbelief of Jesus' own family (cf. Mark 3:31-32)
   2. The unbelief of the Pharisees (cf. Mark 2:24; 3:1,6,22)

E. Compare the Gospel parallels where the title "Son of Man" changes to "sons of men"
   1. Matt. 12:22-37 (i.e., 12:32, "a word against the Son of Man")
   2. Luke 11:14-26; 12:8-12 (i.e., 12:10, "a word against the Son of Man")
   3. Mark 3:28 (i.e., "All sins shall be forgiven the sons of men")

   The unpardonable sin is the continuing rejection of Jesus in the presence of great light. The Pharisees clearly understood but refused to believe. In this sense it is related to the "sin unto death" in 1 John (see Special Topic: Sin Unto Death).

▣ **"believed"** This term (BDB 52, KB 63, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) is the main OT word for faith/trust. See Special Topic: Believe, Trust, Faith, and Faithfulness (OT) at Num. 12:7.

14:12 "I will smite them" This is either God testing Moses or God's willingness to start all over again, as He had with Noah and Abraham. I like to think of this as God testing Moses. This happened several other times (cf. Exod. 32:9-10; Num. 16:45; Deut. 9:14). See Special Topic: God Tests His People at Contextual Insights to Numbers 13, B.

▣ **"pestilence"** There are three judgments that YHWH brings (i.e., Lev. 25:23-26).
1. pestilence/disease
2. sword/war
3. famine/siege

YHWH uses natural things with supernatural intensity, timing, and locality (i.e., just like the plagues on Egypt and the crossing of the Jordan in Joshua).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:13-19

[13]But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst, [14]and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. [15]Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say, [16]'Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.' [17]But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, [18]'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth *generations*.' [19]Pardon, I pray,

the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

14:13 "the Egyptians will hear of it" YHWH's care for His namesake and His witness among the nations is the basis of Moses' prayer (cf. Exod. 32:12). God had always chosen Israel to be a kingdom of priests (cf. Gen. 12:15,22; Exod. 19:4-6). He cares what the nations think about Him and the very purpose in choosing Israel was to choose the world. See Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer at Num. 11:2 and YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29.

14:14

NASB	**"art seen eye to eye"**
NKJV, NRSV, REB, Peshitta	**"are seen face to face"**
TEV, JPSOA	**"appear in plain sight"**
NJB	**"show yourself to them face to face"**
LXX	**"seen with eyes by eyes"**

This unusual Hebrew phrase, literally "eye to eye" (BDB 744), is found only here and Isa. 52:8. It could refer to

1. YHWH's visible presence in the cloud over the tent of meeting
2. YHWH speaking to Moses face to face

It expresses intimacy and personal presence (cf. similar imagery in Gen. 32:30; Exod. 33:1; Deut. 5:4; 34:10; Jdgs. 6:22). All of Israel's enemies knew that YHWH was with them.

▣ **"a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night"** This is exactly "the shadow of YHWH" for Israel. YHWH's presence with Israel was symbolized in the cloud (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 465). It was a pillar of fire by night to light up the camp. By day it was protection from the desert heat. It was God's way of leading the people from campsite to campsite (cf. Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19-20; 19:9,15-25; 33:9-10).

14:17 "let the power of the LORD be great" Throughout the chapter, YHWH (LORD) has been used, but here *Adon* (Lord, BDB 10, PLURAL) is used instead. The Jews became so nervous about using the covenant name for Deity that whenever they read Scripture, they substituted the name *Adon* for YHWH. See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D. at Num. 1:1.

14:18 This is a tremendous summary of the gracious character of God (cf. Exod. 34:6,7; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Jonah 4:2; Nah. 1:3). See Special Topic: Characteristics of Israel's God (OT) at Intro. to Numbers, VIII, B, 4.

▣ At the end of line A, the LXX adds, "and faithfulness," which reflects the reading of Exod. 34:6. This is a typical scribal addition. See Special Topic: Textual Criticism.

SPECIAL TOPIC: TEXTUAL CRITICISM

This subject will be dealt with in such a way as to explain the textual notes found in this commentary. The following outline will be utilized

I. The textual sources of our English Bible
   A. Old Testament
   B. New Testament

II. Brief explanation of the problems and theories of "lower criticism" also called "textual criticism."

III. Suggested sources for further reading

I. The textual sources of our English Bible

A. Old Testament

1. Masoretic text (MT) – The Hebrew consonantal text was set by Rabbi Aquiba in A.D. 100. The vowel points, accents, marginal notes, punctuation and apparatus points were added starting in the sixth century A.D. and were finished in the ninth century A.D. It was done by a family of Jewish scholars known as the Masoretes. The textual form they used was the same as the one in the Mishnah, Talmud, Targums, Peshitta, and Vulgate.
2. Septuagint (LXX) – Tradition says the Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) was produced by 70 Jewish scholars in 70 days for the Alexandria library under the sponsorship of King Ptolemy II (285-246 B.C.) The translation was supposedly requested by a Jewish leader living in Alexandria. This tradition comes from "Letter of Aristeas." The LXX frequently was based on a differing Hebrew textual tradition from the text of Rabbi Aquiba (MT).
3. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) – The Dead Sea Scrolls were written in the Roman B.C. period (200 B.C. to A.D. 70) by a sect of Jewish separatists called the "Essenes." The Hebrew manuscripts, found in several sites around the Dead Sea, show a somewhat different Hebrew textual family behind both the MT and the LXX.
4. Some specific examples of how the comparison of these texts have helped interpreters understand the Old Testament.
    a. The LXX has helped translators and scholars understand the MT
        (1) the LXX of Isa. 52:14, "As many shall be amazed at <u>him</u>."
        (2) the MT of Isa. 52:14, "Just as many were astonished over <u>you</u>."
        (3) in Isa. 52:15 the pronoun distinction of the LXX is confirmed
            (a) LXX, "so will many nations marvel at him"
            (b) MT, "so he sprinkles many nations"
    b. The DSS have helped translators and scholars understand the MT
        (1) the DSS of Isa. 21:8, "then the seer cried, Upon a watchtower I stand. . ."
        (2) the MT of Isa. 21:8, "and I cried, a lion! My Lord, I always stand on the watch tower by day"
    c. Both the LXX and DSS have helped clarify Isa. 53:11
        (1) LXX & DSS, "after the travail of his soul he will see light, he will be satisfied"
        (2) MT, "he shall see. . .of the travail of his soul, He shall be satisfied"

B. New Testament

1. Over 5,300 manuscripts of all or parts of the Greek New Testament are extant. About 85 are written on papyri and 268 are manuscripts written in all capital letters (uncials). Later, about the ninth century A.D., a running script (minuscule) was developed. The Greek manuscripts in written form number about 2,700. We also have about 2,100 copies of lists of Scripture texts used in worship that we call lectionaries.

2. About 85 Greek manuscripts containing parts of the New Testament written on papyrus are housed in museums. Some are dated from the second century A.D., but most are from the third and fourth centuries A.D. None of these MSS contain the whole New Testament. Just because these are the oldest copies of the New Testament does not automatically mean they have fewer variants. Many of these were copied rapidly for a local use. Care was not exercised in the process. Therefore, they contain many variants.
3. Codex Sinaiticus, known by the Hebrew letter א (*aleph*) or (01), found at St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai by Tischendorf. It dates from the fourth century A.D. and contains both the LXX of the OT and the Greek NT. It is of "the Alexandrian Text" type.
4. Codex Alexandrinus, known as "A" or (02), a fifth century Greek manuscript which was found in Alexandria, Egypt.
5. Codex Vaticanus, known as "B" or (03), found in the Vatican's library in Rome and dates from the middle of the fourth century A.D. It contains both LXX of the Old Testament and Greek New Testament. It is of "the Alexandrian Text" type.
6. Codex Ephraemi, known as "C" or (04), a fifth century Greek manuscript which was partially destroyed.
7. Codex Bezae, known as "D" or (05), a fifth or sixth century Greek manuscript. It is the chief representative of what is called "The Western Text." It contains many additions and was the main Greek witness for the King James translation.
8. The NT MSS can be grouped into three, possibly four, families that share certain characteristics.
    a. Alexandrian text from Egypt
        (1) P^{75}, P^{66} (about A.D. 200), which record the Gospels
        (2) P^{46} (about A.D. 225), which records Paul's letters
        (3) P^{72} (about A.D. 225-250), which records Peter and Jude
        (4) Codex B, called Vaticanus (about A.D. 325), which includes the whole OT and NT
        (5) Origen quotes from this text type
        (6) other MSS which show this text type are א, C, L, W, 33
    b. Western text from North Africa
        (1) quotes from North African church fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, and the Old Latin translation
        (2) quotes from Irenaeus
        (3) quotes from Tatian and Old Syriac translation
        (4) Codex D "Bezae" follow this text type
    c. Eastern Byzantine text from Constantinople
        (1) this text type is reflected in over 80% of the 5,300 MSS
        (2) quoted by Antioch of Syria's church fathers, Cappadoceans, Chrysostom, and Therodoret
        (3) Codex A, in the Gospels only
        (4) Codex E (eighth century) for full NT
    d. the fourth possible type is "Caesarean" from Palestine
        (1) it is primarily seen only in Mark
        (2) some witnesses to it are P^{45} and W

II. The problems and theories of "lower criticism" or "textual criticism."

A. How the variants occurred

1. inadvertent or accidental (vast majority of occurrences)

a. slip of the eye in hand copying which reads the second instance of two similar words and thereby omits all of the words in between (homoioteleuton)

(1) slip of the eye in omitting a double letter word or phrase (haplography)

(2) slip of the mind in repeating a phrase or line of a Greek text (dittography)

b. slip of the ear in copying by oral dictation where a misspelling occurs (itacism). Often the misspelling implies or spells a similar-sounding Greek word.

c. the earliest Greek texts had no chapter or verse divisions, little or no punctuation and no division between words. It is possible to divide the letters in different places forming different words.

2. intentional

a. changes were made to improve the grammatical form of the text copied

b. changes were made to bring the text into conformity with other biblical texts (harmonization of parallels)

c. changes were made by combining two or more variant readings into one long combined text (conflation)

d. changes were made to correct a perceived problem in the text (cf. 1 Cor. 11:27 and 1 John 5:7-8)

e. some additional information as to the historical setting or proper interpretation of the text was placed in the margin by one scribe but placed into the text by a second scribe (cf. John 5:4)

B. The basic tenets of textual criticism (logical guidelines for determining the original reading of a text when variants exist)

1. the most awkward or grammatically unusual text is probably the original

2. the shortest text is probably the original

3. the older text is given more weight because of its historical proximity to the original, everything else being equal

4. MSS that are geographically diverse usually have the original reading

5. doctrinally weaker texts, especially those relating to major theological discussions of the period of manuscript changes, like the Trinity in 1 John 5:7-8, are to be preferred.

6. the text that can best explain the origin of the other variants

7. two quotes that help show the balance in these troubling variants

a. J. Harold Greenlee's book, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*,

"No Christian doctrine hangs upon a debatable text; and the student of the NT must beware of wanting his text to be more orthodox or doctrinally stronger than is the inspired original" (p. 68).

b. W. A. Criswell told Greg Garrison of *The Birmingham News* that he (Criswell) doesn't believe every word in the Bible is inspired, "at least not every word that has been given to the modern public by centuries of translators." Criswell said:

> "I very much am a believer in the textual criticism. As such, I think, the last half of the 16th chapter of Mark is heresy: it's not inspired, it's just concocted...When you compare those manuscripts way back yonder, there

was no such thing as that conclusion of the Book of Mark. Somebody added it. . ."

The patriarch of the SBC inerrantists also claimed that "interpolation" is also evident in John 5, the account of Jesus at the pool of Bethesda. And he discusses the two different accounts of the suicide of Judas (cf. Matt. 27 and Acts 1): "It's just a different view of the suicide," Criswell said. "If it is in the Bible, there is an explanation for it. And the two accounts of the suicide of Judas are in the Bible." Criswell added, "Textual criticism is a wonderful science in itself. It is not ephemeral, it's not impertinent. It's dynamic and central. . ."

III. Manuscript problems (textual criticism). Suggested sources for further reading

A. *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, by R.H. Harrison

B. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* by Bruce M. Metzger

C. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, by J. H Greenlee

▣ **"He will by no means clear the *guilty*"** This is an emphatic statement (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 607, KB 720; both in the *Piel* stem). Sin can be forgiven but the consequences often move through time with terrible results (cf. Exod. 34:7; Jer. 30:11; 46:28; Nah. 1:3)!

▣ **"visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations"** To fully understand what is being said here, one must compare Deut. 5:9-10 with 7:9. YHWH's wrath can be seen to the third and fourth generation but His love is seen to the thousandth generation of those who love Him. I believe that normally what is passed on to our children are our propensities and our circumstances; often the children suffer for parents' lifestyle sins (cf. Ezekiel 18).

14:19 "Pardon" This is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE used as a prayer request. The VERB (BDB 699, KB 757) is also used in verse 20, where YHWH answers Moses' request. See note below.

▣ **"Your lovingkindness"** This is the Hebrew word *hesed* and refers to God's covenant love and loyalty. See Special Topic: Lovingkindness (*hesed*).

SPECIAL TOPIC: LOVINGKINDNESS (*hesed*)

This term (BDB 338, KB 336 II) has a wide semantic field.

A. Used in connection to human beings
   1. kindness to fellow men (e.g., 1 Sam. 20:14; 2 Sam. 16:17; 2 Chr. 24:22; Job 6:14; Ps. 141:5; Pro. 19:22; 20:6)
   2. kindness toward the poor and needy (e.g., Micah 6:8)
   3. affection of Israel toward YHWH (cf. Jer. 2:2; Hos. 6:4,6)
   4. the temporary beauty of a wild flower (cf. Isa. 40:6)

B. Used in connection to God

1. covenant loyalty and love
    a. "in redemption from enemies and troubles" (e.g., Gen. 19:19; 39:21; Exod. 15:13; Ps. 31:16; 32:10; 33:18,22; 36:7,10; 42:8; 44:26; 66:20; 85:7; 90:14; 94:18; 107:8,15,21,31; 109:21022; 143:8,12; Jer. 31:3; Ezra 7:28; 9:9)
    b. "in preservation of life from death" (e.g., Job 10:12; Ps. 6:4-5; 86:13)
    c. "in quickening of spiritual life" (e.g., Ps. 119:41,76,88,124,149,159)
    d. "in redemption from sin" (cf. Ps. 25:7; 51:1; 130:7-8)
    e. "in keeping the covenants" (e.g., Deut. 7:9,12; 2 Chr. 6:14; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; Dan. 9:4; Mic. 7:20)
2. describes a divine attribute (e.g., Exod. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; Neh. 9:17; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Micah 7:20)
3. kindness of God
    a. "abundant" (e.g., Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:5; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2)
    b. "great in extent" (e.g., Exod. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; 7:9)
    c. "everlasting" (e.g., 1 Chr. 16:34,41; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ezra 3:11)
    d. "like a stronghold" (e.g., Ps. 59:17)
    e. related to god's power (e.g., Ps. 62:11c-12a)
4. deeds of kindness (e.g., 2 Chr. 6:42; Ps. 89:2; Isa. 55:3; 63:7; Lam. 3:22)

This word is translated many ways in English translations. I think the best summary definition would be "God's no strings-attached covenant loyalty." It is parallel to the NT term "love (*agapaō*). God is faithful and loving because of who He is!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:20-25

[20]So the LORD said, "I have pardoned *them* according to your word; [21]but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. [22]Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, [23]shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. [24]But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it. [25]Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys; turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea."

14:20 "So the LORD said, "I have pardoned *them* according to your word" Although YHWH forgave them through Moses' intercession, there was still a penalty to be paid (i.e., forty years of wilderness wandering).

Intercessory prayer can and does change YHWH's intentions (cf. Exod. 32:14):

> **32:14 "the LORD changed His mind"** This seems to be a strange phrase when connected to the God who does not change (cf. Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). This is an anthropomorphic idiom (see Special Topic: God Described as Human). There are several places in the OT where God changes His mind (cf. 1 Sam. 15:11; Ps. 106:45; Jer. 18:7-10; 26:3,13,19; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:10).
>
> God's sovereignty can be affected by circumstances and prayer (see Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer). God has an eternal redemptive plan for humanity made in His image (see

Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan). He wants to change His mind when His people repent and seek Him!

14:21 "as I live" This is an oath taken by YHWH in His own name (cf. Num. 14:28; Deut. 32:40). "As I live" reflects the covenant name for God, YHWH (based on the Hebrew word "to be" (cf. Exod. 3:14). See Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Num. 1:1.

▣ **"all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD"** Here again is the key to understanding the OT. YHWH wanted to bless Israel so as to attract the nations, but her disobedience elicited YHWH's judgment, not His blessing. See Special Topic: YHWH Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29.

14:22 "ten times" This is a metaphor of many times, not exactly ten (i.e., Gen. 18:32; 24:55; 31:7,41). See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #5 at Num. 11:16-18.

14:23 "shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers" See Num. 14:32,35; 26:65; 32:11. This is discussed in detail in Hebrews 3 and 4.

14:24 "My servant Caleb" This was an honorific title. It was used of Moses. It will be used of Joshua after his death, and it was used of David. It is significant that Caleb is called by this title. See Special Topic: My Servant at Num. 11:11.

▣ **"he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully"** Here, the term "spirit" seems to refer to his human spirit and not the Holy Spirit. See Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17.

▣ **"I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it"** We know that Caleb will later ask for his inheritance around the city of Hebron, where the giants dwelled and this was even at his advanced age (cf. Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:6-15; 15:13,14).

14:25 "turn tomorrow and set out to the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea" This is irony. This is exactly what the people of God asked for, to return to Egypt, and now they were moving that direction under God's judgment.

These are two *Qal* IMPERATIVES. YHWH is directing His people.

1. turn – BDB 815, KB 937
2. set out (or "pull up stakes") – BDB 652, KB 704

▣ **"Red Sea"** See Special Topic: The Red Sea.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE RED SEA (BDB 410 CONSTRUCT BDB 693 I)

I. Name

A. Literally the name is *Yam Suph*.
   1. "Sea of Weeds" or "Sea of Reeds" (Egyptian root)
   2. "Sea at the end (of the earth)" (Semitic root)

B. This can refer to
   1. salt water, 1 Kgs. 9:26 (Gulf of Aqaba); Jonah 2:5 (Mediterranean Ocean)
   2. fresh water, Exod. 2:3; Isa. 19:6

C. The Septuagint is the first translation to call it "the Red Sea." Possibly these translators were relating it to the sea of Edom (red). This designation was perpetuated by the Latin Vulgate and later the King James English translation.

II. Location

A. There are several bodies of water referred to by this name.

1. the narrow body of water between Egypt and the Sinai peninsula about 190 miles long (Gulf of Suez)
2. the body of water between the Sinai peninsula and Arabia about 112 miles long (Gulf of Aqaba)

B. It could relate to the shallow marsh area in the northeastern part of the Nile delta close to Tanis, Zoan, Avaris, Rameses, which is on the southern shore of Lake Menzaleh (the marshy region).

C. It could be used metaphorically of the mysterious waters to the south, often used of the sea at the end (of the earth). This means it could refer to

1. modern Red Sea (Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Aqaba, cf. 1 Kgs. 9:26)
2. Indian Ocean (cf. Herodotus 1.180)
3. Persian Gulf (cf. Josephus)

III. *Suph* in Numbers 33

A. In Num. 33:8 the body of water that was miraculously divided is called *suph* (BDB 693 I, "reeds" or "weeds").

B. In Num. 33:10,11 the Israelites are said to camp by *yam suph* (Sea of Reeds/Weeds).

C. There are two different bodies of water.

1. the first is not the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
2. the second is probably the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)

D. The term *suph* is being used in the OT in three ways.

1. body of water parted by YHWH to allow the Israelites to pass, but the Egyptian soldiers to drown
2. the northwestern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
3. the northeastern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba)

E. *Yam suph* possibly does not mean "reed sea" because

1. there were/are no reeds (papyrus) in the Red Sea (salt water)
2. the supposed Egyptian etymology refers to a land, not a lake

F. *Suph* could come from the Semitic root "end" (BDB 692) and refer to the mysterious unknown waters to the south (see Bernard F. Batts, "Red Sea or Reed Sea? What *Yam Suph* Really Means" in *Approaches to the Bible*, vol. 1, pp. 291-304).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:26-35

[26]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [27]"How long *shall I bear* with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. [28]Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; [29]your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. [30]Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. [31]Your children, however, whom you said would

become a prey—I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. [32]But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. [33]Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they will suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness. [34]According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, *even* forty years, and you will know My opposition. [35]I, the LORD, have spoken, surely this I will do to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be destroyed, and there they will die.'"

14:26-28 This is a repeat of earlier revelation (i.e., Num. 14:11-25). It shows the editorial process by which the OT was compiled. By faith we believe in the inspiration (see Special Topic: Inspiration) of the editors and compilers as much as the original authors. Moderns do not know

1. when the OT was written down
2. who wrote it or edited it
3. how it was structured or compiled

14:27 Notice that the VERB "shall I bear" is in italics, meaning it is not in the text. This question represents YHWH's emotional question to Moses and Aaron.

14:28 Compare Num. 14:2 with 14:29 and 43. Also compare 14:3 with 14:31.

14:29 "your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men" Israel's sin was forgiven but still the consequences remained. This refers to men twenty years of age and older who were capable of military service (i.e., Num. 1:45).

14:30 "I swore" This is literally "I lifted my hand," which was a physical gesture of oath taking. When used here of YHWH, who is "spirit," it is an anthropomorphism. See Special Topic: Anthropomorphic Language to Describe God at Num. 3:16.

14:31 "your children" It seems that YHWH does make a distinction between those who were old enough to understand and respond to Him (cf. Deut. 1:39). See Special Topic: The Age of Accountability.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The church, following Paul, has focused on Genesis 3 as the source of human sin/evil. This developed into an Augustinian/Calvinistic emphasis on total depravity (i.e., human inability to respond to God unaided). This became one of the five pillars of Calvinism and a basic principle of Reform Christianity.

However, the rabbis never focused on Genesis 3 as the source of evil (some did focus on Genesis 6), but on individual responsibility based on knowledge and commitment. They would posit two intents (*yetzers*), one good and one evil. The classical example would be the rabbinical saying, "in every human heart are two dogs, one evil and one good. The one that is fed the most becomes the biggest." Therefore, humans are only responsible after a period of maturity and covenant knowledge/commitment (i.e., *Bar Mitzvah* for boys at age 13 and *Bat Mitzvah* for girls at age 12). Other biblical examples of this theological perspective are Jonah 4:11 and Isaiah 7:15-16.

To put this is in contrasting terms:

1. Paul/Augustine/Calvin focused on God's sovereignty and human inability.
2. Rabbis/Jesus/Paul focused on covenantal responsibility.

It is not an either/or, but a both/and! Be careful of theological systems! Realize that biblical truth is presented in tension-filled pairs (see Special Topic: Paradox in Scripture). Believers are to live godly lives within the tension, not desire quick, easy answers or playing the blame game! Although the Bible does not specifically address the question of the age of accountability, there are two texts that hint about it.

1. Deuteronomy 1:39
2. Isaiah 7:16

Judgment is related to knowledge. One must have a knowledge of disobedience before one can rebel. Those, because of

1. age
2. environment
3. disability

who do not know about God's will and ways, will surely not be held responsible for violating or rejecting that which they did not know.

I have come to the place in my walk with God that I trust His mercy, grace, and compassion in areas such as this where there is no specific revelation.

See Special Topic: Covenant.

14:33 "Your sons shall be shepherds for forty years in the wilderness, and they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness, until your corpses lie in the wilderness" The rebellion is documented in Deut. 32:10-14; Jeremiah 2; Hos. 2:15-20; 9:10; 11:1-4. It is somewhat ironical that in later Judaism this very period of wilderness wandering was known as an idyllic period and is referred to as the honeymoon between YHWH and the nation of Israel (cf. Ps. 95:8-11; Ezekiel 23). YHWH turns even judgment into blessings!

▣ **"forty years"** Literally it was 38 years. The number "forty" is a round number of a long period of time. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #7 at Num. 11:16-18.

▣ **"they shall suffer for your unfaithfulness"** See Num. 14:18, which is a reflection to the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5. Children do suffer for the sins of their parents.

"Unfaithfulness" is literally "fornications" (BDB 276). This could be

1. literally referring to worshiping the fertility gods of Canaan
2. metaphorical of going after another god when YHWH was Israel's true husband

14:34 "According to the number of days which you spied out the land, forty days, for every day you shall bear your guilt a year, *even* forty years" This verse is often used to be the key to the interpretation of prophecy. However, it is obvious from the context that this should not be pushed into every set of dates, numbers, and judgments. Again, the term "forty" means a long period of indefinite time and the wilderness wandering did not last exactly forty years.

▣

NASB	**"you shall know My opposition"**
NKJV	**"you shall know My rejection"**
NRSV	**"you shall know My displeasure"**
TEV, REB	**"You will know what it means to have me against you"**
NJB	**"learn what it means to reject me"**
JPSOA	**"You shall know what it means to thwart Me"**
LXX	**"you shall know the wrath of my anger"**

The last word occurs only twice in the OT, here and Job 33:10. KB 1761 says there is no cognate root in any other Semitic languages. KB suggests it is best understood as related to the VERB (BDB 626, cf. Num. 30:5,8,11; 32:7,9) "to hinder," "to restrain," or "to frustrate," which results in a translation like, "what happens when I withdraw My hand." But still, this is conjecture.

14:35 "I the LORD have spoken, surely this I will do" This, in my opinion, is the key to understanding prophecy: what God says God will perform! The bottom line of our understanding of God is that He is trustworthy and we can base our personal faith on His word (cf. Isa. 14:24; 25:1; 45:23; 49:10; 55:8-11).

I do, however, hold to the priority of the NT. The OT must be viewed through the words of Jesus and His Apostles. See Special Topic: Why do OT Covenant Promises Seem So Different from NT Covenant Promises?

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHY ARE THE END-TIME EVENTS SO CONTROVERSIAL?

Through the years of my study of eschatology I have learned that most Christians do not have or want a developed, systematized, end-time chronology. There are some Christians who focus or major on this area of Christianity for theological, psychological, or denominational reasons. These Christians seem to become obsessed with how it will all end, and somehow miss the urgency of the gospel! Believers cannot affect God's eschatological (end-time) agenda, but they can participate in the gospel mandate (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Most believers affirm a Second Coming of Christ and an end-time culmination of the promises of God. The interpretive problems arising from how to understand this temporal culmination come from several biblical paradoxes.

1. the tension between Old Covenant prophetic models and New Covenant apostolic models
2. the tension between the Bible's monotheism (one God for all) and the election of Israel (a special people)
3. the tension between the conditional aspect of biblical covenants and promises ("if. . .then") and the unconditional faithfulness of God to fallen mankind's redemption
4. the tension between Near Eastern literary genres and modern western literary models
5. the tension between the Kingdom of God as present, yet future
6. the tension between belief in the imminent return of Christ and the belief that some events must happen first.

Let us discuss these tensions one at a time.

FIRST TENSION (OT racial, national, and geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but Jesus nor the NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world.

8. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)
9. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezekiel 37-39; Daniel 7-12; Zechariah)
10. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
11. Jesus Himself (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
12. the writings of Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thess. 2)
13. the writings of John (1 John and Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor for the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to redeem fallen mankind in Gen. 3:15, before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).
2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which is <u>so</u> integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7,15,16; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Revelation 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are
   a. the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29)
   b. the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45, quoted in 2 Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14)
   c. the temple is now Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:61; 27:40; John 2:19-21) and through Him the local church (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19)
   d. even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e.,"Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e.,"kingdom of priests," cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome (cf. Rev. 1:7).

SECOND TENSION (monotheism vs. an elect people)

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer, God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7,14,18,21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism. All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness

(cf. Gen.1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Genesis 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)!

The tension arises when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4:2,9,22; Gal. 3:6). Israel lost her mission (the church is now a kingdom of priests, cf. Rev. 1:6; 2 Pet.2:5,9), turned mandate into privilege, service into a special standing! God chose one to choose all!

THIRD TENSION (conditional covenants vs. unconditional covenants)

There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if. . .then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it! God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isaiah 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in who was your father/mother! Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7 and Galatians 3).

The world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It is still a conditional covenant! This is not to imply that God has totally rejected the Jews (cf. Romans 9-11). There may be a place and purpose for end-time, <u>believing</u> Israel (cf. Zech. 12:10).

FOURTH TENSION (Near Eastern literary models vs. western models)

Genre is a critical element in correctly interpreting the Bible. The Church developed in a western (Greek) cultural setting. Eastern literature is much more figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic than modern, western culture's literary models. It focuses on people, encounters, and events more than succinct propositional truths. Christians have been guilty of using their history and literary models to interpret biblical prophecy (both OT and NT). Each generation and geographical entity has used its culture, history, and literalness to interpret Revelation. Every one of them has been wrong! It is arrogant to think that modern western culture is the focus of biblical prophecy!

The genre in which the original, inspired author chooses to write is a literary contract with the reader. The book of Revelation is not historical narrative. It is a combination of letter (chapters 1-3), prophecy, and mostly apocalyptic literature. It is as wrong to make the Bible say more than was intended by the original author as it is to make it say less than what he intended! Interpreters' arrogance and dogmatism are even more inappropriate in a book like Revelation.

The Church has never agreed on a proper interpretation of Revelation. My concern is to hear and deal with the whole Bible, not some selected part(s). The Bible's eastern mind-set presents truth in tension-filled pairs. Our western trend toward propositional truth is not invalid, but unbalanced! I think it is possible to remove at least some of the impasse in interpreting Revelation by noting its changing purpose to successive

generations of believers. It is obvious to most interpreters that Revelation must be interpreted in light of its own day and its genre. An historical approach to Revelation must deal with what the first readers would have, and could have, understood. In many ways modern interpreters have lost the meaning of many of the symbols of the book. Revelation's initial main thrust was to encourage persecuted believers. It showed God's control of history (as did the OT prophets); it affirmed that history is moving toward an appointed terminus, judgment or blessing (as did the OT prophets). It affirmed in first century Jewish apocalyptic terms God's love, presence, power, and sovereignty!

It functions in these same theological ways to every generation of believers. It depicts the cosmic struggle of good and evil. The first century details may have been lost to us, but not the powerful, comforting truths. When modern, western interpreters try to force the details of Revelation into their contemporary history, the pattern of false interpretations continues!

It is quite possible that the details of the book may become strikingly literal again (as did the OT in relation to the birth, life, and death of Christ) for the last generation of believers as they face the onslaught of an anti-God leader (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2) and culture. No one can know these literal fulfillments of the Revelation until the words of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21) and Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; and 2 Thessalonians 2) also become historically evident. Guessing, speculation, and dogmatism are all inappropriate. Apocalyptic literature allows this flexibility. Thank God for images and symbols that surpass historical narrative! God is in control; He reigns; He comes!

Most modern commentaries miss the point of the genre! Modern western interpreters often seek a clear, logical system of theology rather than being fair with an ambiguous, symbolic, dramatic genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature. This truth is expressed well by Ralph P. Martin in his article, "Approaches to New Testament Exegesis," in the book *New Testament Interpretation*, edited by I. Howard Marshall:

> "Unless we recognize the dramatic quality of this writing and recall the way in which language is being used as a vehicle to express religious truth, we shall grievously err in our understanding of the Apocalypse, and mistakenly try to interpret its visions as though it were a book of literal prose and concerned to describe events of empirical and datable history. To attempt the latter course is to run into all manner of problems of interpretation. More seriously it leads to a distortion of the essential meaning of apocalyptic and so misses the great value of this part of the New Testament as a dramatic assertion in mythopoetic language of the sovereignty of God in Christ and the paradox of his rule which blends might and love (cf. Rev. 5:5,6; the Lion is the Lamb)" (p. 235).

W. Randolph Tate in his book *Biblical Interpretations*:

> "No other genre of the Bible has been so fervently read with such depressing results as apocalypse, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. This genre had suffered from a disastrous history of misinterpretation due to a fundamental misunderstanding of its literary forms, structure, and purpose. Because of its very claim to reveal what is shortly to happen, apocalypse has been viewed as a road map into and a blueprint of the future. The tragic flaw in this view is the assumption that the books' frame of reference is the reader's contemporary age rather than the author's. This misguided approach to apocalypse (particularly Revelation) treats the work as if it were a cryptogram by which contemporary events can be used to interpret the symbol of the text. . .First, the interpreter must recognize that apocalyptic communicates its messages through symbolism. To interpret a symbol literally when it is metaphoric is simply to misinterpret. The issue is not whether the events in apocalyptic are historical. The events may be historical; they may have really happened, or might happen, but the author presents events and communicates meaning through images and archetypes" (p. 137).

From *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Ryken, Wilhost and Longman III:

> "Today's readers are often puzzled and frustrated by this genre. The unexpected imagery and out-of-this-world experiences seem bizarre and out of sync with most of Scripture. Taking this literature at face value leaves many readers scrambling to determine 'what will happen when,' thus missing the intent of the apocalyptic message" (p. 35).

FIFTH TENSION (the Kingdom of God as present yet future)

The kingdom of God is present, yet future. This theological paradox becomes focused at the point of eschatology. If one expects a literal fulfillment of all OT prophecies to Israel then the Kingdom becomes mostly a restoration of Israel to a geographical locality and a theological pre-eminence! This would necessitate that the Church is secretly raptured out at chapter 5 and the remaining chapters relate to Israel (but note Rev. 22:16).

However, if the focus is on the kingdom being inaugurated by the promised OT Messiah, then it is present with Christ's first coming, and then the focus becomes the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The theological emphasis is on a current salvation. The kingdom has come, the OT is fulfilled in Christ's offer of salvation to all, not His millennial reign over some!

It is surely true that the Bible speaks of both of Christ's comings, but where is the emphasis to be placed? It seems to me that most OT prophecies focus on the first coming, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (cf. Daniel 2). In many ways this is analogous to the eternal reign of God (cf. Daniel 7). In the OT the focus is on the eternal reign of God, yet the mechanism for that reign's manifestation is the ministry of the Messiah (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26-27). It is not a question of which is true; both are true, but where is the emphasis? It must be said that some interpreters become so focused on the millennial reign of the Messiah (cf. Revelation 20) that they have missed the biblical focus on the eternal reign of the Father. Christ's reign is a preliminary event. As the two comings of Christ were not obvious in the OT, neither is a temporal reign of the Messiah!

The key to Jesus' preaching and teaching is the kingdom of God. It is both present (in salvation and service), and future (in pervasiveness and power). Revelation, if it focuses on a Messianic millennial reign (cf. Revelation 20), is preliminary, not ultimate (cf. Revelation 21-22). It is not obvious from the OT that a temporal reign is necessary; as a matter of fact, the Messianic reign of Daniel 7 is eternal, not millennial.

SIXTH TENSION (imminent return of Christ vs. the delayed *Parousia*)

Most believers have been taught that Jesus is coming soon, suddenly, and unexpectedly (cf. Matt. 10:23; 24:27,34,44; Mark 9:1; 13:30; Rev. 1:1,3; 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,10,12,20). But every expectant generation of believers so far has been wrong! The soonness (immediacy) of Jesus' return is a powerful promised hope of every generation, but a reality to only one (and that one a persecuted one). Believers must live as if He were coming tomorrow, but plan and implement the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20) if He tarries.

Some passages in the Gospels and 1 and 2 Thessalonians are based on a delayed Second Coming (*Parousia*). There are some historical events that must happen first:

1. world-wide evangelization (cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10)
2. the revelation of "the man of Sin" (cf. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 13)
3. the great persecution (cf. Matt. 24:21,24; Revelation 13)

There is a purposeful ambiguity (cf. Matt. 24:42-51; Mark 13:32-36)! Live every day as if it were your last but plan and train for future ministry!

CONSISTENCY AND BALANCE

It must be said that the different schools of modern eschatological interpretation all contain half truths. They explain and interpret well some texts. The problem lies in consistency and balance. Often there is a set of presuppositions which use the biblical text to fill in the pre-set theological skeleton. The Bible does not reveal a logical, chronological, systematic eschatology. It is like a family album. The pictures are true,

but not always in order, in context, in a logical sequence. Some of the pictures have fallen out of the album and later generations of family members do not know exactly how to put them back. The key to proper interpretation of Revelation is the intent of the original author as revealed in his choice of literary genre. Most interpreters try to carry their exegetical tools and procedures from other genres of the NT into their interpretations of Revelation. They focus on the OT instead of allowing the teachings of Jesus and Paul to set the theological structure and let Revelation act as illustrative.

I must admit that I approach this commentary on Revelation with some fear and trepidation, not because of the curse of Rev. 22:18-19, but because of the level of controversy the interpretation of this book has caused and continues to cause among God's people. I love God's revelation. It is true when all men are liars (cf. Rom. 3:4)! Please use this commentary as an attempt to be thought provoking and not definitive, as a sign post and not a road map, as a "what if," not a "thus says the Lord." I have come face to face with my own inadequacies, biases, and theological agenda. I have also seen those of other interpreters. It almost seems that people find in Revelation what they expect to find. The genre lends itself to abuse! However, it is in the Bible for a purpose. Its placement as the concluding "word" is not by accident. It has a message from God to His children of each and every generation. God wants us to understand! Let us join hands, not form camps; let us affirm what is clear and central, not all that may be, might be, could be true. God help us all!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:36-38

[36]As for the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land and who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing out a bad report concerning the land, [37]even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD. [38]But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive out of those men who went to spy out the land.

14:37 "even those men who brought out the very bad report of the land died by a plague before the LORD" Those ten men who brought an evil report died immediately. The rest of the generation died somewhat of a natural death over the next forty years of wilderness wandering (cf. Deut. 19:16-19).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 14:39-45

[39]When Moses spoke these words to all the sons of Israel, the people mourned greatly. [40]In the morning, however, they rose up early and went up to the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Here we are; we have indeed sinned, but we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised." [41]But Moses said, "Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the LORD, when it will not succeed? [42]Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies, for the LORD is not among you. [43]For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there in front of you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned back from following the LORD. And the LORD will not be with you." [44]But they went up heedlessly to the ridge of the hill country; neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses left the camp. [45]Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, and struck them and beat them down as far as Hormah.

14:39-45 These verses describe false faith at the wrong time and the wrong place, which is not really faith at all, but rebellion against the stated judgment of YHWH. The military attempt to invade the Promised Land from the south after YHWH's judgment proved to be disastrous (cf. Num. 14:45).

It is significant that this very geographical location of "Hormah" will be the later site of the first military victory of the children of YHWH against the king of Arad after the wilderness wandering period

is concluded (cf. Num. 21:1-3). The term "Hormah" means "unto destruction" (BDB 356). It is located on the southern border of the Promised Land (cf. Josh. 15:30).

14:39 "the people mourned greatly" This VERB (DB 5, KB 6, *Hithpael* IMPERFECT with *waw*) is regularly used for grieving over a death. Here, it is the prediction of the deaths to come of

1. the spies who brought the faithless report, Num. 14:36-38
2. the whole generation who grumbled in the wilderness, Num. 14:21-23,28-30

14:42 "Do not go up" These are the words of Moses (BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense). These people are still not listening and obeying YHWH's designated leader and speaker!

▣ **"for the LORD is not among you"** The key to Israel's success was the personal presence of their covenant God. Without Him they were doomed to defeat and shame!

14:43 The Israelites were afraid to fall in battle to the Canaanite armies (cf. Num. 14:3), but now that is exactly what happens! The irony of unbelief.

14:44

NASB	**"they went up heedlessly"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"they presumed to go up"**
TEV	**"they still dared to go up"**
NJB	**"they presumptiously set off"**
JPSOA	**"defiantly they marched"**
REB	**"they went on recklessly"**
LXX	**"they acted forcefully and went up"**
Peshitta	**"they started to go up"**

The VERB (BDB 779 II, KB 860, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) basically means "to dare." They acted in direct contradiction to YHWH's stated judgment.

They continue "to spurn" YHWH (cf. Num. 14:11).

▣ **"the ark of the covenant"** This special symbol of YHWH's presence did not go before the army into battle as it normally did. Utter defeat (Num. 11:45) was the result.

See Special Topic: The Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Explain how the statements of unbelief found in Num. 14:2-4 impugn YHWH.
2. Why is Num. 14:10 so shocking?
3. How does Num. 14:11 relate to Gen. 12:1-3?
4. How is Num. 14:18 related to Exod. 34:6?
5. What does it mean that God visits the iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generation?
6. What is the significance of Num. 14:21-22, as it relates to Gods purpose in choosing Abraham/Israel?
7. What is the significance of Num. 14:35 and how it relates to our understanding of the Bible?
8. Why is Num. 14:35-45 not an act of faith on the part of the Hebrew nation?

NUMBERS 15

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Laws for Canaan	Laws of Grain and Drink Offerings	Cultic Regulations	Laws About Sacrifice	Cereal Offerings to Accompany Sacrifices
15:1-10	15:1-16	15:1-10	15:1-19	15:1-12
15:11-13		15:11-16		
				15:13-16
Laws of the Sojourner				
15:14-16				The First-fruits of Bread
15:17-21	15:17-21	15:17-21	15:17-21	15:17-21
	Laws Concerning Unintentional Sins			Expiation for Faults of Inadvertence
15:22-26	15:22-26	15:22-26	15:22-26	15:22-24a
				15:24b-26
15:27-31	15:27-29	15:27-31	15:27-29	15:27-29
	Laws Concerning Presumptuous Sins			
	15:30-31		15:30-31	15:30-31
Sabbath-breaking Punished	Penalty for Violating the Sabbath		The Man Who Broke the Sabbath	Sabbath-breaking
15:32-36	15:32-36	15:32-36	15:32-36	15:32-36
Tassels	Tassels on Garments		Rules About Tassels	Tassels On Clothes
15:37-41	15:37-41	15:37-41	15:37-41	15:37-39
				15:40-41

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading"

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:1-10

[1]Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you, [3]then make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a special vow, or as a freewill offering or in your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the LORD. from the herd or from the flock. [4]The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil, [5]and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice, for each lamb. [6]Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; [7]and for the drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a soothing aroma to the LORD. [8]When you prepare a bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a special vow, or for peace offerings to the LORD, [9]then you shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths *of an ephah*

of fine flour mixed with one-half a hin of oil; [10]and you shall offer as the drink offering one-half a hin of wine as an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD.'"

15:2 "Speak" This *Piel* IMPERATIVE is repeated in vv. 18 and 37. These laws were not from the mind of Moses but revelations from YHWH, the Holy One of Israel. If Israel is to be holy (Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:38) they must obey His word (cf. Num. 15:40).

▣ **"When you enter the land"** This must have been very encouraging to the children of the generation that died in the wilderness (cf. Num. 15:18).

▣ **"which I am giving you"** This reflects the promises of Genesis 12; 15; 22. See Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Num. 11:12b.

15:3 There follows a series of initial and recurring sacrifices to mark the theological significance of Israel's entrance into Canaan.

▣ **"burnt offering"** See notes at Leviticus 1.

▣ **"freewill offering"** See notes at Leviticus 3.

▣ **"a soothing aroma"** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma.

SPECIAL TOPIC: A SOOTHING AROMA (BDB 926 and 629)

This is sacrificial imagery for an accepted sacrifice (cf. Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18,25,41; Lev. 1:9,13,17). This imagery does not mean to communicate that the sacrifice was seen as "feeding" YHWH. This was the general view of sacrifice in the ANE.

1. Gilgamesh Epic – 11:159-161
2. see Special Topic: Sacrificial Systems of the Ancient Near East
3. in Ezekiel the terminology is used of pagan sacrifices (cf. Ezek. 6:13; 16:19; 20:28), but in Ezek. 20:41 it becomes a future idiom of YHWH's work through the Messianic temple.

As the sacrifice burned it turned into smoke and ascended. It left the physical realm and entered the spiritual realm. YHWH was pleased with appropriate sacrifice (i.e., Gen. 4:4-5), which denoted

1. a faithful attitude
2. an appropriate gift
3. acknowledged procedures

15:4 "grain offering" See notes at Leviticus 2. These offerings were given in a set sequence.

▣ **"*ephah. . .hin*"** See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

15:5 "wine for the libation" This is also mentioned in v. 10. See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Num. 4:7b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:11-13

[11]"'Thus it shall be done for each ox, or for each ram, or for each of the male lambs, or of the goats. [12]According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do for everyone according to their number. [13]All who are native shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD.'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:14-16

[14]If an alien sojourns with you, or one who may be among you throughout your generations, and he *wishes to* make an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, just as you do so he shall do. [15]*As for* the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns *with you*, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before the LORD. [16]There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you.'"

15:14-16 YHWH always welcomed aliens who lived with Israel to join in their worship. There was one law for them both (cf. Exod. 12:49; Lev. 24:22; Num. 15:15,16,29).

15:15-16 "statute. . .ordinance" See Special Topic: Terms Used for God's Revelation at Num. 10:8.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:17-21

[17]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [18]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land where I bring you, [19]then it shall be, that when you eat of the food of the land, you shall lift up an offering to the LORD. [20]Of the first of your dough you shall lift up a cake as an offering; as the offering of the threshing floor, so you shall lift it up. [21]From the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord an offering throughout your generations.'"

15:17-21 These guidelines refer to initial offerings upon entering Canaan. They were meant to symbolize YHWH's ownership of the land and its bounty.

This same symbolism is true for

1. the Sabbath – see Special Topic: The Sabbath
2. the tithe – see Special Topic: Tithing in the Mosaic Legislation
3. the firstborn – see Special Topic: Firstborn at Num. 3:46

SPECIAL TOPIC: SABBATH

This is from the Hebrew word (BDB 992, KB 409) meaning "rest" or "cessation." It is connected to the seventh day of creation (see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*) where God ceased His labor after finishing initial creation and rested (cf. Gen. 2:1-3). God did not rest because He was tired, but because (1) creation was complete and good (cf. Gen. 1:31) and (2) to give mankind a regular pattern for worship and rest. The usage as a day of worship starts with Gen. 2:2-3, where YHWH uses His rest as a pattern for animals (cf. Exod. 23:12) and mankind (humans need a regular schedule of work, rest, and worship). The Sabbath begins like all the days of Genesis 1, at twilight; therefore, twilight on Friday to twilight on Saturday was the official time period. All the details of its observance are given in Exodus (especially chapters 16,20,31, and 35) and Leviticus (especially chapters 23-26). The first specialized use of this day by Israel was in Exod. 16:25-26 in the gathering of manna. It then becomes part of "the Ten Words" (cf. Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). This is one example where the Ten Commandments in Exodus

20 are slightly different from the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5. Deuteronomy is preparing Israel for the settled, agricultural life in Canaan.

The Pharisees had taken these regulations and, by their oral discussions, interpreted them (i.e., the Oral Traditions) to include many rules. Jesus often performed miracles, knowingly violating their picky rules so as to enter into a theological dialogue with them (i.e., Matthew 12). It was not the Sabbath that Jesus rejected or belittled, but their self-righteous legalism and lack of love (cf. Mark 2:27-28).

The early church worshiped on both the Sabbath and the first day of the week (i.e., Sunday, resurrection day, cf. John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). The Synagogue addressed the growing Christian movement by demanding members to reject Jesus as the Messiah (i.e., The Eighteen Benedictions). At this point (i.e., A.D. 70) the Christians began to meet exclusively on Sunday.

SPECIAL TOPIC: TITHES IN THE MOSAIC LEGISLATION

A. Scripture References

	For Priests and Central Sanctuary	For Local Levites	For Local Poor
1.	Lev. 27:30-32		
2.	Deut. 12:6-7,11,17	Deut. 12:12	
3.	Deut. 14:22-26	Deut. 14:27	Deut. 14:28-29
4.		Deut. 26:12-15	
5.	Num. 18:21-24	Num. 18:25-29 (Levites must tithe of their tithe to central shrine)	
6.	Neh. 12:44	Neh. 10:37,38	Neh. 12:44
7.	Mal. 3:8,10		

B. Examples of tithing predate Mosaic legislation
   1. Genesis 14:20, Abraham to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:2-9)
   2. Genesis 28:22, Jacob to YHWH

C. The tithes of Israel were used to support the central sanctuary, but every third year the national tithes were directed exclusively to the local poor.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:22-26

22"'But when you unwittingly fail and do not observe all these commandments, which the LORD has spoken to Moses, 23*even* all that the LORD has commanded you through Moses, from the day when the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations, 24then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one bull for a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one male goat for a sin offering. 25Then the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the sons of Israel, and they will be forgiven; for it was an error, and they have brought their offering, an offering by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their error. 26So all the congregation of the sons of Israel will be forgiven, with the alien who sojourns among them, for *it happened* to all the people through error.'"

15:22-31 These paragraphs deal with intentional (i.e., defiantly, v. 30) and unintentional disobedience. See Special Topic: Unintentional Sins.

SPECIAL TOPIC: UNINTENTIONAL SINS (OT)

I. Note from Joshua 20:3

The entire sacrificial system was geared toward those who sinned out of ignorance or passion. NIDOTTE, vol. 2, p. 94, states,

"The concept of 'unintentionally' or 'inadvertently' (Lev. 4:2) is both strategic and problematic (cf. Jos. 4:13,22,27; 5:15,18; 22:14; Num. 15:22,24-29). Because of it some scholars have concluded that the sin offering only treated inadvertent sin, that is, sins that were committed by mistake or sins which were done not knowing that the particular act was sinful (see Milgrom, 1991, 228-29). However, the word 'unintentionally' means basically 'in error' (the vb. means to commit an error, go astray). Although it can also mean that the error was unintentional or inadvertent (see e.g., Num. 35:11,15,22-23; Jos. 20:3,9), this is not necessarily the case (see 1 Sam. 26:21; Eccl. 5:6)."

There was no sacrifice for high-handed, defiant, premeditated, or known sin (e.g., Ps. 51:17). This concept of intentionality (BDB 993) is referred to in Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15; 22:14; Num. 4:42; 15:27-31; and 19:4.

This is a good place to point out that the commandment "You shall not murder" (cf. Exod. 20:13; Deut. 5:17) does not mean "kill" (KJV), but do not commit "non-legal, premeditated murder" (BDB 953, cf. Exod. 21:12-14). There was legal premeditated killing.

1. blood avenger
2. holy war
3. judicial sentences

II. Note from Deut. 4:42 – "unintentionally"

The negated term (BDB 395, KB 228) refers to the accidental death of a fellow Israelite accidentally, without premeditation or prejudice. We would call it manslaughter.

The lack of evil motive is the key element. It becomes the theological heart of the sacrificial system. Any sin committed intentionally had no sacrifice available (cf. Exod. 21:12-14; Lev. 4:2,22,27; 5:15-18; 22:14; Num. 15:27,30; Deut. 17:12-13; Josh. 20:1-6). Even the national sacrifice by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) did not cover premeditated sin (cf. Ps: 51:14-17)! Are you not glad we are under the NT sacrifice of Jesus?!

15:25 "make atonement" See Special Topic: Atonement at Num. 5:7b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:27-31

[27]"'Also if one person sins unintentionally, then he shall offer a one year old female goat for a sin offering. [28]The priest shall make atonement before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven. [29]You shall have one law for him who does *anything* unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. [30]But the person who does *anything* defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. [31]Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt *will be* on him.'"

15:30

NASB, JPSOA	**"defiantly"**
NKJV, REB	**"presumptiously"**

NRSV **"high-handedly"**
TEV, NJB **"deliberately"**
LXX **"with a hard hand of arrogance"**
Peshitta **"wittingly"**

The phrase is literally "with a high hand" (BDB 926), which could denote

1. defiance, presumption
2. boldness (cf. Exod. 14:8; Num. 33:3)
3. clear-eyed rebellion against YHWH's law (note v. 31; 2 Sam. 12:9; 2 Chr. 36:16)

This is exactly the opposite mentality of "unintentional" (BDB 993).

▣

NASB, Peshitta **"blaspheming the LORD "**
NKJV **"brings reproach on the LORD"**
NRSV **"affronts the LORD"**
TEV **"treating the LORD with contempt"**
NJB **"commits an outrage against Yahweh"**
JPSOA **"reviles the LORD"**
REB **"insults the LORD"**
LXX **"this one provokes God"**

This VERB (BDB 154, KB 180, always in *Piel* stem) means to impugn one's character by acting in certain ways (cf. 2 Kgs. 19:22; Isa. 37:23; Ezek. 10:27, NIDOTTE, vol, 1, pp. 828-830). YHWH is blasphemed when His people act in knowingly rebellious ways. It is not just their words but their acts that reveal their hearts (Num. 15:31)!

In the NT "YHWH" comes before the VERB for emphasis. The consequences for speaking against YHWH are spelled out in Lev. 24:15-16.

▣ **"cut off"** See notes at Lev. 17:10 and Num. 9:13; 20:3.

In the next verse this VERB (BDB 503, KB 500, *Niphal* IMPERFECT) is matched with the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root, for emphasis (NASB, "shall be completely cut off").

This would refer to their parents.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:32-36

[32]Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day. [33]Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; [34]and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. [35]Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." [36]So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

15:32-36 Like Num. 9:1-8, something happened that was not specifically dealt with in YHWH's revelation, so Moses had to consult Him to ascertain His will in the matter.

Until YHWH revealed His will, the accused was held in confinement (cf. Lev. 24:12).

15:35 "shall surely be put to death" This is an emphatic construction (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 559, KB 562). See Special Topic: Death Penalty in Israel.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE DEATH PENALTY IN ISRAEL

Ancient Israel was to reflect the character of YHWH to the world (cf. Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Exod. 19:5-6). When intentional covenant rebellion distorted this missionary purpose, serious consequences manifested (i.e., death penalty).

The Pentateuch lists several categories:

1. sins against YHWH
   a. Canaanite worship practices – Exod. 22:18; Lev. 20:2-3,27; Deut. 18:10-11
   b. idolatry (heavenly hosts) – Exod. 22:20; Deut. 17:2-7
   c. blasphemy – Exod. 22:28; Lev. 24:15-16
   d. false prophecy – Deut. 13:1-11; 18:20-22
   e. Sabbath violations – Exod. 31:14-15; 35:2
2. sexual sins
   a. incest – Lev. 20:11-21
   b. fornication – Lev. 19:29; 21:9; Deut. 22:13-21; 23:17-18
   c. adultery – Exod. 20:14; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:23-24
   d. sodomy – Lev. 18:22; 20:13
   e. bestiality – Exod. 22:19; Lev. 20:15-16
3. violation of covenant regulations against fellow Israelites
   a. murder – Exod. 20:13; 21:12-14; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:16-21; Deut. 5:17
   b. kidnaping (to sell) – Exod. 21:16; Deut. 24:7 and possibly Exod. 20:15; Deut. 5:19
   c. rebellion against parents – Deut. 21:18-21
   d. false witness
   e. taking holy war spoils – Joshua 7

The methods of execution also varied.

1. stoning – most common
2. burning – Gen. 38:24; Lev. 20:14; 21:9
3. hanging/impaling – Deut. 21:22-23
4. sword – Deut. 13:15

Exceptions for special cases.

1. cities of refuge and subsequent trial – Joshua 20
2. stringent investigations of accusations – Deut. 13:15; 17:4; 19:18
3. need for two witnesses – Num. 35:36; Deut. 17:6; 19:15

The death penalty was to be

1. a way to cleanse the land – Deut. 13:5; 17:12; 19:13,19; 21:9,21; 22:21,22,24; 24:7
2. a deterrent to others – Deut. 17:13; 19:20; 21:21
3. a way of stopping clan violence (i.e., no personal revenge, except regulations set for blood-avenger)

See *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, pp. 147-163.

▣ **"all the congregation shall stone him with stones"** This was a way for corporate Israel to remove sin from their midst. See Special Topic: Stone to Death at Num. 14:10.

Even though the VERB and NOUN are from different roots (cf. 15:36), they have the same meaning and are emphatic, like Num. 14:10.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 15:37-41

[37]The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, [38]"Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. [39]It shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, [40]so that you may remember to do all My commandments and be holy to your God. [41]I am the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God."

15:37-41 This paragraph is about "tassels" (BDB 851; NIDOTTE, vol.1, pp. 827-828). In Deut. 22:12 another word is used, "twisted threads" (BDB 152). They refer to the same thing.

1. here, they were attached to their clothing to remind the Israelites to keep the Law
2. in Deut. 22:12, they were to help separate the Israelis from the Canaanites (see note there online)
3. by Jesus' day the rabbis quoted these verses in connection to the head covering during worship (*tallith*, prayer shawl, cf. Matt. 23:5), which later became the yarmulke, worn daily

15:39b This phrase shows YHWH's understanding of the fallen nature of human beings after Genesis 3 (see Special Topic: The Fall [Genesis 3 in the NT]).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE FALL in the NT

(Genesis 3; see exegetical notes online in the commentary of Genesis)

The Fall affected all mankind is clearly expressed by Paul in Rom. 5:12-21.

Paul develops his theology of the sinfulness of all humanity in the book of Romans. The first point of "the good news" of the gospel is the bad news of human need! Paul develops this from Rom. 1:18-3:18 (the summary conclusion is Rom. 3:19-31). Romans describes the lostness, sinfulness, and need of all human beings.

1. immoral pagans
2. moral pagans
3. Jews

Everyone is responsible to God because of

1. natural revelation, Rom. 1:18-23
2. internal moral witness, Rom. 2:14-16

One of the most horrible recurrent phrases in Romans 1-3 is "God gave them over. . ." (cf. Rom. 1:24,26,28; Eph. 4:17-19). A shocking litany of OT texts is quoted in Rom. 3:9-18! Humans are in deep trouble, need, and rebellion! One does not need a "savior" until one recognizes his/her need!

Romans 5:12-21 is a discussion of Jesus as the second Adam (cf. 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49; Phil. 2:6-8). It gives emphasis to the theological concept of both individual sin and corporate guilt. Paul's development of mankind's (and creation's, cf. Rom. 8:18-23) fall in Adam was unique and different from the rabbis while his view of corporality was very much in line with rabbinical teaching. It showed Paul's ability under inspiration to use, or supplement, the truths he was taught during his training in Jerusalem under Gamaliel (cf. Acts 22:3).

The doctrine of original sin from Genesis 3 and Paul was developed by Augustine and Calvin. It asserts that humans are born sinful. Often Psalm 51:5; 58:3; and Job 15:14; 25:4 are used as OT proof-texts. The alternate theological position that humans are morally and spiritually responsible for their own choices and destiny was developed first by the rabbis and then in the church by Pelagius and Arminius. There is some

evidence for their view in Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15; and Jonah 4:11; John 9:41; 15:22,24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 4:15. The thrust of this theological position would be that children are innocent until an age of moral responsibility (for the rabbis this was 13 years old for boys and 12 years old for girls).

There is a mediating position in which both an innate evil propensity and an age of moral responsibility are both true! Evil is not only corporate, but a developing evil of self and sin (life apart from God). The wickedness of humanity is not the issue (cf. Gen. 6:5,11-12,13; Rom. 3:9-18,23), but the when, at birth or later in life?

▣ **"played the harlot"** This is a Semitic idiom referring to

1. Israel's worshiping the fertility gods of the ANE (cf. Exod. 34:14,15,16; Lev. 17:7; 20:5,6; Deut. 31:16)
2. YHWH as Israel's true husband (i.e., Jer. 31:32; Hosea 1-3)

15:41 This is covenant language (cf. Exod. 20:2) reminding Israel of YHWH's promises to Abraham, Gen. 15:12-22. YHWH, and only YHWH, was Israel's Deity. See Special Topic: Monotheism.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MONOTHEISM

The concept of "monotheism" (one and only one, personal, ethical God with no female consort), not just the "high god" of polytheism or the good god of Iranian dualism (Zoroastrianism), is unique to Israel (Abraham and Job, 2000 B.C.). There is one rare exception briefly in Egypt (Amenhotep IV, also known as Akhenaten, 1367-1350 or 1386-1361 B.C., who worshiped *Aten*, the sun god as the only god). See J. Assmann, *The Mind of Egypt*, pp. 215-217.

This concept is expressed in several phrases in the OT.

1. "no one like YHWH our *Elohim*," Exod. 8:10; 9:14; Deut. 33:26; 1 Kgs. 8:23
2. "no other besides Him," Deut. 4:35,39; 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 22:32; Isa. 45:21; 44:6,8; 45:6,21
3. "YHWH is one," Deut. 6:4; Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; 1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19
4. "none like You," 2 Sam. 7:22; Jer. 10:6
5. "You alone are God," Ps. 86:10; Isa. 37:16
6. "Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me," Isa. 43:10
7. "there is no other; besides Me. . .there is no other," Isa. 45:5,6,22
8. He is the cause of all things, Isa. 45:7 (cf. Amos 3:6)
9. "there is none else, no other God," Isa. 45:14,18
10. "there is none except Me," Isa. 45:21
11. "there is no other;. . .there is no one like Me," Isa. 46:9

It must be admitted that this crucial doctrine has been revealed in progressive ways. The early statements could be understood as "henotheism" or practical monotheism (there are other gods, i.e., Jos. 24:15; 1 Kgs. 18:21, but only one God for us, cf. Exod. 15:11; 20:2-5; Deut. 5:7; 6:4,14; 10:17; 32:12; 1 Kgs. 8:23; Ps. 83:18; 86:8; 136:1-9).

The first texts that begin to denote a singularity (philosophical monotheism) are early (cf. Exod. 8:10; 9:14; 20:2-3; Deut. 4:35,39; 33:26). The full and complete claims are found in Isaiah 43-46 (cf. 43:10-11; 44:6,8; 45:7,14,18,22; 46:5,9).

The OT depreciates the gods of the nations as

1. human creations – Deut. 4:28; 2 Kgs. 19:18; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; 40:19; 41:7,24,29; 44:10,12; 46:6-7; Jer. 10:3-5; Rev. 9:10
2. demons – Deut. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; Isa. 8:19; 19:3c; 1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20
3. vanity, empty – Deut. 32:21; 2 Kgs. 17:15; Ps. 31:6; Isa. 2:18; 41:29; Jer. 2:5; 10:8; 14:22; Jer. 2:5; 8:19
4. no gods – Deut. 32:21; 2 Chr. 13:9; Isa. 37:19; Jer. 2:11; 5:7; 1 Cor. 8:4-5; 10:20; Rev. 9:20

The NT alludes to Deut. 6:4 in Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:4,6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; and James 2:19. Jesus quotes it as the first commandment in Matt. 22:36-37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27. The OT, as well as the NT, asserts the reality of other spiritual beings (demons, angels), but only one creator/redeemer God (YHWH, Gen. 1:1).

Biblical monotheism is characterized by

1. God is one and unique (ontology is assumed, not specified)
2. God is personal (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 3:8)
3. God is ethical (cf. Exod. 34:6; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8-10)
4. God created humans in His image (Gen. 1:26-27) for fellowship (i.e., #2). He is a jealous God (cf. Exod. 20:5-6)

From the NT

1. God has three eternal, personal manifestations (see Special Topic: The Trinity)
2. God is perfectly and completely revealed in Jesus (cf. John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-19; Heb. 1:2-3)
3. God's eternal plan for fallen humanity's redemption is the sacrificial offering of His only Son (Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:6-11; Hebrews)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why do these laws about sacrifice break into the narrative at this point?
2. Define "unintentional sin."
3. What was the purpose of tassels?
4. How does Num. 15:40 relate to Lev. 11:44; 19:2?

NUMBERS 16

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Korah'S Rebellion	Rebellion Against Moses and Aaron	Revolts Against Moses	The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram	The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram
16:1-3	16:1-3	16:1-11	16:1-3	16:1-3
16:4-7	16:4-11		16:4-7	16:4-7
16:8-11			16:8-11	16:8-11
16:12-14	16:12-14	16:12-14	16:12-14	16:12-15
16:15-19	16:15-19	16:15-19	16:15	The Punishment
			16:16-21	16:16-19
16:20-22	16:20-30	16:20-22		16:20-24
			16:22	
16:23-24		16:23-30	16:23-24	
16:25-30			16:25-27a	16:25-27a
			16:27b-30	16:27b-30
16:31-35	16:31-35	16:31-35	16:31-34	16:31-32
				16:33-34
			16:35	16:35
			The Fire Pans	
16:36-40	16:36-40	16:36-40	16:36-40	
Murmuring and Plague	Murmuring of the People		Aaron Saves the People	
16:41-50	16:41-45	16:41-50	16:41-45a	
			16:45b-50	
	16:46-50			

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading"

BACKGROUND STUDY

A. Although the text does not specifically mention the motives for the rebellion, one is tempted to see jealousy as the primary factor (cf. Num. 11:2).

B. Korah, a member of the family of Levites who had the unique responsibility of carrying the furniture of the Tabernacle, wanted to share leadership with Aaron (cf. Num. 16:8-10). This shows the tension between the priests and the Levites, all descendants of Levi.

C. Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, seemingly wanted to have a share of the preeminence he had lost.

D. The rebellion was somewhat more widely spread than just the family of Korah and three of the sons of Reuben. We see that there were over 250 leaders of the different tribes who were

involved in this particular rebellion. This shows the extent of the unrest and lack of confidence among the people of God. See Josephus, *Antiq*, 4.2.1-4; 4.3.1-4.

E. What bothers me personally about OT accounts such as this is whether these people who challenged Moses' and Aaron's leadership are excluded from heaven or just taken early. Going to *Sheol* at death (i.e., into the earth; see Special Topic: *Sheol*) is the lot of all humans since Genesis 3. See Special Topic: Apostasy.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

I. Old Testament

A. All humans go to *Sheol* (there are no cognate roots and the etymology is uncertain, BDB 982, KB 1368), which was a way of referring to the place where the dead live, or the grave, mostly in Wisdom Literature and Isaiah. In the OT it was a shadowy, conscious but joyless, existence (cf. Job 10:21-22; 38:17).

B. *Sheol* characterized

1. associated with God's judgment (fire), Deut. 32:22
2. a prison with gates, Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18
3. A land of no return, Job 7:9 (an Akkadian title for death)
4. a land/realm of darkness, Job 10:21-22; 17:13; 18:18
5. a place of silence, Ps. 28:1; 31:17; 94:17; 115:17; Isa. 47:5
6. associated with punishment even before Judgment Day, Ps. 18:4-5
7. associated with *abaddon* (destruction; see Special Topic: *Abaddon. . .Apollyon*), in which God is also present, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2
8. associated with "the Pit" (grave), Ps.16:10; 88:3-4; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:15-17
9. wicked descend alive into *Sheol*, Num. 16:30,33; Job 7:9; Ps. 55:15
10. personified often as an animal with a large mouth, Num. 16:30; Pro. 1:12; Isa. 5:14; Hab. 2:5
11. people there called *Repha'im* (i.e., "spirits of the dead"), Job 26:5; Pro. 2:18; 12:16; 26:14; Isa. 14:9-11)
12. however, YHWH is present even here, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Pro. 15:11

II. New Testament

A. The Hebrew *Sheol* is translated by the Greek *Hades* (the unseen world)

B. *Hades* characterized (much like *Sheol*)

1. refers to death, Matt. 16:18
2. linked to death, Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14
3. often analogous to the place of permanent punishment (*Gehenna*), Matt. 11:23 (OT quote); Luke 10:15; 16:23-24
4. often analogous to the grave, Luke 16:23

C. Possibly divided (rabbis)

1. righteous part called *Paradise* (really another name for heaven, cf. 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7), Luke 23:43
2. wicked part called *Tartarus*, a holding place far below *Hades*, 2 Peter 2:4, where it is a holding place for evil angels (cf. Genesis 6; I Enoch); it is associated with the "Abyss," Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3

D. *Gehenna*

1. Reflects the OT phrase, "the valley of the sons of Hinnom," (south of Jerusalem). It was the place where the Phoenician fire god, *Molech* (BDB 574, KB 591), was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6), which was forbidden in Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5.
2. Jeremiah changed it from a place of pagan worship into a site of YHWH's judgment (cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6-7). It became the place of fiery, eternal judgment in I Enoch 90:26-27 and Sib. 1:103.
3. The Jews of Jesus' day were so appalled by their ancestors' participation in pagan worship by child sacrifice, that they turned this area into the garbage dump for Jerusalem. Many of Jesus' metaphors for eternal judgment came from this landfill (fire, smoke, worms, stench, cf. Mark 9:44,46). The term *Gehenna* is used only by Jesus (except in James 3:6).
4. Jesus' usage of *Gehenna*
   a. fire, Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43
   b. permanent, Mark 9:48 (Matt. 25:46)
   c. place of destruction (both soul and body), Matt. 10:28
   d. paralleled to *Sheol*, Matt. 5:29-30; 18:9
   e. characterizes the wicked as "son of hell," Matt. 23:15
   f. result of judicial sentence, Matt. 23:33; Luke 12:5
   g. the concept of *Gehenna* is parallel to the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14) or the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). It is possible the lake of fire becomes the permanent dwelling place of humans (from *Sheol*) and evil angels (from *Tartarus*, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude v. 6, or the abyss, cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-11; 20:1,3).
   h. it was not designed for humans, but for Satan and his angels, Matt. 25:41

E. It is possible, because of the overlap of *Sheol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna* that

1. originally all humans went to *Sheol/Hades*
2. their experience there (good/bad) is exacerbated after Judgment Day, but the place of the wicked remains the same (this is why the KJV translated *hades* (grave) as *gehenna* (hell).
3. the only NT text to mention torment before Judgment is the parable of Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the Rich Man). *Sheol* is also described as a place of punishment now (cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:1-5). However, one cannot establish a doctrine on a parable.

III. Intermediate state between death and resurrection

A. The NT does not teach the "immortality of the soul," which is one of several ancient views of the afterlife that assert:

1. human souls exist before their physical life
2. human souls are eternal before and after physical death
3. often the physical body is seen as a prison and death as release back to pre-existent state

B. The NT hints at a disembodied state between death and resurrection

1. Jesus speaks of a division between body and soul, Matt. 10:28
2. Abraham may already have a body, Mark 12:26-27; Luke 16:23
3. Moses and Elijah have a physical body at the transfiguration, Matthew 17
4. Paul asserts that at the Second Coming the believers with Christ will get their new bodies first, 1 Thess. 4:13-18

5. Paul asserts that believers get their new spiritual bodies on Resurrection Day, 1 Cor. 15:23,52
6. Paul asserts that believers do not go to *Hades*, but at death are with Jesus, 2 Cor. 5:6,8; Phil. 1:23. Jesus overcame death and took the righteous to heaven with Him, 1 Pet. 3:18-22.

IV. Heaven

A. This term is used in three senses in the Bible.
   1. the atmosphere above the earth, Gen. 1:1,8; Isa. 42:5; 45:18
   2. the starry heavens, Gen. 1:14; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 148:4; Heb. 4:14; 7:26
   3. the place of God's throne, Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 9:24 (third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2)

B. The Bible does not reveal much about the afterlife, probably because fallen humans have no way or capacity to understand (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).

C. Heaven is both a place (cf. John 14:2-3) and a person (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6,8). Heaven may be a restored Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-2; Revelation 21-22). The earth will be cleansed and restored (cf. Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21; 2 Pet. 3:10). The image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) is restored in Christ. Now the intimate fellowship of the Garden of Eden is possible again.

However, this may be metaphorical (heaven as a huge, cubed city of Rev. 21:9-27) and not literal. 1 Corinthians 15 describes the difference between the physical body and the spiritual body as the seed to the mature plant. Again, 1 Cor. 2:9 (a quote from Isa. 64:4 and 65:17) is a great promise and hope! I know that when we see Him we will be like Him (cf. 1 John 3:2).

V. Helpful resources

A. William Hendriksen, *The Bible On the Life Hereafter*

B. Maurice Rawlings, *Beyond Death's Door*

SPECIAL TOPIC: APOSTASY (*aphistēmi*)

This Greek term *aphistēmi* has a wide semantic field. However, the English term "apostasy" is derived from this term and prejudices its usage to modern readers. Context, as always, is the key, not a preset definition.

This is a compound term from the preposition *apo*, which means "from" or "away from" and *histēmi*, "to sit," "to stand," or "to fix." Notice the following (non-theological) usages:

1. to remove physically
   a. from the Temple, Luke 2:37
   b. from a house, Mark 13:34
   c. from a person, Mark 12:12; 14:50; Acts 5:38
   d. from all things, Matt. 19:27,29
2. to remove politically, Acts 5:37
3. to remove relationally, Acts 5:38; 15:38; 19:9; 22:29
4. to remove legally (divorce), Deut. 24:1,3 (LXX) and NT, Matt. 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4; 1 Cor. 7:11
5. to remove a debt, Matt. 18:7
6. to show unconcern by leaving, Matt. 4:20; John 4:28; 16:32
7. to show concern by not leaving, John 8:29; 14:18

8. to allow or permit, Matt. 13:30; 19:14; Mark 14:6; Luke 13:8

In a theological sense the VERB also has a wide usage:

1. to cancel, pardon, remit the guilt of sin, Exod.32:32 (LXX); Num. 14:19; Job 42:10 and NT, Matt. 6:12,14-15; Mark 11:25-26
2. to refrain from sin, 2 Tim. 2:19
3. to neglect by moving away from
   a. the Law, Matt. 23:23; Acts 21:21
   b. the faith, Ezek. 20:8 (LXX); Luke 8:13; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12

Modern believers ask many theological questions that the NT writers would have never thought about. One of these would relate to moderns tendency to separate faith (justification) from faithfulness (sanctification).

There are persons in the Bible who are involved in the people of God and something happens to cause them to leave.

I. Old Testament
   A. Those who heard the twelve (ten) spies' report, Numbers 14 (cf. Heb. 3:16-19)
   B. Korah, Numbers 16
   C. Eli's sons, 1 Samuel 2, 4
   D. Saul, 1 Samuel 11-31
   E. False prophets (examples)
      1. Deut. 13:1-5 18:19-22 (ways to know a false prophet)
      2. Jeremiah 28
      3. Ezekiel 13:1-7
   F. False prophetesses
      1. Ezekiel 13:17
      2. Nehemiah 6:14
   G. Evil leaders of Israel (examples)
      1. Jeremiah 5:30-31; 8:1-2; 23:1-4
      2. Ezekiel 22:23-31
      3. Micah 3:5-12

II. New Testament
   A. This Greek term is literally "to apostasize." The Old and New Testaments both confirm an intensification of evil and false teaching before the Second Coming (cf. Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; Acts 20:29,30; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; 2 Tim. 4:4). This Greek term may reflect Jesus' words in the Parable of the Soils found in Matthew 13; Mark 4; and Luke 8. These false teachers are obviously not Christians, but they came from within (cf. Acts 20:29-30; 1 John 2:19); however, they are able to seduce and capture immature believers (cf. Heb. 3:12).

      The theological question is were the false teachers ever believers? This is difficult to answer because there were false teachers in the local churches (cf. 1 John 2:18-19). Often our theological or denominational traditions answer this question without reference to specific Bible texts (except the proof-text method of quoting a verse out of context to supposedly prove one's bias).

   B. Apparent faith
      1. Judas, John 17:12
      2. Simon Magnus, Acts 8
      3. Those spoken of in Matt. 7:13-23

4. Those spoken of in Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8
5. The Jews of John 8:31-59
6. Alexander and Hymenaeus, 1 Tim. 1:19-20
7. Those of 1 Tim. 6:21
8. Hymenaeus and Philetus, 2 Tim. 2:16-18
9. Demas, 2 Tim. 4:10
10. False teachers, 2 Peter 2:19-22; Jude vv. 12-19
11. antichrists, 1 John 2:18-19

C. Fruitless faith
1. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
2. 2 Peter 1:8-11

We rarely think about these texts because our systematic theology (Calvinism, Arminianism, etc.) dictates the mandated response. Please do not pre-judge me because I bring up this subject. My concern is proper hermeneutical procedure. We must let the Bible speak to us and not try to mold it into a preset theology. This is often painful and shocking because much of our theology is denominational, cultural or relational (parent, friend, pastor), not biblical (see Special Topic: What Does It Mean to "Receive," "Believe," "Confess/Profess," and "Call Upon"?). Some who are in the People of God turn out to not be in the People of God (e.g., Rom. 9:6).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:1-3

[1]Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *action*, [2]and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. [3]They assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

16:1 "Korah. . ." The full family tree of Korah can be seen in Exod. 6:16-25. Korah and Reuben camped on the south side of the Tabernacle. This physical proximity may be involved in the explanation of why these two tribes rebelled together.

▣ **"On the son of Peleth"** It is interesting that three of the descendants of Reuben are mentioned in this verse. However, On is only mentioned in this verse (cf. Num. 26:4-11).

16:2 "two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown" This shows other tribal leaders were also involved in the rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron, and not just the rabble of Num. 11:4. It is ironic that these men, chosen by their peers, were not chosen by God (i.e., 1 Sam. 16:7-10).

▣

NASB, NKJV,	
LXX, Peshitta	**"men of renown"**
NRSV	**"well-known men"**

TEV **"well known leaders"**
NJB, JPSOA **"men of repute"**
REB **"men of good standing"**

The term (BDB 1027, KB 1548, D, #4) basically means "name." Here it denotes

1. men of standing or reputation, Ruth 4:11
2. men who continue the family name, Gen. 9:14; 25:6-7
3. powerful, Gen. 6:4

In this context they were tribal leaders.

16:3 "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst" This sounds like a really good argument. It sounds like one that I have made in interpreting Eph. 4:11-12. It does assert a half-truth. It seems that although all of Israel was a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:5-6), God chose special leaders out of this group to lead His people. There is a dialectical tension between all of God's people being priests and God choosing certain leaders among them.

▣ **"are holy"** Israel is "holy" (see Special Topic: Holy at Num. 5:3) because of their covenant relationship to the "holy" Deity. All things connected to YHWH take on a sacredness. This is both a possession and a godliness (see Special Topic: Sanctification).

SPECIAL TOPIC: NEW TESTAMENT HOLINESS / SANCTIFICATION

The NT asserts that when sinners turn to Jesus in repentance and faith (cf. Mark 1:15; Acts 3:16,19; 20:21), they are instantaneously justified and sanctified. This is their new position in Christ. His righteousness has been imputed to them (cf. Gen. 15:6; Romans 4). They are declared right and holy (a forensic act of God).

But the NT also urges believers on to holiness or sanctification. It is both a theological position in the finished work of Jesus Christ and a call to be Christlike in attitude and actions in daily life. As salvation is a free gift and a cost-everything lifestyle, so too, is sanctification.

Initial Response	**A Progressive Christlikeness**
Acts 26:18	Romans 6:19
Romans 15:16	2 Corinthians 7:1
1 Corinthians 1:2-3; 6:11	Ephesians 1:4; 2:10
2 Thessalonians 2:13	1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3-4,7; 5:2
Hebrews 2:11; 10:10,14; 13:12	1 Timothy 2:15
1 Peter 1:12	2 Timothy 2:21
	Hebrews 12:14
	1 Peter 1:15-16

▣ **"the LORD is in their midst"** The people are basing their argument about being holy on the presence of the Lord in their camp (cf. Lev. 20:12; Num. 5:3; 35:34).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:4-7

4When Moses heard *this*, he fell on his face; 5and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring *him* near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself. 6Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, 7and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the

presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses *shall be* the one who is holy. You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi!"

16:4 Moses recognized the extent of the rebellion (cf. Num. 14:5). This is just another in a series questioning YHWH.

16:5 "even the one whom He will choose" God's choice—not man's is the key. The irony between Num. 16:2 and 5 is obvious.

16:6-7 "Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company. . ." Moses proposed an ultimate test. All of these men would have remembered what happened to Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10, when they approached the Lord with strange fire in their censers. This group would have their day in court but it would be a life-giving confrontation.

Numbers 16:6 and 7 have a series of IMPERATIVES to Korah and his company.

1. do this – BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal*
2. take censers – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal*
3. put fire in them – BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal*
4. lay incense upon them – BDB 962, KB 1321, *Qal*

There are two more in Num. 16:16-17.

5. present before the Lord – BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal*
6. each of you take his firepan – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal*

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:8-11

[8]Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, [9]is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the *rest of* the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; [10]and that He has brought you near, *Korah*, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also? [11]Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?"

16:8-10 This is the only clue to the psychological motivation of Korah.

16:11 "gathered together against the LORD" It is interesting that as these people rebelled against YHWH's rules they were rebelling against Him. We need to hear that today! There must be a balance in our day between the faithful following of God-given leaders and God-given leaders being more led by God and not by themselves.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:12-14

[12]Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; but they said, "We will not come up. [13]Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but you would also lord it over us? [14]Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

16:12-14 "Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab" These non-Levite families of Reuben refused to respond to Moses' summons to come to the same meeting where he confronted Korah. Their reasons are as follows:

1. they accused Moses of taking them out of the land of milk and honey, referring to Egypt
2. they are all going to die by warfare in the wilderness
3. they did not have the Promised Land allocation
4. Moses was "lording it over them" (this is an intensified form; INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB, both *Hithpael*)

My, what a lapse of memory they had since the days of hard taskmasters in Egypt! Really, they were not confronting Moses, but God, in His plan and provisions.

16:13 "Is it not enough" This is a sarcastic, rhetorical question of rebellion (cf. Num. 16:9,13; Josh. 27:17; Isa. 7:13; Ezek. 16:20; 34:18)

▣ **"but you would also lord it over us"** This is an *Hithpael* INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an *Hithpael* IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 979, KB 1362, which makes it an emphatic question. It may be alluding to

1. Moses as the only leader of Israel
2. Moses' previous status in Pharaoh's court (i.e., "prince")

16:14

NASB, NKJV, NRSV, Peshitta	**"put out the eyes"**
TEV	**"trying to deceive us"**
NJB, REB	**"hood-wink"**
JPSOA	**"gouge out. . .eyes"**
LXX	**"cut out the eyes"**

The Hebrew VERB (BDB 669, KB 722, *Piel* IMPERFECT) basically means "to bore out," "pick out" (cf. Pro. 30:17), or "gouge out" (cf. Jdgs. 16:21). Here, it is imagery for tricking someone about something. They are challenging the integrity and motives of Moses, YHWH's chosen leader.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:15-19

15 Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not regard their offering! I have not
taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them." 16 Moses said to Korah, "You
and all your company be present before the LORD tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron.
17 Each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD,
two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron *shall* each *bring* his firepan." 18 So they each took
his own censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and they stood at the doorway of the tent of
meeting, with Moses and Aaron. 19 Thus Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the
doorway of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

16:15 Moses has had it with these people.

1. he became very angry
2. do not regard their offering (i.e., the censers, vv. 6-70)
3. he claims he has not taken a single donkey
4. he has not harmed any of them in any way (this is similar to Samuel's response in 1 Sam. 22:3 and Nehemiah's response in Nehemiah 5)

16:17 "two hundred and fifty firepans" There were special firepans for the priests but there would not have been this many. Obviously these were firepans which were used at home or they were made especially

for this occasion. Notice these non-priests were to approach YHWH's Tabernacle as if they were. Surely they remembered Nadab and Abihu of Leviticus 10.

16:19 "the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation" See notes at Num. 14:10; 16:42; 20:6. This represented the personal presence of YHWH.

For "glory" see Special Topic: Glory (*kabod*) at Num. 14:10b.

For "Lord" see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Num. 1:1.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:20-22

[20]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [21]"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." [22]But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation?"

16:21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly" Again, this seems to be another test of Moses (cf. Exod. 32:9,10; Num. 14:11,12; 16:45). YHWH really was attempting to start over with Moses, as He had with Noah and Abraham.

The VERB "separate" (BDB 95, KB 110, *Niphal* IMPERATIVE) basically means "to separate," "to divide," or "to set apart." The NOUN form is used in v. 16 of the Levites being set apart to the service of the Tabernacle (cf. Num. 8:14; 23:13). Also note:

1. to set apart the people of Israel to YHWH, Lev. 20:24,26
2. to set apart some Levites for the music ministry, 1 Chr. 25:1
3. separate mercenaries from service, 2 Chr. 25:10
4. to designate people to bury the dead, Ezek. 39:14
5. here (cf. v. 45), it means to "get away from" those about to be judged by YHWH (i.e., the whole people of God); in v. 24, the same concept is expressed by "get back from. . ."

16:22 "God of the spirits of all flesh" This is a word play on the Hebrew word *ruah* (BDB 924, cf. Num. 27:16), which can mean "wind," "breath," or "spirit." It seems to be an allusion to Gen. 2:7. See Special Topics: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:7 and Monotheism at Num. 15:41.

▣ **"when one man sins, will You be angry with the entire congregation"** It is obvious from the earlier parts of the OT that corporate responsibility is emphasized (i.e., Adam's sin, Genesis 3; Achan's sin, Joshua 7). However, in verses such as this, one begins to see an ancient form of individualism being manifested. Compare Jer. 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 18 for a continuing emphasis on individual responsibility (cf. Matt. 10:32; John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:23-24

[23]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [24]"Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:25-30

[25]Then Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him, [26]and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept away in all their sin." [27]So they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out *and* stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones. [28]Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; for this is not my doing.

[29]If these men die the death of all men or if they suffer the fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. [30]But if the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD."

16:26 "touch nothing that belongs to them" Apparently these men were treated as Jericho will be later in the sense of *herem* (see Special Topic: Curse in the OT) or "holy war" as that which is uniquely dedicated to God. It becomes so holy that it cannot be used by humans.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CURSE (*anathema*)

I. OT

There are several words in Hebrew for "curse." *Herem* (BDB 356, KB 353) was used of something given to God (cf. LXX translates it as *anathema* (BAGD 54, Lev. 27:28). It usually involved destruction of the item (because it was too holy for human's use (cf. Deut. 7:26; Jos. 6:17-18; 17:12). It was a term used in the concept of "holy war." God told Joshua to destroy the Canaanites. Jericho was the first opportunity, the "first fruits" of this holy destruction/cleansing.

II. NT

In the NT *anathema* and its related forms were used in several different senses:

A. as a gift or offering to God (cf. Luke 21:5)
B. as a death oath (cf. Acts 23:14)
C. to curse and swear (cf. Mark 14:71)
D. a curse formula related to Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3)
E. a giving of someone or something to the judgment or destruction by God (cf. Rom. 9:3; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8-9).

Number D above is very controversial. I have included my notes from 1 Cor. 12:3.

"Jesus is accursed" is a shocking statement. Why would anyone (except traditional Jews) who claims to speak for God say this? The term (i.e., *anathema*) itself had an OT background (i.e., Hebrew, *herem*). It related to the concept of Holy War, where a city was devoted to God and, therefore, it became holy. This meant that everything in it that breathed, human or animal, had to die (cf. Jos. 6:17; 7:12)."

See Gal. 3:13 for Paul's use of this phrase. Paul saw the substitutionary death of Jesus as taking on Himself the curse of the Mosaic law. Originally this curse was related to proper burial procedures in the holy land.

The theories of how this term was used in Corinth are

1. that it has a Jewish setting relating to the synagogue oaths (cf. Acts 26:11, i.e., later, rabbinical curse formulas were used to remove Christians from the synagogue). To remain a member one had to reject or curse Jesus of Nazareth.
2. that it has a Roman setting relating to Emperor worship where only Caesar could be called "Lord"
3. that it has a pagan worship setting where the curses were called on people by the use of a god's name. This could then be translated, "May Jesus curse _____" (cf. 1 Cor. 16:22).
4. that someone related the phrase to the theological concept of Jesus bearing the OT curse for us (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).
5. Recent studies from Corinth (cf. footnote #1 p. 164 in Bruce Winter's *After Paul Left Corinth*) document the curse tablets found on the ancient acropolis at Corinth. Biblical scholars have

assumed that a linking VERB "is" should be provided in the phrase, "Jesus is accursed," but this archaeological evidence clearly shows that these first century Roman period curses from Corinth lack the VERB (as do some of the curses in the LXX of Deut. 22:15-20), as does 1 Cor. 12:3. There is further archaeological evidence that Christians in first century Roman Corinth used curse formulas in burial procedures (i.e., Byzantine period), found on Christian graves (J. H. Kent, *The Inscriptions*, 1926-50. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies, 1966, vol. 8:3, no. 644).

Some segments of the church at Corinth were reverting to pagan curses in Jesus' name against other members of the church. Not only is the method a problem, but also the hateful motive. This is another example of the tension within this church. Paul wants them to build up the church, edify the church. They want to curse part of the church!

16:22-29 These verses record Moses' words about the coming judgment on the rebels and their families. He asserts that if they die a natural death, then he has not been sent by YHWH.

He also asserts that this judgment is not something he wanted (v. 28). Judgment is always a tragedy! YHWH is a gracious God but He is also a "holy" and "righteous" God. There are consequences to rebellion and disobedience. See the Special Topics:

1. Characteristics of Israel's God (OT) at Num. 11:18
2. Holy at Num. 5:3
3. Righteousness
4. Judgment in the NT

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Righteousness" is such a crucial topic that a Bible student must make a personal extensive study of the concept.

In the OT God's character is described as "just" or "righteous" (VERB, BDB 842, KB 1003; MASCULINE NOUN, BDB 841, KB 1004; FEMININE NOUN, BDB 842, KB 1006). The Mesopotamian term itself comes from a "river reed," which was used as a construction tool to judge the horizontal straightness of walls and fences. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God's righteousness as well as His right to judge.

Man was created in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1,3; 9:6). Mankind was created for fellowship with God (i.e., Gen. 3:8). All of creation is a stage or backdrop for God and mankind's interaction. God wanted His highest creation, mankind, to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and be like Him! Mankind's loyalty was tested (cf. Genesis 3) and the original couple failed the test. This resulted in a disruption of the relationship between God and humanity (cf. Rom. 5:12-21).

God promised to repair and restore the fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:15; see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan). He does this through His own will and His own Son. Humans were incapable of restoring the breach (cf. Rom. 1:18-3:20; Revelation 5).

After the Fall, God's first step toward restoration was the concept of covenant based on His invitation and mankind's repentant, faithful, obedient response (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38). Because of the Fall, humans were incapable of appropriate action (cf. Rom. 3:21-31; Galatians 3). God Himself had to take the initiative to restore covenant-breaking humans. He did this by

1. <u>declaring</u> mankind righteous through the work of Christ (i.e., forensic righteousness)
2. <u>freely giving</u> mankind righteousness through the work of Christ (i.e., imputed righteousness)

3. providing the indwelling Spirit who produces righteousness (i.e., Christlikeness, the restoration of the image of God) in mankind
4. restoring the fellowship of the Garden of Eden (compare Genesis 1-2 with Revelation 21-22)

However, God requires a covenantal response. God decrees (i.e., freely gives, i.e., Rom. 5:8; 6:23) and provides, but humans must respond and continue to respond in

1. repentance
2. faith
3. lifestyle obedience
4. perseverance

Righteousness, therefore, is a covenantal, reciprocal action between God and His highest creation, based on the character of God, the work of Christ, and the enabling of the Spirit, to which each individual must personally and continually respond appropriately. The concept is called "justification by grace through faith" (i.e., Eph. 2:8-9). The concept is revealed in the Gospels, but not in these terms. It is primarily defined by Paul, who uses the Greek term "righteousness" in its various forms over 100 times.

Paul, being a trained rabbi, uses the term *dikaiosunē* in its Hebrew sense of the term *tsaddiq* used in the Septuagint, not from Greek literature. In Greek writings the term is connected to someone who conformed to the expectations of Deity and society (i.e., Noah, Job). In the Hebrew sense it is always structured in covenantal terms (see Special Topic: Covenant). YHWH is a just, ethical, moral God. He wants His people to reflect His character. Redeemed mankind becomes a new creature (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). This newness results in a new lifestyle of godliness (Matthew 5-7; Gal. 5:22-24; James; 1 John). Since Israel was a theocracy there was no clear delineation between the secular (society's norms) and the sacred (God's will). This distinction is expressed in the Hebrew and Greek terms being translated into English as "justice" (relating to society) and "righteousness" (relating to religion).

The gospel (good news) of Jesus is that fallen mankind has been restored to fellowship with God. This has been accomplished through the Father's love, mercy, and grace; the Son's life, death, and resurrection; and the Spirit's wooing and drawing to the gospel. Justification is a free act of God, but it must issue in godliness (Augustine's position, which reflects both the Reformation emphasis on the freeness of the gospel and Roman Catholic emphasis on a changed life of love and faithfulness). For Reformers the term "the righteousness of God" is an OBJECTIVE GENITIVE (i.e., the act of making sinful mankind acceptable to God [positional sanctification], while for the Catholics it is a SUBJECTIVE GENITIVE, which is the process of becoming more like God [experiential progressive sanctification]. In reality it is surely both!!)

In my view all of the Bible from Genesis 4 – Revelation 20 is a record of God's restoring the fellowship of Eden. The Bible starts with God and mankind in fellowship in an earthly setting (cf. Genesis 1-2) and the Bible ends with the same setting (cf. Revelation 21-22). God's image and purpose will be restored!

To document the above discussions note the following selected NT passages illustrating the Greek word group.

1. God is righteous (often connected to God as Judge)
   i. Romans 3:26
   b. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-6
   c. 2 Timothy 4:8
   d. Revelation 16:5
2. Jesus is righteous
   a. Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14 (title of Messiah)
   b. Matthew 27:19

c. 1 John 2:1,29; 3:7

3. God's will for His creation is righteousness
   a. Leviticus 19:2
   b. Matthew 5:48 (cf. 5:17-20)
4. God's means of providing and producing righteousness
   a. Romans 3:21-31
   b. Romans 4
   c. Romans 5:6-11
   d. Galatians 3:6-14
5. Given by God
   a. Romans 3:24; 6:23
   b. 1 Corinthians 1:30
   c. Ephesians 2:8-9
6. Received by faith
   a. Romans 1:17; 3:22,26; 4:3,5,13; 9:30; 10:4,6,10
   b. 2 Corinthians 5:7,21
7. Through acts of the Son
   a. Romans 5:21
   b. 2 Corinthians 5:21
   c. Philippians 2:6-11
8. God's will is that His followers be righteous
   a. Matthew 5:3-48; 7:24-27
   b. Romans 2:13; 5:1-5; 6:1-23
   c. Ephesians 1:4; 2:10
   d. 1 Timothy 6:11
   e. 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:16
   f. John 3:7
   g. 1 Peter 2:24
9. God will judge the world by righteousness
   a. Acts 17:31
   b. 2 Timothy 4:8

Righteousness is a characteristic of God, freely given to sinful mankind through Christ. It is

1. a decree of God
2. a gift of God
3. an act of Christ
4. a life to be lived

But it is also a process of becoming righteous that must be vigorously and steadfastly pursued, which will one day be consummated at the Second Coming. Fellowship with God is restored at salvation but progresses throughout life to become a face-to-face encounter with Him (cf. 1 John 3:2) at death or the *Parousia*!

Here is a good quote to conclude this discussion. It is taken from *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* from IVP

> "Calvin, more so than Luther, emphasizes the relational aspect of the righteousness of God. Luther's view of the righteousness of God seems to contain the aspect of acquittal. Calvin emphasizes the marvelous nature of the communication or imparting of God's righteousness to us" (p. 834).

For me the believer's relationship to God has three aspects.

1. the gospel is a person (emphasis of the Eastern Church and Calvin)
2. the gospel is truth (emphasis of Augustine and Luther)
3. the gospel is a changed life (Catholic emphasis)

They are all true and must be held together for a healthy, sound, biblical Christianity. If any one is over emphasized or depreciated, problems occur.

We must welcome Jesus!

We must believe the gospel!

We must pursue Christlikeness!

SPECIAL TOPIC: JUDGMENT IN THE NT

Judgment is certain (cf. Matt. 12:36; Heb. 9:27; 2 Pet. 2:4,9; 3:7).

A. The one who judges is
   1. God (cf. Rom. 2:2-3; 14:10,12; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:23; Rev. 20:11-15)
   2. Christ (cf. John 9:39; Matt. 16:27; 25:31-46; Acts 10:42; 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1)
   3. the Father through the Son (cf. John 5:22-27; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16)

   Judgment is an unpleasant subject, but a recurrent theme in the Bible. It is based on several bedrock biblical truths.
   1. This is a moral universe created by an ethical God (we reap what we sow, cf. Gal. 6:7).
   2. Humanity is fallen; we have rebelled.
   3. This is not the world God intended it to be.
   4. All conscious creations (angels and humans) will give an accounting to their Creator for the gift of life. We are stewards.
   5. Eternity will be permanently determined by our actions and choices made in this life.

B. Should Christians judge one another?

   This issue must be dealt with in two ways.
   1. believers are admonished not to judge one another (cf. Matt. 7:1-5; Luke 6:37,42; Rom. 2:1-11; James 4:11-12)
   2. believers are admonished to evaluate leaders (cf. Matt. 7:6,15-16; 1 Cor. 14:29; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; and 1 John 4:1-6)

   Some criteria for proper evaluation may be helpful.
   1. evaluation should be for the purpose of affirmation (cf. 1 John 4:1 – "test" with a view toward approval; see Special Topic: Testing)
   2. evaluation should be done in humility and gentleness (cf. Gal. 6:1)

3. evaluation must not focus on personal preference issues (cf. Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 8:1-13; 10:23-33)
4. evaluation should identify those leaders who have "no handle for criticism" from within the church or the community (cf. 1 Timothy 3).

16:28 "this is not my doing" Literally, "not from my heart." The exodus and the events that followed were not at Moses' direction and surely not a plan by him to grab power over Israel.

16:30 "the LORD brings about an entirely new thing. . .descend alive into Sheol" Moses prophesies a test (like Aaron's rod of Numbers 17). He says that if these men die a natural death, then he is not a prophet and God has not chosen him, but if the earth opens up and uniquely swallows this group (i.e., a personification of Num. 26:10; Deut. 11:6; Ps. 106:16-18, cf. Exod. 15:12), then God has confirmed Moses' and Aaron's leadership. The ancient Hebrews believed that the earth contained the dead because that is where they placed their dead (see Special Topic: Where Are the Dead?). This is not a scientific explanation but is simply a metaphor of description (i.e., phenomenological language), which is common in the OT.

There is some confusion about how Korah died. Was Korah with this group of Reubenites or was he one of those who offered fire before the Lord in the Tabernacle? It seems, from Num. 26:11-12, that Korah left the two hundred and fifty in the Tabernacle and went to stand with the sons of Reuben and was, thereby, swallowed up along with them, as was his family.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

I. Old Testament
   A. All humans go to *Sheol* (there are no cognate roots and the etymology is uncertain, BDB 982, KB 1368), which was a way of referring to the place where the dead live, or the grave, mostly in Wisdom Literature and Isaiah. In the OT it was a shadowy, conscious but joyless, existence (cf. Job 10:21-22; 38:17).
   B. *Sheol* characterized
      1. associated with God's judgment (fire), Deut. 32:22
      2. a prison with gates, Job 38:17; Ps. 9:13; 107:18
      3. A land of no return, Job 7:9 (an Akkadian title for death)
      4. a land/realm of darkness, Job 10:21-22; 17:13; 18:18
      5. a place of silence, Ps. 28:1; 31:17; 94:17; 115:17; Isa. 47:5
      6. associated with punishment even before Judgment Day, Ps. 18:4-5
      7. associated with *abaddon* (destruction; see Special Topic: *Abaddon. . .Apollyon*), in which God is also present, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2
      8. associated with "the Pit" (grave), Ps.16:10; 88:3-4; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:15-17
      9. wicked descend alive into *Sheol*, Num. 16:30,33; Job 7:9; Ps. 55:15
      10. personified often as an animal with a large mouth, Num. 16:30; Pro. 1:12; Isa. 5:14; Hab. 2:5
      11. people there called *Repha'im* (i.e., "spirits of the dead"), Job 26:5; Pro. 2:18; 12:16; 26:14; Isa. 14:9-11)
      12. however, YHWH is present even here, Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8; Pro. 15:11

II. New Testament

A. The Hebrew *Sheol* is translated by the Greek *Hades* (the unseen world)

B. *Hades* characterized (much like *Sheol*)

1. refers to death, Matt. 16:18
2. linked to death, Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14
3. often analogous to the place of permanent punishment (*Gehenna*), Matt. 11:23 (OT quote); Luke 10:15; 16:23-24
4. often analogous to the grave, Luke 16:23

C. Possibly divided (rabbis)

1. righteous part called *Paradise* (really another name for heaven, cf. 2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7), Luke 23:43
2. wicked part called *Tartarus*, a holding place far below *Hades*, 2 Peter 2:4, where it is a holding place for evil angels (cf. Genesis 6; I Enoch); it is associated with the "Abyss," Luke 8:31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3

D. *Gehenna*

1. Reflects the OT phrase, "the valley of the sons of Hinnom," (south of Jerusalem). It was the place where the Phoenician fire god, *Molech* (BDB 574, KB 591), was worshiped by child sacrifice (cf. 2 Kgs. 16:3; 21:6; 2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6), which was forbidden in Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5.
2. Jeremiah changed it from a place of pagan worship into a site of YHWH's judgment (cf. Jer. 7:32; 19:6-7). It became the place of fiery, eternal judgment in I Enoch 90:26-27 and Sib. 1:103.
3. The Jews of Jesus' day were so appalled by their ancestors' participation in pagan worship by child sacrifice, that they turned this area into the garbage dump for Jerusalem. Many of Jesus' metaphors for eternal judgment came from this landfill (fire, smoke, worms, stench, cf. Mark 9:44,46). The term *Gehenna* is used only by Jesus (except in James 3:6).
4. Jesus' usage of *Gehenna*
   a. fire, Matt. 5:22; 18:9; Mark 9:43
   b. permanent, Mark 9:48 (Matt. 25:46)
   c. place of destruction (both soul and body), Matt. 10:28
   d. paralleled to *Sheol*, Matt. 5:29-30; 18:9
   e. characterizes the wicked as "son of hell," Matt. 23:15
   f. result of judicial sentence, Matt. 23:33; Luke 12:5
   g. the concept of *Gehenna* is parallel to the second death (cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6,14) or the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:42,50; Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14-15; 21:8). It is possible the lake of fire becomes the permanent dwelling place of humans (from *Sheol*) and evil angels (from *Tartarus*, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude v. 6, or the abyss, cf. Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1-11; 20:1,3).
   h. it was not designed for humans, but for Satan and his angels, Matt. 25:41

E. It is possible, because of the overlap of *Sheol*, *Hades*, and *Gehenna* that

1. originally all humans went to *Sheol/Hades*
2. their experience there (good/bad) is exacerbated after Judgment Day, but the place of the wicked remains the same (this is why the KJV translated *hades* (grave) as *gehenna* (hell).
3. the only NT text to mention torment before Judgment is the parable of Luke 16:19-31 (Lazarus and the Rich Man). *Sheol* is also described as a place of punishment now (cf. Deut. 32:22; Ps. 18:1-5). However, one cannot establish a doctrine on a parable.

III. Intermediate state between death and resurrection

A. The NT does not teach the "immortality of the soul," which is one of several ancient views of the afterlife that assert:

1. human souls exist before their physical life
2. human souls are eternal before and after physical death
3. often the physical body is seen as a prison and death as release back to pre-existent state

B. The NT hints at a disembodied state between death and resurrection

1. Jesus speaks of a division between body and soul, Matt. 10:28
2. Abraham may already have a body, Mark 12:26-27; Luke 16:23
3. Moses and Elijah have a physical body at the transfiguration, Matthew 17
4. Paul asserts that at the Second Coming the believers with Christ will get their new bodies first, 1 Thess. 4:13-18
5. Paul asserts that believers get their new spiritual bodies on Resurrection Day, 1 Cor. 15:23,52
6. Paul asserts that believers do not go to *Hades*, but at death are with Jesus, 2 Cor. 5:6,8; Phil. 1:23. Jesus overcame death and took the righteous to heaven with Him, 1 Pet. 3:18-22.

IV. Heaven

A. This term is used in three senses in the Bible.

1. the atmosphere above the earth, Gen. 1:1,8; Isa. 42:5; 45:18
2. the starry heavens, Gen. 1:14; Deut. 10:14; Ps. 148:4; Heb. 4:14; 7:26
3. the place of God's throne, Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Ps. 148:4; Eph. 4:10; Heb. 9:24 (third heaven, 2 Cor. 12:2)

B. The Bible does not reveal much about the afterlife, probably because fallen humans have no way or capacity to understand (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).

C. Heaven is both a place (cf. John 14:2-3) and a person (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6,8). Heaven may be a restored Garden of Eden (Genesis 1-2; Revelation 21-22). The earth will be cleansed and restored (cf. Acts 3:21; Rom. 8:21; 2 Pet. 3:10). The image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) is restored in Christ. Now the intimate fellowship of the Garden of Eden is possible again.

However, this may be metaphorical (heaven as a huge, cubed city of Rev. 21:9-27) and not literal. 1 Corinthians 15 describes the difference between the physical body and the spiritual body as the seed to the mature plant. Again, 1 Cor. 2:9 (a quote from Isa. 64:4 and 65:17) is a great promise and hope! I know that when we see Him we will be like Him (cf. 1 John 3:2).

V. Helpful resources

A. William Hendriksen, *The Bible On the Life Hereafter*

B. Maurice Rawlings, *Beyond Death's Door*

▣

NASB	**"brings about an entirely new thing"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"creates"**
TEV, JPSOA	**"does something unheard of"**
NJB	**"does something utterly new"**
REB	**"works a miracle"**
LXX	**"show forth by an omen"**
Peshitta	**"make a new thing"**

This is the Hebrew VERB *bara* (BDB 135, KB 153, *Qal* IMPERFECT accompanied by its NOUN). The VERB is used in Gen. 1:1 (a *Qal* PERFECT). It is used only of Divine activity. However, here, it is not "out of nothing" (i.e., *ex nihilo*) but something never done before using existing natural features.

I personally am not sure that Genesis specifically asserts creation out of nothing. Remember, Genesis 1-2 is an abbreviated summary of YHWH's activity over time. It asserts the "who" and "why," not the "how" and "when" of creation. See full notes online at Genesis 1-2. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2 ed., pp. 394-397, and NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 728-234.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:31-35

[31]As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; [32]and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with *their* possessions. [33]So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. [34]All Israel who *were* around them fled at their outcry, for they said, "The earth may swallow us up!" [35]Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.

16:34-35 Here we see that all the rebellious leaders of Korah's group who wanted to be priests were killed instantaneously by fire (see Special Topic: Fire at Num. 11:1b). This is similar to what occurred in Leviticus 10.

There is some ambiguity here because of the use of the number "two hundred and fifty." Some say it refers to the tribal leaders of v. 2, while others say it refers to two hundred members of Korah's own family who wanted to be priests.

For a good discussion on "Judgment" see *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 470-744 (?).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:36-40

[36]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [37]"Say to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he shall take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and you scatter the burning coals abroad. [38]As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the LORD and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel." [39]So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which the men who were burned had offered, and they hammered them out as a plating for the altar, [40]as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD; so that he will not become like Korah and his company—just as the LORD had spoken to him through Moses.

16:36-40 The MT starts chapter 17 at v. 36 (cf. NJB versing). The firepans of the rebel Levites were to be kept because they were holy. They became a new bronze (cf. Exod. 27:3) covering for the sacrificial altar. This would be a sign for the children of Israel. God's acts of judgment were meant to teach later generations. They had to be recorded as accurately as His acts of grace (cf. Num. 17:10). See Special Topics:

1. Altar of Sacrifice at Num. 1:50-51b
2. Altar of Incense at Num. 1:50-51b

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 16:41-50

[41]But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD's people." [42]It came about, however, when the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward

the tent of meeting, and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared. [43]Then Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, [44]and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [45]"Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them instantly." Then they fell on their faces. [46]Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense *on it*; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone forth from the LORD, the plague has begun!" [47]Then Aaron took *it* as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put *on* the incense and made atonement for the people. [48]He took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked. [49]But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah. [50]Then Aaron returned to Moses at the doorway of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been checked.

16:41 "all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron" One would think that the actions of God, His judgment against those who rebelled, would preclude the people of God from grumbling so soon. Unfortunately, it did not! Fallen human nature is pervasive and recurrent.

16:46 "the plague has begun" Here is a dramatic example of the intermediary effectiveness of Aaron, God's special choice as priest. Aaron stood between the plague and the tribes of Israel who were still alive and effectively placated the wrath of God. This is the only account in all the Pentateuch where offering incense acted in the sense of atonement. Another unusual text is Num. 31:50, where the Israelites made an offering of gold jewelry to make atonement. Usually it required a blood sacrifice.

▣ Notice the number of IMPERATIVES.

1. take your censer – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. put fire in it – BDB 678, KB 733, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
3. lay incense on it – BDB 962, KB 1321, *QAL* IMPERATIVE
4. bring it quickly – BDB 229, KB 246, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
5. make atonement – BDB 497, KB 493, *Piel* IMPERATIVE; see Special Topic: Atonement at Num. 5:7b

Normally, Moses intercedes for Israel but in this case, Aaron offers a sacrifice of incense (only here in the OT) to stay YHWH's hand of judgment.

This had to happen quickly (i.e., "Aaron ran," v. 47). Normally, priests had to avoid the dead but here Aaron ran to the demarcation between the living and the dead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How are the family of Levites from Kohath in contact with a family of the tribe of Reuben?
2. Are all Israelites "holy"? If so, how?
3. How are Leviticus 10 and Numbers 16 related?
4. What did Korah want?
5. What did the family of Reubenites want?
6. How is Num. 16:22 related to Ezekiel 18?
7. Define "*Sheol*."
8. How does the concept of "Hebrew corporality" affect the families of the rebels?
9. Why were the censers holy?
10. What is unique about Num. 16:46?

NUMBERS 17

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
				The Censers (follows MT versing)
				17:1-3
				17:4-5
				Aaron Intercedes
				17:6-8
				17:9-14
Aaron's Rod Buds	The budding of Aaron's Rod	Aaron's Budding Rod	Aaron's Walking Stick	Aaron's Branch
17:1-7	17:1-5	17:1-7	17:1-5	17:16-20
	17:6-7		17:6-7	17:21-24
17:8-11	17:8-9	17:8-11	17:8-11	17:25-26
	17:10-11			Expiation: The Function of the Priesthood
17:12-13	17:12-13	17:12-13	17:12-13	17:27-18:7

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading**"**

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:1-7

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household: twelve rods, from all their leaders according to their fathers' households. You shall write each name on his rod, [3]and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there is one rod for the head *of each* of their fathers' households. [4]You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony, where I meet with you. [5]It will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout. Thus I will lessen from upon Myself the grumblings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you." [6]Moses therefore spoke to the sons of Israel, and all their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' households, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods. [7]So Moses deposited the rods before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

17:2 "a rod" This NOUN (BDB 641) has a wide semantic field.

1. a staff
   a. walking staff (symbol of wealth and status as family leader) – Gen. 38:18
      (1) Moses' staff – Exod. 4:2,17,20; 7:2,20; 14:16
      (2) Aaron's staff – Exod. 7:9,10,12,19, etc.
      (3) court magician's staff – Exod. 7:8-12
      (4) God's staff – Exod. 4:20; 17:9

b. shepherd's staff
c. symbol of sustaining food – Lev. 20:26

2. a rod
   a. a weapon – 1 Sam. 14:27
   b. pole of tribe – here
   c. symbol of power/rule – Isa. 9:4; 10:5; 30:32
   d. symbol of wicked power – Ezek. 7:11
   e. symbol of God's discipline – Job 9:34; 21:9; Ps. 89:32
3. a tribe (i.e., led by one with a leader's staff) – Exod. 31:2; Lev. 24:11; Num. 1:4; Josh. 7:1; Mic. 6:9
4. branch – Ezek. 19:11,12,14 (twice); see JB; NJB has "branch" in Num. 17:2

The familiar passage in Ps. 23:4 has different but overlapping meanings.

1. rod – BDB 986
2. staff – BDB 1044

17:4 "where I meet with you" This phrase shows the uniqueness of Moses' relationship with YHWH (and, by implication, Aaron, cf. Exod. 4:10-16). The issue of YHWH's choice of Moses has already been made!

This rod blooming, like so many visible symbols (cf. v. 10; Num. 16:37-40) of YHWH's presence, power, and purposes, will clearly reveal who is the leader of Israel (v. 5).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:8-11

[8]Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. [9]Moses then brought out all the rods from the presence of the LORD to all the sons of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod. [10]But the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die." [11]Thus Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

17:8 This verse implies Aaron's rod showed a process of fruitfulness.

1. sprouted – BDB 827 I, KB 965, *Qal* PERFECT
2. put forth buds – BDB 422, KB 425, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT with *waw*
3. blossomed – BDB 847, KB 1013, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT with *waw*
4. produced fruit – BDB 168, KB 19, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*

17:8-11 The tribes of Israel (i.e., their leaders) clearly saw and confirmed YHWH's choice.

17:10 YHWH wants Israel's past faithlessness to be a current warning. He does not want to judge His people.

▣ **"rebels"** This is literally the idiom "sons of rebellion" (BDB 598).

17:11 The theme of "obedience" is crucial in Numbers. See Special Topic: Keep.

SPECIAL TOPIC: KEEP (taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Deut. 5:10)

It is a characteristic of Deuteronomy to link obedience to YHWH's covenant to love for YHWH (cf. 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6,16,20).

YHWH's love is not capricious, but clearly defined. He shows no partiality. His initiating covenant love is maintained by covenant obedience.

"Keep" (BDB 1036, KB 1581) is the key concept in this chapter (cf. Deut. 5:1,10,12,29,32 and many more times in Deuteronomy). The OT was based on the grace of YHWH and human obedience/performance. YHWH wanted to show human inability to respond appropriately (cf. Galatians 3). The NT (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38) is based on God's gracious initiation and redemption in Christ. Believers are still destined to be righteous (cf. Eph. 1:14; 2:10), but they have been accepted and forgiven by grace through faith (cf. Eph. 2:8-9). Now they obey/perform out of a sense of gratitude and family love (i.e., "those who love Me"). The goal is the same, a righteous (Christlike) people, but the mechanism has changed from human performance to Christ's performance (cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Another Hebrew root used in Deut. 6:4, "hear" (BDB 1033, KB 1581), also means "hear so as to do/obey." Obedience is the evidence that faithful followers are faithful followers. Note Jesus' words in Luke 6:46! One of the saddest passages in Isaiah describes Israel's inability to obey (cf. Isa. 6:9-13)! Also note Jesus' words in Matt. 7:21-23,24-27)!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 17:12-13

[12]Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Behold, we perish, we are dying, we are all dying! [13]Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, must die. Are we to perish completely?"

17:12-13 These verses seem out of place. They do not fit the flow of the context. There have been several theories.

1. The Oxford Study Bible, p. 159, suggests they should go after Num. 14:34 (so too, JB)
2. also possibly after Num. 14:41-45
3. They represent the repentance of Israel after questioning YHWH's chosen leaders 3 times. They finally see the need of an intermediating priesthood.
4. It is an introduction to chapter 18.

Plagues were often a divine judgment on Israel, Num. 14:37; 16:45-50; 25:8-9,18; 31:16; 2 Sam. 24:21,28; 1 Chr. 21:22; 2 Chr. 21:14-15; Ps. 106:28-31; Jer. 21:6. But, note the purpose was always a purification resulting in repentance and restoration of fellowship and covenant.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why does the Hebrew word "rod" also denote a tribe?
2. If there are 13 tribes, why twelve rods?
3. Why did God want Aaron's rod kept permanently?
4. What is the contextual purpose of Num. 17:12-13?

NUMBERS 18

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT versing)
Duties of Levites	Duties of Priests and Levites	The Responsibility of Aaronic Priests and Other Levites	Duties of Priests and Levites	Expiation: The Function of the Priesthood
18:1-7	18:1-7	18:1-7	18:1-7	17:27-18:7
The Priest's Portion	Offerings for Support of the Priests		The Share of the Priests	The Priest's Portion
18:8-20	18:8-20	18:8-20	18:8-11	18:8-10
				18:11-19
			18:12-13	
			18:14	
			18:15-18	
			18:19	The Levites' Portion
			18:20	18:20
	Tithes for Support of the Levites		The Share of the Levites	
18:21-24	18:21-24	18:21-24	18:21-24	18:21-24
	The Tithes of the Levites		The Levites' Tithe	Tithes
18:25-32	18:25-32	18:25-32	18:25-32	18:25-29
				18:30-32

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading"

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. In the context of the conflict between Aaron and Korah, the place of the families of the tribe of Levi is spelled out specifically.

B. The Oxford Study Bible (NRSV) suggests that most of the information contained in this chapter is a repeat of earlier revelation.
   1. Num. 18:1-7 – Num. 3:5-10
   2. Num. 18:8-10 – Leviticus 1-7
   3. Num. 18:15 – Exod. 13:11-13
   4. Num. 18:16 – Num. 3:44-48
   5. Num. 18:17 – Lev. 27:9-10, 26-27
   6. Num. 18:18 – Lev. 7:28-36
   7. Num. 18:19 – Lev. 2:13
   8. Num. 18:21 – Lev. 27:30-33

C. There is always some confusion about the details of these laws which are recorded in different books of the Pentateuch. There has been some updating and editorial revision within the community of Israel.
   1. Tabernacle of the wilderness
   2. Temple of Solomon

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:1-7

[1]So the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood. [2]But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you, while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. [3]And they shall thus attend to your obligation and the obligation of all the tent, but they shall not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die. [4]They shall be joined with you and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; but an outsider may not come near you. [5]So you shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel. [6]Behold, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel; they are a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD, to perform the service for the tent of meeting. [7]But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

18:1 "the LORD said to Aaron" Usually YHWH speaks to Moses, but here, like Lev. 10:8, He addresses Aaron (and his family).

▣

NASB, JPSOA,
Peshitta "bear the guilt"
NKJV "bear the iniquity"
NRSV "bear responsibility"
NJB "answerable for"
REB "fully answerable"
LXX "bear the sins of. . ."

The VERB (BDB 669, KB 724, *Qal* IMPERFECT [*Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT in v. 22]) normally means
1. to lift a burden (i.e., carry)
2. to lift
   a. a hand
   b. an eye
   c. one's face
   d. a lament
   e. a name
   f. a prayer
   g. one's self
3. to bear guilt or punishment (i.e., Ezek. 14:10; 44:12)
4. carry off
   a. literal

b. figurative

There are two possibilities here.

1. if they obey YHWH's guidelines they will not die (i.e., v. 23; Exod. 28:43; 30:32; Leviticus 10; 16:2; 21:23; Num. 1:51; 3:10; 9:13; 17:12-13)
2. they are to atone for this guilt of Israel by the altar (i.e., Exod. 28:38)

Number 1 fits this context best! Some priests did die (cf. Leviticus 10).

18:2 YHWH provides for the needs of both the priests and the Levites.

1. priests are sustained by the gifts to the altar
2. Levites are sustained by the tithes of the people

Neither group of the tribe of Levi has a land inheritance in Canaan because YHWH, Himself, is their inheritance (cf. Num. 18:20,24; Deut. 10:9; 12:12; 14:27,29).

▣ **"Bring with you also your brothers"** This is a *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE (BDB 897, KB 1132). It is followed by two IMPERFECTS used as JUSSIVES.

1. joined with you – BDB 530, KB 522
2. serve you – BDB 1058, KB 1661

The Levites have a part but a lesser, limited part. They are to serve YHWH by serving the priests and the Tabernacle (i.e., the sacrificial system of atonement).

8:3

NASB	**"attend to your obligation"**
NKJV	**"attend to your needs"**
NRSV	**"perform duties"**
TEV, REB	**"to fulfill their duties**
NJB	**"at the service"**
JPSOA	**"discharge their duties"**
LXX	**"keep your guard duties"**
Peshitta	**"keep your charge"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 1036, KB 1581, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*; used in vv. 3,4,5,7), which can mean "keep," "guard," or "preserve." BDB suggests here it has the connotation of "discharge the duties of the office" (i.e., Num. 1:53; 3:7,8,10,28,32,38; Lev. 5:35). They will have specific assigned tasks in serving the priests and the Tabernacle. They must do these and only these or death will occur. There are degrees of holiness.

1. High Priest – Leviticus 16
2. priests
3. Levites

18:4 The term "outsider" is literally "stranger" (BDB 266 I, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE). The Levites are to

1. guard the Tabernacle from all but the priests (cf. v. 22)
2. guard the Tabernacle from non-Israelites (see full note at Num. 3:10)

Here, #1 fits best (cf. vv. 7,22). The Levites are stationed by family around the inner circle of the Tabernacle. See Special Topic: Chart of the Tabernacle at Num. 2:2d.

Israel functioned on a "holy-profane" or "clean-unclean" worldview. The tribe of Levi was involved in

1. protecting the Tabernacle from non-Israelites/priests
2. protecting it from disqualified Levites/priests
3. protecting the levels of holiness between the holy place and the holy of holies

At each level some were excluded. If there was a violation of YHWH's rules in this area, then death resulted.

This same worldview distinction also guided "who" could eat "what" and "where."

18:5 The purpose of the Tabernacle is that Israel's sin is dealt with and there needed to be no more divine plagues. This may be the contextual reason for the expressed fear of Num. 17:12-13. An example of this intercession is seen in

a. Moses' prayers'
b. Aaron's censer of Num. 16:46

18:6 The Levites were a "gift" (BDB 682 I, cf. Num. 3:9; 8:16,19; here) to the priests to help them in serving the needs of the sacrificial system (i.e., the Tabernacle and all its movement and functioning).

18:7 The priests were responsible for

1. everything related to the sacrificial altar (see Special Topic: Altar of Sacrifice at Num. 1:50-51b)
2. everything inside the shrine (i.e., holy place and holy of holies)

See Special Topic: Levitical Priests at Num. 3:3.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:8-20

[8]Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment. [9]This shall be yours from the most holy *gifts, reserved* from the fire; every offering of theirs, even every grain offering and every sin offering and every guilt offering, which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons. [10]As the most holy *gifts* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you. [11]This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it. [12]All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to the LORD, I give them to you. [13]The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD shall be yours; everyone of your household who is clean may eat it. [14]Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. [15]Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. [16]As to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. [17]But the firstborn of an ox or the firstborn of a sheep or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall offer up their fat in smoke *as* an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the LORD. [18]Their meat shall be yours; it shall be yours like the breast of a wave offering and like the right thigh. [19]All the offerings of the holy *gifts*, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you." [20]Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.

18:8-20 YHWH, Himself, communicates this information to Aaron. This revelation is characterized as

1. a portion
2. a perpetual allotment

The priests shall be sustained by part of (not fat or internal organs):

1. grain offering, Num. 18:9,12; cf. Leviticus 2
2. sin offering, Num. 18:8, cf. Leviticus 4
3. guilt offering, Num. 18:9; cf. Leviticus 5
4. all wave offerings, Num. 18:11,18
5. all fresh oil offerings, Num. 18:12
6. all fresh wine offerings, Num. 18:12
7. all first fruits, Num. 18:12
8. all the redemption money paid by families for their first child (and first of the domestic animals), Num. 18:15-18

18:8
NASB, NKJV,
NJB **"a portion"**
NRSV **"a priestly portion"**
TEV **"the part assigned to you"**
JPSOA **"a prerequisite"**
REB **"allotted portion"**
LXX **"honor"**
Peshitta **"by reason of the anointing"**

The MT has a NOUN (BDB 603), which is used only here but is related to the root "anointed" (BDB 603, KB 644 I, cf. Exod. 29:29; 40:15). KB (KB 644 II) defines it as "share" or "allotment," from a similar root in Lev. 7:35 (different vowels).

In several places it is in the same context as "perpetual allotment" (cf. Exod. 29:28-29; Lev. 6:11).

18:9 "*reserved* from the fire" Some sacrifices were completely burned (i.e., burnt offerings, Leviticus 1), but for all others only a small portion was burned on the altar of sacrifice. The rest was to be eaten by different groups.

1. priests only
2. priest and Levite families
3. the offerer and friends

The fat of the internal organs and the blood always belonged to YHWH.

1. fat burned completely
2. the part of the blood not put on the horns of the altar was poured out at the base of the altar (cf. Num. 18:17)

18:9,16 "most holy" This category of food is restricted to the priests alone and must be eaten in the Tabernacle (cf. Lev. 6:1-7:10). It got this designation by being connected to things that enter the inner shrine.

"Holy" food is allowed to be eaten by the priests' families at home.

18:12 "wine" See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Num. 4:7b.

18:14
NASB, NKJV,
NRSV **"devoted thing"**
TEV **"unconditionally dedicated"**
NJB **"under the curse"**
JPSOA **"proscribed"**
REB **"devoted to God"**

LXX **"anathematized"**
Peshitta **"dedicated"**

The MT has *herem* (BDB 356 I), which can mean

1. something devoted, given to the sanctuary – Lev. 27:28; Ezek. 44:29 (i.e., priests can eat it)
2. Jericho totally given to YHWH for destruction (i.e., holy war) and, therefore, no spoils – Joshua 6-7
3. YHWH's judgment
   a. on a person – 1 Kgs. 20:42
   b. on a nation
      (1) Edom – Isa. 34:5
      (2) Israel – Isa. 43:28
4. a curse – Zech. 14:16; Mal. 4:6

See Special Topic: Curse at Num. 16:26.

18:15 "firstborn" The concept of a part of something belonging to the Lord is a way of asserting His ownership of the thing!

1. Sabbath – all days/time
2. tithe – all wealth/property
3. first fruit – all the crops
4. firstborn – all the family or all the herd

Possibly #5 could be Israel as YHWH's ownership of all nations. See Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29

▣ **"redeem"** This VERB is used four times in Num. 18:15-17. The first use is the intensified form (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and the IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 804, KB 911). Israel's firstborn children are surely to be redeemed (no human sacrifice). See Special Topic: Ransom/Redeem, I. A. #2 at Num. 3:46.

18:16 "shekels" See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

▣ **"gerahs"** This term (BDB 176 II) occurs in the OT only five times (i.e., Exod. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; 18:16; and Ezek. 45:12) and always in connection to a shekel.

18:17 "blood" See Special Topic: Blood.

SPECIAL TOPIC: BLOOD

In the OT blood (BDB 196) denotes the life (cf. Lev. 17:11,14; Gen. 9:4; Deut. 12:23). This life, both animal and human, is a gift from God and belongs to God.

The AB, vol. 1, p. 761, notes that "blood" and "life" are poetical parallels in Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Akkadian.

In the Mosaic sacrificial system sin required a life (cf. Ezek. 18:4,20). God graciously allowed the substitute of an innocent animal's life to atone for the sin of a human. Ultimately the blood that will atone for human rebellion is Jesus, the Messiah's blood/death (cf. Isaiah 15; Mark 10:45; 14:24; John 1:29; Rom. 3:25; 15:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 1:2,19; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; 5:9). An innocent life was given on behalf of the guilty (i.e., Hebrew corporality, cf. Rom. 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

▣ **"a soothing aroma"** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Num. 15:3d.

18:19-20 These verses serve as a summary of Num. 18:8-18.

18:19 "an everlasting covenant of salt" This concept is referred to in several places (i.e., Lev. 2:13; 2 Chr. 13:5; Ezek. 43:24). See Special Topics:

1. Forever (*'olam*) at Num. 10:8
2. Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b
3. Salt

It is surely possible that this phrase is linked to the fact that a fellowship meal was accompanied by salt (although it is not mentioned specifically in Gen. 31:54; Exod. 24:5-11; Ps. 50:5). Salt could represent:

1. a binding oath
2. a curse symbol (cf. Jdgs. 9:45; Jer. 48:9; Zeph. 2:9)
3. a part of a fellowship meal
4. a symbol of permanence (i.e., salted food; see NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 750)

SPECIAL TOPIC: SALT

- used in preparing food (Job 6:6)
- used in preserving fish, meat, and pickling
- used as an antiseptic (rubbed on babies, Ezek. 16:4)
- used in sacrifices
  a. sacred incense (Exod. 30:35)
  b. shewbread
  c. animal offerings (Ezek. 43:24)
  d. meal offering (Lev. 2:13)
- used as covenant
  a. unbreakable
  b. in perpetuity
  c. Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5; Lev. 2:13
- used as a symbol of Christians
  a. Matt. 5:13 (positive)
  b. Matt. 5:13 (negative)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:21-24

[21]"To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting. [22]The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. [23]Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. [24]For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'"

18:21-32 These two paragraphs deal with YHWH's provision for the Levites. They will receive the tithes of Israel (cf. Lev. 27:30-33; see Special Topic: Tithing the in Mosaic Legislation at Num. 15:17-21).

Exactly how this is related to a special third-year tithe is uncertain (cf. Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12). Possibly it is for Levites only and not those associated with the Tabernacle.

The New Century Bible, Leviticus and Numbers, p. 165, has an explanation of the different texts on tithing. It asserts that

1. Deut. 14:22-23, Israelites ate the tithe at the central sanctuary but every third year it went uniquely to the poor (cf. Deut. 26:12)
2. Numbers 18, written later, had all the tithes go to the Levites
3. even later, Lev. 27:30-33; 2 Chr. 31:6, the tithe included animals

My problem with this is the assumption that we moderns know the dating of different texts in the OT. The J.E.D.P. theory is just that and worse, it is based on a western literary model, not ANE. See Special Topic: Pentateuch Source Criticism at Introduction to Numbers, VII, C, #1.

18:21 "in return for" This root (BDB 322 II) is used only here and in v. 31 in this sense. The root normally means "to pass on," "pass away," or "pass through." This is a good place to remind all of us that words have meaning only in sentences. Sentences have meaning only in paragraphs (i.e., literary contexts). Dictionaries and lexicons only follow usages, they do not define terms! See BIBLE INTERPRETATION SEMINAR online (first red box), www.freebiblecommentary.org.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 18:25-32

[25]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [26]"Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, 'When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD a tithe of the tithe. [27]Your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat. [28]So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD's offering to Aaron the priest. [29]Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them.' [30]You shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then *the rest* shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat. [31]You may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting. [32]You will bear no sin by reason of it when you have offered the best of it. But you shall not profane the sacred gifts of the sons of Israel, or you will die.'"

18:26 The Levites must tithe their tithe (cf. Neh. 10:38-39). This was mostly agricultural items or animals from the herd (cf. Lev. 27:30-33). AB, vol. 4, p. 451, says that animals were excluded from the Levites' tithe of the time.

▣ **"you shall present an offering from it to the LORD"** The grammatical form of the VERB is PERFECT with *waw*, which usually denotes an ongoing sense. This is the usual intention of the *waw* with a PERFECT (i.e., Num. 18:31). See Special Topic: Hebrew Grammar, II, D (i.e., *waw* conversive/consecutive).

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEBREW GRAMMAR

I. Hebrew is part of the Shemitic (Semitic) family of southwest Asian languages. The name (given by modern scholars) comes from Noah's son, Shem (cf. Gen. 5:32; 6:10). Shem's descendants are listed in Gen. 10:21-31 as Arabs, Hebrews, Syrians, Arameans, and Assyrians. In reality some Semitic languages are used by nations listed in Ham's line (cf. Gen. 10:6-14), Canaan, Phoenicia, and Ethiopia.

Hebrew is part of the northwest group of these Semitic languages. Modern scholars have samples of this ancient language group from

A. Amorite (*Mari Tablets* from 18th century B.C. in Akkadian)
B. Canaanite (*Ras Shamra Tablets* from 15th century B.C in Ugaritic)
C. Canaanite (*Amarna Letters* from 14th century B.C in Canaanite Akkadian)
D. Phoenician (Hebrew uses Phoenician alphabet)
E. Moabite (Mesha stone, 840 B.C.)
F. Aramaic (official language of the Persian Empire used in Gen. 31:47 [2 words]; Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:4b-6; 7:28; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 and spoken by Jews in the first century in Palestine)

The Hebrew language is called "the lip of Canaan" in Isa. 19:18. It was first called "Hebrew" in the prologue of Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Ben Sirach) about 180 B.C. (and some other early places, cf. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, pp. 205ff). It is most closely related to Moabite and the language used at Ugarit. Examples of ancient Hebrew found outside the Bible are

1. the Gezer calendar, 925 B.C. (a school boy's writing)
2. the Siloam Inscription, 705 B.C. (tunnel writings)
3. Samaritan Ostraca, 770 B.C. (tax records on broken pottery)
4. Lachish letters, 587 B.C. (war communications)
5. Maccabean coins and seals
6. some Dead Sea Scroll texts
7. numerous inscriptions (cf. "Languages [Hebrew]," ABD 4:203ff)

It, like all Semitic languages, is characterized by words made up of three consonants (tri-consonantal root). It is an inflexed language. The three-root consonants carry the basic word meaning, while prefixed, suffixed, or internal additions show the syntactical function (later vowels, cf. Sue Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 46-49).

Hebrew vocabulary demonstrates a difference between prose and poetry. Word meanings are connected to folk etymologies (not linguistic origins). Word plays and sound plays are very common (*paronomasia*).

II. Aspects of Predication

A. VERBS

The normal expected word order is VERB, PRONOUN, SUBJECT (with modifiers), OBJECT (with modifiers). The basic non-flagged VERB is the *Qal,* PERFECT, MASCULINE, SINGULAR form. It is how Hebrew and Aramaic lexicons are arranged.

VERBS are inflected to show

1. number – SINGULAR, PLURAL, DUAL
2. gender – MASCULINE and FEMININE (no NEUTER)
3. mood – indicative, subjunctive, imperative (relation of the action to reality)
4. TENSE (ASPECT)
   a. PERFECT, which denotes completion, in the sense of the beginning, continuing, and concluding of an action. Usually this form was used of past action, the thing has occurred. J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says

      "The single whole described by a perfect is also considered as certain. An imperfect may picture a state as possible or desired or expected, but a perfect sees it as actual, real, and sure" (p. 36).

S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, describes it this way:

> "The perfect is employed to indicate actions the accomplishment of which lies indeed in the future, but is regarded as dependent upon such an unalterable determination of the will that it may be spoken of as having actually taken place: thus a resolution, promise, or decree, especially a Divine one, is frequently announced in the perfect tense" (p. 17, e.g., the prophetic perfect).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, defines this verbal form as one which:

> "views a situation from the outside, as a whole. As such it expresses a simple fact, whether it be an action or state (including state of being or mind). When used of actions, it often views the action as complete from the rhetorical standpoint of the speaker or narrator (whether it is or is not complete in fact or reality is not the point). The perfect can pertain to an action/state in the past, present or future. As noted above, time frame, which influences how one translates the perfect into a tense-oriented language like English, must be determined from the context" (p. 86).

b. IMPERFECT, which denotes an action in progress (incomplete, repetitive, continual, or contingent), often movement toward a goal. Usually this form was used of Present and Future action.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, says

> "All IMPERFECTS represent incomplete states. They are either repeated or developing or contingent. In other words, are partially developed, or partially assured. In all cases they are partial in some sense, i.e., incomplete" (p. 55).

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *From Exegesis to Exposition*, says

> "It is difficult to reduce the essence of the imperfect to a single concept, for it encompasses both aspect and mood. Sometimes the imperfect is used in an indicative manner and makes an objective statement. At other times it views an action more subjectively, as hypothetical, contingent, possible, and so on" (p. 89).

c. The added *waw*, which links the VERB to the action of the previous VERB(s).

d. IMPERATIVE, which is based on the volition of the speaker and potential action by the hearer.

e. In ancient Hebrew only the larger context can determine the authorial-intended time orientations.

B. The seven major inflected forms and their basic meaning. In reality these forms work in conjunction with each other in a context and must not be isolated.

1. *Qal* (*Kal*), the most common and basic of all the forms. It denotes simple action or a state of being. There is no causation or specification implied.
2. *Niphal*, the second most common form. It is usually PASSIVE, but this form also functions as reciprocal and reflexive. It also has no causation or specification implied.
3. *Piel*, this form is active and expresses the bringing about of an action into a state of being. The basic meaning of the *Qal* stem is developed or extended into a state of being.

4. *Pual*, this is the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Piel*. It is often expressed by a PARTICIPLE.
5. *Hithpael*, which is the reflexive or reciprocal stem. It expresses iterative or durative action to the *Piel* stem. The rare PASSIVE form is called *Hothpael*.
6. *Hiphil*, the active form of the causative stem in contrast to *Piel*. It can have a permissive aspect, but usually refers to the cause of an event. Ernst Jenni, a German Hebrew grammarian, believed that the *Piel* denoted something coming into a state of being, while *Hiphil* showed how it happened.
7. *Hophal,* the PASSIVE counterpart to the *Hiphil*. These last two are the least used of the 7 stems.

Much of this information comes from *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, by Bruce K. Walke and M. O'Connor, pp. 343-452.

Agency and causation chart. One key in understanding the Hebrew VERB system is to see it as a pattern of VOICE relationships. Some stems are in contrast to other stems (i.e., *Qal – Niphal; Piel – Hiphil*). The chart below tries to visualize the basic function of the VERB stems as to causation.

Voice or Subject Agency	No Secondary Agency	An Active Secondary Agency	A Passive Secondary Agency
Active	*Qal*	*Hiphil*	*Piel*
Middle passive	*Niphal*	*Hophal*	*Pual*
Reflexive/Reciprocal	*Niphal*	*Hiphil*	*Hithpael*

This chart is taken from the excellent discussion of the VERBAL system in light of new Akkadian research (cf. Bruce K. Waltke, M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, pp. 354-359.

R. H. Kennett, *A Short Account of the Hebrew Tenses*, has provided a needed warning.

> "I have commonly found in teaching, that a student's chief difficulty in the Hebrew verbs is to grasp the meaning which they conveyed to the minds of the Hebrews themselves; that is to say, there is a tendency to assign as equivalents to each of the Hebrew Tenses a certain number of Latin or English forms by which that particular Tense may commonly be translated. The result is a failure to perceive many of these fine shades of meaning, which give such life and vigor to the language of the Old Testament.
>
> The difficulty in the use of the Hebrew verbs lies solely in the point of view, so absolutely different from our own, from which the Hebrews regarded an action; the *time*, which with us is the first consideration, as the very word, 'tense' shows, being to them a matter of secondary importance. It is, therefore, essential that a student should clearly grasp, not so much the Latin or English forms which may be used in translating each of the Hebrew Tenses, but rather the aspect of each action, as it presented itself to a Hebrew's mind.
>
> The name 'tenses' as applied to Hebrew verbs is misleading. The so-called Hebrew 'tenses' do not express the *time* but merely the *state* of an action. Indeed were it not for the confusion that would arise through the application of the term 'state' to both nouns and verbs, 'states' would be a far better designation than 'tenses.' It must always be borne in mind that it is impossible to translate a Hebrew verb into English without employing a limitation (of time), which is entirely absent in the Hebrew. The ancient Hebrews never thought of an action as past, present, or future, but simply as *perfect*, i.e., complete, or *imperfect*, i.e., as in course of development. When we say that a certain Hebrew tense corresponds to a Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future in English,

we do not mean that the Hebrews thought of it as Perfect, Pluperfect, or Future, but merely that it must be so translated in English. The *time* of an action the Hebrews did not attempt to express by any verbal form" (preface and p. 1).

For a second good warning, Sue Groom, *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*, reminds us,

> "There is no way of knowing whether modern scholars' reconstruction of semantic fields and sense relations in an ancient dead language are merely a reflection of their own intuition, or their own native language, or whether those fields existed in Classical Hebrew" (p. 128).

C. MOODS (Modes)

1. It happened, is happening (INDICATIVE), usually uses PERFECT tense or PARTICIPLES (all PARTICIPLES are INDICATIVE).
2. It will happen, could happen (SUBJUNCTIVE)
   a. uses a marked IMPERFECT tense
      (1) COHORTATIVE (added h), FIRST PERSON IMPERFECT form which normally expresses a wish, a request, or self-encouragement (i.e., actions willed by the speaker)
      (2) JUSSIVE (internal changes), THIRD PERSON IMPERFECT (can be second person in negated sentences) which normally expresses a request, a permission, an admonition, or advice
   b. uses a PERFECT tense with *lu* or *lule*

      These constructions are similar to SECOND CLASS CONDITIONAL sentences in Koine Greek. A false statement (protasis) results in a false conclusion (apodosis).
   c. uses an IMPERFECT tense and *lu*

      Context and *lu*, as well as a future orientation, mark this SUBJUNCTIVE usage. Some examples from J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* are Gen. 13:16; Deut. 1:12; 1 Kgs. 13:8; Ps. 24:3; Isa. 1:18 (cf. pp. 76-77).

D. *Waw* – Conversive/consecutive/relative. This uniquely Hebrew (Canaanite) syntactical feature has caused great confusion through the years. It is used in a variety of ways often based on genre. The reason for the confusion is that early scholars were European and tried to interpret in light of their own native languages. When this proved difficult they blamed the problem on Hebrew being a "supposed" ancient, archaic language. European languages are TENSE (time) based VERBS. Some of the variety and grammatical implications were specified by the letter WAW being added to the PERFECT or IMPERFECT VERB stems. This altered the way the action was viewed.

1. In historical narrative the VERBS are linked together in a chain with a standard pattern.
2. The *waw* prefix showed a specific relationship with the previous VERB(s).
3. The larger context is always the key to understanding the VERB chain. Semitic VERBS cannot be analyzed in isolation.

J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, notes the distinctive of Hebrew in its use of the *waw* before PERFECTS and IMPERFECTS (pp. 52-53). As the basic idea of the PERFECT is past, the addition of *waw* often projects it into a future time aspect. This is also true of the IMPERFECT whose basic idea is present or future; the addition of *waw* places it into the past. It is this unusual time shift which explains the *waw's* addition, not a change in the basic meaning of the tense itself. The *waw* PERFECTS work well with prophecy, while the *waw* IMPERFECTS work well with narratives (pp. 54, 68).

Watts continues his definition

"As a fundamental distinction between *waw* conjunctive and *waw* consecutive, the following interpretations are offered:

1. *Waw* conjunctive appears always to indicate a parallel.
2. *Waw* consecutive appears always to indicate a sequence. It is the only form of *waw* used with consecutive imperfects. The relation between the imperfects linked by it may be temporal sequence, logical consequence, logical cause, or logical contrast. In all cases there is a sequence" (p. 103).

E. INFINITIVE – There are two kinds of INFINITIVES

1. INFINITIVE ABSOLUTES, which are "strong, independent, striking expressions used for dramatic effect. . .as a subject, it often has no written verb, the verb 'to be' being understood, of course, but the word standing dramatically alone" J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*" (p. 92).
2. INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT, which are "related grammatically to the sentence by prepositions, possessive pronouns, and the construct relationship" (p. 91).

   J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, describes the construct state as:

   "When two (or more) words are so closely united that together they constitute one compound idea, the dependent word (or words) is (are) said to be in the construct state" (p. 44).

F. INTERROGATIVES

1. They always appear first in the sentence.
2. Interpretive significance
   a. *ha* – does not expect a response
   b. *halo'* – the author expects a "yes" answer

NEGATIVES

1. They always appear before the words they negate.
2. Most common negation is *lo'*.
3. The term *'al* has a contingent connotation and is used with COHORTATIVES and JUSSIVES.
4. The term *lebhilti*, meaning "in order that. . .not," is used with INFINITIVES.
5. The term *'en* is used with PARTICIPLES.

G. CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

1. There are four kinds of conditional sentences which basically are paralleled in Koine Greek.
   a. something assumed to be happening or thought of as fulfilled (FIRST CLASS in Greek)
   b. something contrary to fact whose fulfillment is impossible (SECOND CLASS)
   c. something which is possible or even probable (THIRD CLASS)
   d. something which is less probable; therefore, the fulfillment is dubious (FOURTH CLASS)
2. GRAMMATICAL MARKERS
   a. the assumed to be true or real condition always uses an INDICATIVE PERFECT or PARTICIPLE and usually the protasis is introduced by
      (1) *'im*
      (2) *ki* (or *'asher*)
      (3) *hin* or *hinneh*
   b. the contrary to fact condition always uses a PERFECT aspect VERB or a PARTICIPLE with the introductory PARTICIPLE *lu* or *lule*

c. the more probable condition always used IMPERFECT VERB or PARTICIPLES in the protasis, usually *'im* or *ki* are used as introductory PARTICLES

d. the less probable condition uses IMPERFECT SUBJUNCTIVES in the protasis and always uses *'im* as an introductory PARTICLE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does the phrase, "you shall bear the guilt," mean? (Num. 18:1,22)
2. What does "come near" (Num. 18:3) refer to?
3. Define "outsider." (Num. 18:4)
4. What is the difference between that which is "holy" versus "most holy"?
5. What does the phrase, "an everlasting covenant of salt" mean?
6. Why did the tribe of Levi have no land inheritance? How did they support themselves in an agricultural, pastoral culture?

NUMBERS 19

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Ordinance of the Red Heifer	Laws of Purification	Rites for Purifying A Person Who is Defiled by a Corpse	Ashes of the Red Law	The Ashes of the Red Heifer
19:1-10	19:1-10	19:1-10a	19:1-10	19:1-10
		19:10b-13	Contact with a Corpse	Cases of Uncleanness
19:11-13	19:11-13		19:11-13	19:11-13
19:14-19	19:14-19	19:14-20	19:14-16	19:14-15
				19:16
				The Ritual of Water for Purification
			19:17-19	19:17-20
19:20-22	19:20-22		19:20-22	
		19:21-22		19:21-22

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. It is hard for modern, western people to comprehend the worldview of the ANE. There was no division between secular and sacred, between the physical and the spiritual, but there was a sharp distinction between "clean and unclean," "holy and not holy." See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 477-485.

B. This chapter is about ceremonial purity, not moral purity. It is meant to illustrate the "special holiness" of the camp of Israel because of YHWH's presence (cf. Num. 5:3; 19:13,20; Lev. 26:11-12). For a good discussion on uncleanness see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 365-375.

C. YHWH provided ways for humans to remove ceremonial defilement.
   1. ashes of the red heifer
   2. wash clothes
   3. wash body
   4. separate oneself for a set period

D. These specific requirements about contact with or proximity to a dead person are not found in Leviticus. They are placed here probably because of the large number of dead people mentioned in Numbers 16-17.

E. See Josephus' account in *Antiq*. 4.4.6. He says this was done immediately after the burial of Miriam in the wilderness after her fortieth year of life.
   The use of "tent" in Num. 19:14 implies the antiquity of the account.

F. There is a rabbinical tradition that even Solomon, in all his wisdom, could not explain how the same procedure
   1. made the unclean clean
   2. made the clean unclean

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:1-10

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, [2]"This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect *and* on which a yoke has never been placed. [3]You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. [4]Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. [5]Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned. [6]The priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet *material* and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer. [7]The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. [8]The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. [9]Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. [10]The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them.'"

19:2 "statute of the law" See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Num. 10:8.

Notice the requirements.
1. unblemished – BDB 548
2. red – BDB 10 (i.e., reddish brown with no other colored spots)
3. heifer – BDB 831
4. no defect – BDB 1071
5. never yoked

The age is unspecified but probably just reaching maturity, possibly 2 - 3 years old.

▣ **"an unblemished"** See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Num. 6:14.

19:3 "Eleazar the priest" Aaron's oldest son (cf. Num. 3:4) after the death of Nadab and Abihu (cf. Leviticus 10).

▣ **"be brought outside the camp"** Sacrifices were slain at the altar of sacrifice but this burnt offering was for a special purpose—cleansing ceremonial defilement.

▣ **"before him"** It seems that several priests or clean persons were involved in this ritual.
1. Eleazar
2. one who killed the animal, Num. 19:3
3. one who burned the animal, Num. 19:8
4. one who gathered the ashes and placed them in a clean place outside the camp, Num. 19:9-10

Numbers 2-4 could be the same person but the text implies two persons.

19:4-10 The ritual procedure:

1. the main priest
2. put his finger into container of its blood
3. sprinkled some toward the front of the tent of meeting
4. several times
5. complete animal burned (Num. 19:5)
6. cast into the fire (see notes at Lev. 14:4,6,49,51,52)
   a. cedar wood
   b. hyssop (NIDOTTE, vol. 1, pp. 334-335)
   c. scarlet material
7. the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe, but still be unclean until evening (i.e., start of a new day), Num. 19:7
8. the person who burns the heifer must do the same procedures (Num. 19:8)
9. the person who gathers the ashes removed by a clean person and placed in a special place must do the same procedures (Num. 19:9-10)

19:5 The red heifer is unique in several ways.

1. it is slaughtered, not sacrificed
2. it is slaughtered outside the camp, not at the altar
3. it is not slaughtered specifically by a priest but a clean person (cf. Num. 19:18)
4. it is completely burned, in a different way from Leviticus 1
6. the blood was used and disposed of in an entirely unique way
   a. small amount sprinkled
   b. remainder burned with carcass

19:6 "scarlet *material*" In Leviticus 14 the same ritual items of "cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet" are used. They seem to be tied together in one piece to sprinkle, but here that is not spelled out.

The scarlet could be

1. a dye (the rabbis)
2. a cord (TEV)
3. symbolic colored, unspecified ritual item

19:9 "deposit it outside the camp" This seems to disagree with Num. 19:3. Is the animal slaughtered outside of the camp or are its ashes taken outside the camp?

▣ **"shall keep it as water to remove impurity"** Ashes are mixed with water and kept in a clean place outside the camp where it can be easily accessed by ceremonially unclean Israelites (cf. Num. 8:7).

The term translated "impurity" (BDB 622, cf. Num. 19:13,20; 31:23) is used in several senses.

1. improper sexual union (i.e,. incest), Lev. 20:21
2. a woman's menstrual flow, Lev. 2:2,5; 15:19,20,24,25,25,33; 18:19
3. an allusion to idolatry, 2 Chr. 29:5; Ezra 9:11; Ezek. 7:19-20; Lam. 1:17; Zech. 13:1

19:10 There is only one standard in Israel for Israelite, sojourner, and alien (cf. Num. 15:15,29).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:11-13

[11]"'The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. [12]That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, *and then* he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will

not be clean. [13]Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.'"

19:11-19 These paragraphs deal with what makes someone ceremonially unclean (for contact with a dead person see Lev. 21:11; Num. 9:6-7).

1. touches a corpse, probably in connection to the process of burial
2. comes in contact with the tent or any thing in tent of a dead person (Num. 19:22)
3. finds a dead person in an open field
   a. dies naturally
   b. dies in battle (again, probably involved in the burial of such a person)

There is a common ritual procedure involved.

1. the uncleanness lasts for seven days, Num. 19:11,15,16
2. use the water of the red heifer's ashes on the third and seventh days, Num. 19:12,19
3. sprinkle the water of the red heifer on the tent and furnishings of the dead person, Num. 19:18-19,21
4. wash his clothes and himself/herself, Num. 19:19,21

If an Israelite refuses to purify himself, he/she is to be removed from the community (i.e., "cut off"), Num. 19:13,20

1. by a divine act of death
2. by stoning of the community
3. by excommunication (i.e., driven outside the camp permanently)

See full note at Num. 12:15 and Lev. 7:21.

19:13 "defiles the tabernacle of the LORD" This is "the" ceremonial issue (cf. Num. 19:20). YHWH is holy. He dwells over the ark in the midst of the camp of Israel. Nothing unclean must approach or dwell within the "holy camp/community of Israel."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:14-19

[14]"'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. [15]Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean. [16]Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died *naturally*, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. [17]Then for the unclean *person* they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. [18]A clean person shall take hyssop and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying *naturally* or the grave. [19]Then the clean *person* shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe *himself* in water and shall be clean by evening.'"

19:15 This is very specific. Only certain tent contents are unclean.

19:18 "a clean person" Throughout this chapter the only priest involved was Eleazar at the beginning of the ritual outside the camp. All other actions were apparently done by "clean" Israelites (see note at Num. 19:5).

Here, the unclean Israelite (i.e., some connection to a dead person) was administered a cleansing ritual by a layperson.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 19:20-22

[20]"'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean. [21]So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. [22]Furthermore, anything that the unclean *person* touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches *it* shall be unclean until evening.'"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What is the purpose of the ashes of the red heifer?
2. What is unique about this ritual?
3. Did priests or laymen perform the tasks of this cleansing rite?
4. What was the purpose of the three items thrown into the fire?
5. Does one become unclean by touching a dead person or just being in proximity? What is the significance?
6. Why is this chapter so confusing to the rabbis?

NUMBERS 20

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Death of Miriam	Moses' Error at Kadesh	Departure from Kadesh	Events at Kadesh	The Waters of Meribah
20:1-7	20:1-11	20:1	20:1	20:1
		20:2-8	20:2-6	20:2-5
				20:6-8
The Water of Meribah			20:7-9	
20:8				
20:9-13		20:9-13		20:9-11
			20:10-11	The Punishment of Moses and Aaron
	20:12-13		20:12	20:12
			20:13	20:13
	Passage Through Edom Refused		The King of Edom Refuses to Let Israel Pass	Edom Refuses Right of Way
20:14-17	20:14-21	20:14-17	20:14-17	20:14-21
20:18-21		20:18-21	20:18	
			20:19	
			20:20-21	
	Death of Aaron		Death of Aaron	The Death of Aaron
20:22	20:22-29	20:22-29	20:22-29	20:22-26
Death of Aaron				
20:23-29				
				20:27-29

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading"

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:1-7

[1]Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there. [2]There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. [3]The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD! [4]Why then have you brought the LORD's assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? [5]Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us in to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink." [6]Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and

fell on their faces. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to them; [7]and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

20:1 "the wilderness of Zin" See Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

▣ **"the first month"** See Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Introduction to Numbers, V. A. 1.

From Num. 33:38 we learn that this was in the fourth year (i.e., at the end of YHWH's judgment on the unbelieving generation, i.e., the spies' negative report, Numbers 13).

▣ **"Now Miriam died there and was buried there"** It is hard to interpret something based on silence, but this is such a long account. There is no mention of her being mourned, as there is Aaron in Num. 20:29.

This is a sad chapter.

1. Miriam dies (no explanation or grief mentioned), Num. 20:1
2. Moses is condemned to death before the conquest, Num. 20:12
3. Aaron dies on Mt. Hor, Num. 20:22-29

20:2 YHWH tested His people's trust in Him by no natural water sources here and in Exod. 17:1-7 (notice Num. 20:13).

20:3-5 Notice the complaints of the people against Moses, and by implication, YHWH.

1. Num. 20:3b – claiming they wish they had died in YHWH's earlier judgment
2. Num. 20:4 – claiming the lack of water would cause their death as well as all their animals
3. Num. 20:5a – questioning the exodus from Egypt
4. Num. 20:5b – YHWH's promise of a future filled with abundance was not true

20:6 "the tent of meeting" This is one of

1. several terms for the Tabernacle
2. possibly a separate tent outside of the camp where Moses met YHWH

▣ **"the glory of the LORD appeared"** This glory was the physical manifestation of the *shekinah* cloud of glory, which denoted YHWH's presence. It first appears in Exod. 16:7,10.

It could denote YHWH's

1. provision – here
2. judgment – Num. 16:19

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:8

[8]"Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink."

20:8 "Take the rod" This shepherd's rod or walking staff was a symbol of the power of YHWH in the hand of Moses (cf. Exod. 4:2,17,20; 17:5,6).

YHWH will choose to act through Moses (i.e., human instrumentality, cf. Exod. 3:8-10).

This may have been Aaron's rod. See full note at Num. 20:9.

▣ **"speak to the rock"** There are two IMPERATIVES in this verse and this may be a third.

1. take – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal*
2. assemble – BDB 874, KB 1078, *Hiphil*

3. speak – BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* PERFECT

Notice the supernatural element of "speaking" to a rock. Also note it is YHWH's power through His chosen leader in full public view of all!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:9-13

[9]So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as He had commanded him; [10]and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock? " [11]Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. [12]But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." [13]Those *were* the waters of Meribah, because the sons of Israel contended with the LORD, and He proved Himself holy among them.

20:9 The phrase "from before the LORD" may imply that the rod used was Aaron's rod which had earlier budded and fruited (cf. Numbers 17). This rod was placed back in the tent of meeting (Num. 17:10). This rod of Aaron is also mentioned as being related "to the rebels" in Num. 17:10 (BDB 598).

For a good brief discussion of the Hebrew term (BDB 641), which can mean "staff," "rod," "scepter," "stick," or "tribe" see NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 924-925.

20:10-11 Moses is so angry at these grumbling, unfaithful Israelites that he

1. disobeys YHWH's order in public view
2. claims that he and Aaron produced the water
   a. listen now – BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
   b. you rebels – BDB 598, KB 632, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE; the basic root means "to be stubborn" or "to be rebellious"
      (1) of a son – Deut. 28:18,20
      (2) of Moses – here; Num. 27:14
      (3) of Israel – 1 Sam. 12:15; Ps. 78:8; 105:28
      (4) of Jerusalem – Jer. 4:17; 5:23; Lam. 1:18,20; Zeph. 3:1
   c. Moses struck the rock in anger, Num. 20:11; YHWH reacts to this public disobedience in 20:12

20:11 YHWH demonstrates His power often in connection to water. See Special Topic: Waters.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WATERS

There are many different allusions to YHWH's use of water.

1. victory over chaotic water (cf. Gen. 1:2)
2. separation (creation of water not specifically mentioned) of the waters in Genesis
   a. above and below (Gen. 1:6-7)
   b. salt from fresh (Gen. 1:9-10)
3. water as judgment
   a. the Flood (i.e., Genesis 6-9)
   b. blood (i.e., Exod. 7:17-20)
   c. hail (i.e., Exod. 9:18,23)

d. no rain (in Deut. 11:17; 28:20-26; 1 Kgs. 8:35; 17:1; Jeremiah 14)
e. for women (Numbers 5)

4. water as covenant blessing (i.e., Deut. 11:14-15; 28:12)
5. water as a symbol of cleansing
   a. priests (i.e., Exod. 29:4; 30:18-21; Num. 19:7)
   b. worshipers (i.e., Num. 19:8)
   c. baptism (Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21)
6. the splitting of the Red Sea (i.e., Exodus 14-15)
7. special provision of water (i.e., the Exodus, Exodus 17; Numbers 20)
8. the conquest of Canaan, the splitting of the Jordan (i.e., Joshua 3)
9. the splitting of the Jordan by Elijah (i.e., 2 Kgs. 2:7-9) and by Elisha (i.e., 2 Kgs. 2:13-14)

20:12 This is such a sad verse. But it does powerfully show that YHWH is not a respecter of persons. As Aaron's and Moses' sins (and also Miriam, v. 1) had acted against YHWH's will, not one of them was allowed to enter the Promised Land (i.e., Canaan, cf. Deut. 1:37; 3:26-27).

20:13 "the waters of Meribah" A place name and similar water crisis is mentioned early in the wilderness wandering period (cf. Exodus 17). But, the context implies this account refers to Moses striking the rock here in chapter 20. So does it refer to

1. the Exodus 17 account (cf. Ps. 95:8)
2. this account

Possibly the symbolic name Meribah (i.e., contention) is not a place name, as in Exodus 17, but a reference to the conflict between YHWH and Moses here.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:14-17

[14]From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom: "Thus your brother Israel has said, 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us; [15]that our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. [16]But when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out from Egypt; now behold, we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. [17]Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or through vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king's highway, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory.'"

20:14 "From Kadesh" This forms the geographical section of the book of Numbers where the people of God move from Kadesh-Barnea, the southern oasis in the wilderness of Zin, to the borders of the Promised Land in the plains of Moab.

The movement of Israel during the wilderness wandering period is uncertain. They were at Kadesh in Num. 13:26 (cf. Num. 32:8) when they sent out the spies. But here in Num. 20:14, arriving at Kadesh (cf. Num. 33:36-37) marks the last geographical section of the book. It appears Israel moved in a circle and came to several locations (i.e., oases) a number of times during this 38 year judgment period. This seeming meandering is the source of Korah's rebellion and the rebellion in Num. 20:3-5.

It is also possible that there was more than one "Kadesh" (i.e., Gordon Wenham, *Tyndale OT Commentaries*, vol. 4, p. 152).

▣ **"to the king of Edom"** Edom was one of Israel's relatives through Esau (cf. Gen. 27:30 and Genesis 36). Israel was commanded to be kind to them in Deut. 23:7. It is interesting to see the tension between these two groups of relatives as documented throughout the OT (cf. Jdgs. 11:16ff; 1 Sam. 14:42-48; 2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Kgs. 11:14,25; 2 Chr. 20:10-30; Isa. 34:5ff; 63:1ff; Jer. 49:7ff; Lam. 4:21-22; Ezek. 26:12ff; 35:13ff; Amos 1:6-9,11-12). See Special Topic: Edom and Israel.

SPECIAL TOPIC: EDOM AND ISRAEL

A. Edom, which came from Esau, Jacob's brother, is the nation east of the Dead Sea (cf. Genesis 25-28; 32-33). Edom means "red" while Esau means "hairy" (cf. Gen 25:25, 30).
B. Israel was commanded to respect Edom because they were kinsmen (cf. Deut. 23:7).
C. Israel and Edom had continuing problems.
    1. Num. 20:14-21
    2. Jdgs. 11:16-17
    3. 1 Sam. 14:47-48
    4. 2 Sam. 8:14
    5. 1 Kgs. 11:14-22
    6. 2 Kgs. 14:22; 16:5-6
    7. 2 Chr. 20:10-30; 21:8ff
    8. Amos 1:6, 9
D. Prophecies against Edom.
    1. Isa. 34:5ff; 63:1ff
    2. Jer. 49:7-22
    3. Lam. 4:21-22
    4. Ezek. 25:12-14; 35:1-15; 36:2-6
    5. Amos 1:11-12
E. In Obadiah Edom was condemned because of
    1. her pride, Obad. vv. 3-4
        a. in geographical security
        b. in political alliances and military power
        c. in commercial wealth
        d. in traditional wisdom
    2. her violation of Judah, her kinsman, Obad. vv. 10-14
        a. rejoiced over the fall of Jerusalem (Lam. 2:15-17; 4:21)
        b. refused to help (Obad. v. 11)
        c. active support of enemy (Obad. v. 14)
        d. took Judah's property (Jer. 13:19)
    3. her rejection and disdain of YHWH (Obad. v. 16)
F. Edom may be a symbol (type) for all nations who rebelled against God and His people, Obad. vv. 15-21 (cf. Psalm 2).
G. Possible historical fulfilment of this prophecy
    1. destruction of Edom by Neo-Babylon about 5 years after the fall of Jerusalem, 580 B.C.

2. displacement of Edom from Petra by Nabatean Arabs about 550-449 B.C. (cf. Mal. 1:2-5). Edom is not mentioned in Nehemiah's list of surrounding enemies, but is replaced by Arab tribes. Edom moved to the Negev.
3. defeat of Edom by Alexander's general, Antigonus, in 312 B.C. (recorded in Diodorus Seculus)
4. defeat of Edom in the Negev by Judas Maccabaeus around 175 B.C. (cf. I Maccabees 5.3,15; II Maccabees 10.15; Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.8.1; 13.9.1)
5. Edom forced to accept Judaism by John Hyrcanus in 125 B.C. They are now called Idumeans.
6. The Roman General, Titus, completely destroyed the Idumean influence in A.D. 70.

20:16 "He heard our voice and sent an angel" This angel is usually referred to as "the angel of the LORD" (cf. Exod. 13:21-22; 14:19; 23:20; 32:34; 33:2). He represents YHWH. I believe it may be the pre-Incarnate Messiah.

The word "angel" in both Hebrew (BDB 521) and Greek can also mean "messenger" and, if that is true, this could refer to God's human instrumentality, Moses (cf. Exodus 3-6). See Special Topic: The Angel of the Lord.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (BDB 521 CONSTRUCT BDB 217)

It is obvious that deity manifests Himself physically in human form in the OT. The question for Trinitarians becomes which person of the Trinity fulfills this role. Since God the Father (YHWH) and His Spirit are consistently non-corporeal, it seems possible to suggest that these human manifestations are the pre-incarnate Messiah.

To demonstrate the difficulties one faces in trying to identify a theophany from an angelic encounter the following list is illustrative.

1. the angel of the LORD as an angel (often "His angel," "an angel," "the angel," "the Angel of God," even "pillar"
   a. Gen. 24:7,40
   b. Exod. 23:20-23; 32:34
   c. Num. 22:22
   d. Jdgs. 5:23
   e. 2 Sam. 24:16
   f. 1 Chr. 21:15-30
   g. Zech. 1:12-13
2. the angel of the LORD as theophany
   a. Gen. 16:7-13; 18:1-33; 22:11,15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16
   b. Exod. 3:2,4; 14:19 (13:21)
   c. Jdgs. 2:15; 6:22-24; 13:3-23
   d. Hosea 12:3-4
   e. Zech. 3:1-5
   f. Acts 7:30,35,38

Only context can distinguish between the two options.

▣ **"we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory"** By looking at a map of the Sinai peninsula, it is obvious that Kadesh-Barnea is not on the border of Edom unless we have inaccurately drawn the borders of Edom. Some have assumed that Edom covered much more territory to the west or that this is not Kadehs-Barnea, but another Kadesh located closer to the traditional boundaries of Edom.

20:17,19 This is apparently a letter written in the form of its day, giving four reasons to allow the Israelites to pass through the land of the Edomites.

1. we will not pass through your fields
2. we will not pass through your vineyards
3. we will not even drink water from a well
4. we will stay on the king's highway

However, Edom was fearful of this large group of people and would not let them pass. The king's highway refers to a large, developed road on this east side of the Jordan from Damascus, Syria, down to the Gulf of Aqaba on the Arabian peninsula (cf. Num. 20:19,21,22).

It is not certain why this major highway of the trans-Joradn area is called "the king's highway.

1. an anachronism related to David or Solomon
2. to the Assyrian King, Tiglath-pileser III's military campaign in this area (AB, p. 492)
3. possibly as ancient as Genesis 14, named after the four kings who Abraham defeated (Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 22); the road was well known very early (i.e., 3000-2000 B.C.)
4. an idiom for the royal protection of a major north-south caravan route, by being under all the kings along the route; they would want
   a. the taxation
   b. the caravan's merchandise

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:18-21

[18]Edom, however, said to him, "You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you." [19]Again, the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the highway, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing *else*." [20]But he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and with a strong hand. [21]Thus Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so Israel turned away from him.

20:21 "Thus Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; so Israel turned away from him" Although it would have been easy to overwhelm them militarily, especially with the power of God on their side, because God had commanded them not to do that, they simply turned away from a confrontation with their relatives (cf. Deut. 2:1-8 for a parallel of this account).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:22

[22]Now when they set out from Kadesh, the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor.

20:22 "Mount Hor" This will be the site of Aaron's death. Its exact location is uncertain. When one compares Num. 33:31 with Deut. 10:6, it seems that the death of Aaron is placed in two different geographical locations. Because of our uncertainty as to the location of many of these geographical sites, it is best to withhold judgment until more information from archeology is known (i.e., Num. 20:16,23). They may be the same site (Jewish Study Bible, p. 324). *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, p. 166, says that "Moseroth" may be the name for the larger area which included Mt. Hor.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:20:23-29

[23]Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, [24]"Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. [25]Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up to Mount Hor; [26]and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered *to his people*, and will die there." [27]So Moses did just as the LORD had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. [28]After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. [29]When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

20:24 "Aaron will be gathered to his people" This implies that after death there is some kind of family fellowship even in the grave (cf. Gen. 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33; Num. 31:22). The ancient view of *Sheol* was a conscious existence but with less enthusiasm and energy than an earthly existence. The afterlife is one of several theological issues that developed over the time of the OT to NT. We call this "progressive revelation." See Special Topic: Where Are the Dead? at Num. 16:30.

20:25-26 YHWH gives three commands to Moses.

1. take Aaron and Eleazar – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. bring them up to Mt. Hor – BDB 748, KB 828, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
3. strip Aaron of his garments – BDB 832, KB 980, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE
4. put them on his son – BDB 527, KB 519, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*, which is used
   a. as another IMPERATIVE
   b. in a JUSSIVE sense

20:26 "his garments" See Special Topic: Garments of the High Priest.

SPECIAL TOPIC: GARMENTS OF HIGH PRIEST

I. Tunic
   A. undercoat of fine white linen
   B. length of tunic was to the ground, sleeves long, and tied with sash
   C. white symbolized purity
II. Ephod (see Special Topic: Ephod)
   A. made of blue cloth with gold wire, interwoven also with purple and scarlet thread (same colors as veil in the Holy of Holies)
   B. lower border of pomegranates and golden bells (bells were so that the other priests could hear him coming on Day of Atonement)
   C. fastened at the shoulder by 2 onyx stones engraved with the 12 tribes of Israel (six on each)
   D. called "the golden garment"
III. Band of Ephod (girdle)
   A. same color and material as Ephod
   B. bound around the waist
IV. Breastplate (Exodus 28; 29, see Special Topic: Breastplate of the High Priest)
   A. square 8" or 9" set with 12 stones (4 rows of 3, cf. Exod. 28:17-20)

B. attached by golden chain attached to onyx stones at the shoulders
C. same colors and material as Ephod
D. names of 12 tribes, one on each stone
E. inner pouch containing Urim and Thummin (Exod. 28:30)

V. Urim and Thummim (see Special Topic: Urim and Thummim)
A. placed on the breastplate
B. also called Lights and Perfections
C. identity unknown

VI. Turban (miter, Exod. 28:36-39)
A. engraved on gold strip in front, "Holiness to the LORD"
B. fastened with blue cord
C. called "golden crown"

See Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 3.7.1-6

20:27 "So Moses did just as the LORD commanded" This is opposite of Num. 20:10. Obedience is crucial. It applies to all, in all things. This is not a democracy but a theocracy!

20:29 "thirty days" The normal time of mourning was seven days. But because of Moses' and Aaron's crucial, initial leadership, both were mourned thirty days.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why could this chapter be called "the death of original leaders"?
2. List the reasons why the people grumbled.
3. Whose "rod" was used in Num. 20:8,9?
4. How did Moses sin?
5. Is this account at the very same geographical location as Exodus 17?
6. Who is "the angel of the LORD"?
7. Where did the "King's Highway" get its name?
8. Was the putting on of Aaron's priestly garments the ordination of Eleazar?
9. Where is Mt. Hor? How is it related to "Moseroth"?

NUMBERS 21

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Arad Conquered	Canaanites Defeated at Hormah	Events Along the Way	Victory Over the Canaanites	The Capture of Hormah
21:1-3	21:1-3	21:1-3	21:1-3	21:1-3
	The Bronze Serpent		The Snake Made of Bronze	The Bronze Serpent
21:4-5	21:4-9	21:4-9	21:4-9	21:4-5
The Bronze Serpent				
21:6-15				21:6-9
	From Mount Hor to Moab		From Mount Hor to the Valley of the Moabites	By Stages to Transjordan
	21:10-15 (15)	21:10-15 (14b-15)	21:10-15	21:10-12a
				21:12b-15
21:16	21:16-20	21:16-20	21:16-18a	21:16-20
21:17-20 (17) (18a)	(17b) (18a)	(17b) (18a)	(17b) (18a)	(17b) (18a)
			21:18b-20	
Two Victories	King Sihon Defeated		Victory Over King Sihon and King Og	The Conquest of Transjordan
21:21-30	21:21-32	21:21-30	21:21-30	21:21-22
				21:23-24
(27-30)	(27-30)	(27-30)	(27-30)	21:25-30 (27-30)
21:31-32	King Og Defeated	21:31-32	21:31-32	21:31-32
21:33-35	21:33-35	21:33-35	21:33-35	21:33-22:1

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading"

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:1-3

[1]When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim, then he fought against Israel and took some of them captive. [2]So Israel made a vow to the LORD and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." [3]The LORD heard the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites; then they utterly destroyed them and their cities. Thus the name of the place was called Hormah."

21:1 "When the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the way of Atharim" Arad is about seventeen miles south of Hebron. Apparently this name refers not

only to this king, but also to a city and a region. This very same locality is where Israel was defeated when she tried to take the Promised Land by her own strength (cf. Num. 14:35-45). The first victory against the Canaanites is the exact site of their earlier humiliating defeat. This theory is further strengthened by the fact that the word *Atharim* (BDB 87) is translated "the way of the spies" by all early versions of the Bible except the Septuagint, which translates it as a place name (probably the name of a pass). This translation as a place name has been followed by both the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible. It is interesting to wonder if the king of Arad attacked Israel because he felt that the death of Arron would incapacitate them.

▣ **"Negev"** This (BDB 616) term refers to the semi-arid wilderness with few human inhabitants, in the south of Canaan (i.e., Josh. 15:21-32).

▣ **"he fought against Israel and took some of them captive"** The rabbis are nervous about Israel losing some of her men in a war (cf. Joshua 7) to the Canaanites. Therefore, the rabbis say that only one slave was captured, but this does not seem to be the thrust of the text.

21:1 "So Israel made a vow to the LORD" This vow (lit. "vowed a vow," BDB 623, KB 674) is in the form of an oath to totally dedicate this king and his cities to the Lord. We later know this by the term *herem* (BDB 356, KB 353), which means "something utterly dedicated to God" or "to put under the ban." This is what happened to Jericho (cf. Joshua 6). Everything in these cities would die and all of the possessions would be burned because they belonged uniquely to God (i.e., Holy War; see Special Topic: Curse at Num. 16:26).

There may be a biblical distinction between "vow" and "oath." A vow is asking God to act first then a required action of a person, but an "oath" focused on a promised act (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 33, #2, paragraph 5).

▣ **"indeed deliver"** This is an intensified grammatical form (INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 678, KB 733).

▣ **"into my hand"** This is an idiom of power and military victory. See Special Topic: Hand at Num. 11:22.

21:3 "Hormah" This place name (BDB 356) is the exact site of the earlier defeat (cf. Num. 14:45). It is a word play on *herem*. See Special Topic: Vow at Num. 16:26.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:4-5

[4]Then they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the people became impatient because of the journey. [5]The people spoke against God and Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food."

21:4 "they set out from Mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea" It is obvious that they are turning back to the southeast. They are trying to circumvent the land of Edom. Whether this is referring to the exact way back to Egypt, which would be ironical because this is the way the people earlier wanted to go back to Egypt, or if it is referring to the Red Sea as meaning by the city of Ezion-Geber or Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba. See Special Topic: The Red Sea.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE RED SEA (BDB 410 CONSTRUCT BDB 693 I)

I. Name
   A. Literally the name is *Yam Suph*.
      1. "Sea of Weeds" or "Sea of Reeds" (Egyptian root)
      2. "Sea at the end (of the earth)" (Semitic root)
   B. This can refer to
      1. salt water, 1 Kgs. 9:26 (Gulf of Aqaba); Jonah 2:5 (Mediterranean Ocean)
      2. fresh water, Exod. 2:3; Isa. 19:6
   C. The Septuagint is the first translation to call it "the Red Sea." Possibly these translators were relating it to the sea of Edom (red). This designation was perpetuated by the Latin Vulgate and later the King James English translation.

II. Location
   A. There are several bodies of water referred to by this name.
      1. the narrow body of water between Egypt and the Sinai peninsula about 190 miles long (Gulf of Suez)
      2. the body of water between the Sinai peninsula and Arabia about 112 miles long (Gulf of Aqaba)
   B. It could relate to the shallow marsh area in the northeastern part of the Nile delta close to Tanis, Zoan, Avaris, Rameses, which is on the southern shore of Lake Menzaleh (the marshy region).
   C. It could be used metaphorically of the mysterious waters to the south, often used of the sea at the end (of the earth). This means it could refer to
      1. modern Red Sea (Gulf of Suez or the Gulf of Aqaba, cf. 1 Kgs. 9:26)
      2. Indian Ocean (cf. Herodotus 1.180)
      3. Persian Gulf (cf. Josephus)

III. *Suph* in Numbers 33
   A. In Num. 33:8 the body of water that was miraculously divided is called *suph* (BDB 693 I, "reeds" or "weeds").
   B. In Num. 33:10,11 the Israelites are said to camp by *yam suph* (Sea of Reeds/Weeds).
   C. There are two different bodies of water.
      1. the first is not the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
      2. the second is probably the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
   D. The term *suph* is being used in the OT in three ways.
      1. body of water parted by YHWH to allow the Israelites to pass, but the Egyptian soldiers to drown
      2. the northwestern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Suez)
      3. the northeastern extension of the Red Sea (Gulf of Aqaba)
   E. *Yam suph* possibly does not mean "reed sea" because
      1. there were/are no reeds (papyrus) in the Red Sea (salt water)
      2. the supposed Egyptian etymology refers to a land, not a lake
   F. *Suph* could come from the Semitic root "end" (BDB 692) and refer to the mysterious unknown waters to the south (see Bernard F. Batts, "Red Sea or Reed Sea? What *Yam Suph* Really Means" in *Approaches to the Bible*, vol. 1, pp. 291-304).

▣ **"the people became impatient because of the journey"** The MT is literally "her soul was short." Maybe they are upset because

1. they were heading in the wrong direction
2. they wanted to enter the land on the heels of their victory against the king of Arad
3. of the rugged dryness of the territory through which they were traveling

Whatever the reason, this is another characteristic "grumbling" of the book of Numbers.

21:5 This is the same complaining, rebellious spirit that we have seen throughout the book of Numbers. The people of God were attacking Moses but, in reality, they were attacking God and His provisions and plan for them. This attack angered God particularly because they were ungrateful for the supernatural water and the unique bread of heaven, called manna, which He provided for them (cf. Exodus 16 and Numbers 11). See Special Topics:

1. Waters at Num. 20:11
2. Manna at Num. 11:6-9

▣ **"miserable food"** This ADJECTIVE (BDB 887, KB 1106) occurs only here. There is some disagreement among scholars on its etymological root (cf. NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 933-934). BDB says it means "contemptible" or "worthless." Since the root is uncertain, then context, context, context must be our guide.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:6-15

[6]The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. [7]So the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD that He may remove the serpents from us." And Moses interceded for the people. [8]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live." [9]And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived." [10]Now the sons of Israel moved out and camped in Oboth. [11]They journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, in the wilderness which is opposite Moab, to the east. [12]From there they set out and camped in Wadi Zered. [13]From there they journeyed and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which is in the wilderness that comes out of the border of the Amorites, for the Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. [14]Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD

"Waheb in Suphah,
And the wadis of the Arnon,
[15]And the slope of the wadis
That extends to the site of Ar,
And leans to the border of Moab."

21:6 "The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people" The term "fiery" (BDB 977 I) has been explained in three different ways.

1. the color of the snake
2. the sting of the bite
3. the fever which the bite caused

We are uncertain as to which one is true. The fact that Moses made a bronze serpent (v. 9) might lend itself to the theory of the color of the snake.

21:7 "intercede with the LORD" This is the only place where the people asked Moses to intercede for them ("intercede," BDB 813, KB 933, *Hithpael* IMPERATIVE). One of the beautiful things about Moses was his

wonderful intercessory prayers on behalf of the rebellious, sinful people of God. See Special Topic: Intercessory Prayer at Num. 11:2.

21:8 "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live'" This is a very significant theological issue. It is referred to in John 3:14 to speak of Jesus Christ and His being lifted up on the cross (see full note in John online). There was no magic in the bronze serpent but it was faith in God's word that was the key. The people had been balking at God's promises and provisions and now their only means of being delivered from the death sentence of these poisonous snakes was that they believe God and do that which they could not understand. The same is true for our faith in Jesus Christ. It is obvious from the writings of Paul that the Gospel is foolishness to humans, but it is the power of God unto all who believe (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18-2:16). The key is that God told them to do it (i.e., John 1:12; 3:16)!

The term "fiery" (BDB 977 I, NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1289-1290) is related to *seraphim* (BDB 977 II, cf. Isa. 6:2). If one consults Isa. 14:29; 30:6, possibly a flying serpent. See Special Topic: *Seraphim*.

SPECIAL TOPIC: *SERAPHIM* (BDB 977 II, KB 1360, #4)

A. Isaiah 6:2,6 contains the only mention of them in the Bible. It is possible that the "flying serpents" of Isa. 14:29; 30:6 (BDB 977 I plus BDB 733) are in mind.
B. They are a particular order of angels. Their name means "burning ones" (BDB 977 II). The word is from the root "to burn" (BDB 976).
C. In Revelation 4:8, it seems that the *Seraphim* and the *Cherubim* are combined. "The Beasts" look like Cherubs which have two wings (Exod. 25:19) or four wings (Ezek. 1:6-14), but in Revelation they have six wings and occupy the place of *Seraphim*.
D. Possibly related to
    1. the "flying serpents" of Isa. 14:29; 30:6 (BDB 977 I plus BDB 733)
    2. an Egyptian word *serref* ("guardian griffin," a combination of a lion and an eagle)
    3. "winged snakes," from Tut-ankh-amon's throne (ANEP 415-417)
    4. another Hebrew root (BDB 978), meaning "chief," in Arabic called *sharafa*, meaning "to be noble" (ZPEB, vol. 5, p. 349)
E. In Jewish folklore they are connected with "lightning."
F. There is so much about the spiritual realm that God has chosen not to reveal to us. Be careful of
    1. speculation
    2. logical theories
    3. links to pagan mythology

21:10 Numbers 33 has a brief list of the camping sites of the Israelites during this period (cf. Deuteronomy 2). See especially vv. 40-49. Both "Oboth" and "Iyeabarim" are mentioned in v. 43.

The mountain "Pisgah" is mentioned in v. 47 by its other name, "Nebo," the mountain where Moses will die.

21:12 "Wadi Zered. . .Arnon" There were four nations occupying this trans-Jordan area. The most southern one was Edom, then Moab, then one of the Canaanite tribes called "Amorites," and then further to the north is Ammon. These rivers which flow into the Dead Sea mark the boundary between these different groups (i.e., Zered, Arnon, Jabbock).

21:14 "the Book of the Wars of the LORD" It is somewhat unusual that a written source would have already been written on this since many of the wars do not begin until the book of Joshua (i.e., Book of Jashar, Josh. 10:13). However, because of the poetic verses that follow, many believe that this book was made up of pieces of poetry and songs about Israel's victories in the wilderness and later the Promised Land (i.e., a collected anthology).

21:15 "Ar" This (BDB786 I) refers to a city or region on the northern border of Moab, south of the Arnon River (cf. Numbers 21; 28; Deut. 2:9,18,29).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:16

[16]From there *they continued* to Beer, that is the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Assemble the people, that I may give them water."

21:16 "Beer" This is the word for "well" (BDB 91). The reason it is hard to locate many of the sites mentioned in the OT is that they were descriptions of a place.

1. well
2. fortress
3. watchtower
4. pass
5. assent

All are common features of many areas on the eastern and western sides of the Jordan River.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:17-20

[17]Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well! Sing to it!

[18]"The well, which the leaders sank,
Which the nobles of the people dug,
With the scepter *and* with their staffs."

And from the wilderness *they continued* to Mattanah, [19]and from Mattanah to Nahaliel, and from Nahaliel to Bamoth, [20]and from Bamoth to the valley that is in the land of Moab, at the top of Pisgah which overlooks the wasteland."

21:17 The well is personified and is commanded to flow.

1. spring up – BDB 748, KB 828, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. sing – BDB 777, KB 854, *Qal* IMPERATIVE

21:18 This is poetic imagery which is often difficult to interpret. Did

1. the leaders of Israel really dig the well themselves with their "scepters"/"staffs"?
2. they "sing" to it?
3. YHWH do it supernaturally?

Literalism is not "conservative" in poetry, but ridiculous! See Special Topic: Hebrew Poetry and Video Seminar on Biblical Interpretation, www.freebiblecommentary.org, first red box on the home page.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEBREW POETRY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. This type of literature makes up 1/3 of the Old Testament. It is especially common in the "Prophets" (all but Haggai and Malachi contain poetry) and "Writings" sections of the Hebrew canon.

B. It is very different from English poetry. English poetry is developed from Greek and Latin poetry, which is primarily sound-based. Hebrew poetry has much in common with Canaanite poetry. It is basically thought-based in balanced, parallel lines.

C. The archaeological discovery north of Israel at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) has helped scholars understand OT poetry. This poetry from the 15th century B.C. has obvious literary connections with biblical poetry.

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POETRY

A. It is very compact.

B. It tries to express truth, feelings or experiences in imagery.

C. It is primarily written not oral. It is highly structured. This structure is expressed in:

1. balanced lines (parallelism)
2. word plays
3. sound plays

III. THE STRUCTURE (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, pp.965-975)

A. Bishop Robert Lowth in his book, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* (1753) was the first to characterize biblical poetry as balanced lines of thought. Most modern English translations are formatted to show the lines of poetry.

1. synonymous – the lines express the same thought in different words:
   a. Psalm 3:1; 49:1; 83:14; 103:13
   b. Proverbs 19:5; 20:1
   c. Isaiah 1:3,10
   d. Amos 5:24; 8:10
2. antithetical – the lines express opposite thoughts by means of contrast or stating the positive and the negative:
   a. Psalm 1:6; 90:6
   b. Proverbs 10:1,12; 15:1; 19:4
3. synthetic – the next two or three lines develop the thought – Ps. 19:7-9
4. chiasmic – a pattern of poetry expressing the message in a descending and ascending order. The main point is found in the middle of the pattern.

B. Charles A. Briggs in his book, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (1899) developed the next stage of analysis of Hebrew poetry:

1. emblematic – one clause literal and the second metaphorical, Ps. 42:1; 103:3
2. climactic or stair-like – the clauses reveal truth in an ascending fashion, Ps. 19:7-14; 29:1-2; 103:20-22
3. introverted – a series of clauses, usually at least four, are related by the internal structure of line 1 to 4 and 2 to 3 – Ps. 30:8-10a

C. G. B. Gray in his book, *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry* (1915), developed the concept of balanced clauses further by:
   1. complete balance – where every word in line one is repeated or balanced by a word in line two – Psalm 83:14 and Isaiah 1:3
   2. incomplete balance where the clauses are not the same length – Ps. 59:16; 75:6

D. Today there is a growing recognition of literary structural pattern in Hebrew called a chiasm, which usually denotes a number of parallel lines (a.b,b,a; a,b,c,b,a) forming an hour glass shape, often the central line(s) is emphasized.

E. Type of sound patterns found in poetry in general, but not often in eastern poetry
   1. play on alphabet (acrostic, cf. Ps. 9,34,37,119; Pro. 31:10ff; Lamentations 1-4)
   2. play on consonants (alliteration, cf. Ps. 6:8; 27:7; 122:6; Isa. 1:18-26)
   3. play on vowels (assonance, cf. Gen. 49:17; Exod. 14:14; Ezek. 27:27)
   4. play on repetition of similar sounding words with different meanings (paronomasia)
   5. play on words which, when pronounced, sound like the thing they name (onomatopoeia)
   6. special opening and close (inclusive)

F. There are several types of poetry in the Old Testament. Some are topic related and some are form related.
   1. dedication song – Num. 21:17-18
   2. work songs – (alluded to but not recorded in Jdgs. 9:27); Isa. 16:10; Jer. 25:30; 48:33
   3. ballads – Num. 21:27-30; Isa. 23:16
   4. drinking songs – negative, Isa. 5:11-13; Amos 6:4-7 and positive, Isa. 22:13
   5. love poems – Song of Songs, wedding riddle - Jdgs. 14:10-18, wedding song - Ps. 45
   6. laments/dirge – (alluded to but not recorded in 2 Sam. 1:17 and 2 Chr. 35:25) 2 Sam. 3:33; Ps. 27, 28; Jer. 9:17-22; Lam.; Ezek. 19:1-14; 26:17-18; Nah. 3:15-19)
   7. war songs – Gen. 4:23-24; Exod. 15:1-18,20; Num. 10:35-36; 21:14-15; Jos. 10:13; Jdgs. 5:1-31; 11:34; 1 Sam. 18:6; 2 Sam. 1:18; Isa. 47:1-15
   8. special benedictions or blessing of leader – Genesis 49; Num. 6:24-26; Deuteronomy 32; 2 Sam. 23:1-7
   9. magical texts – Balaam, Num. 24:3-9
   10. sacred poems – Psalms
   11. acrostic poems – Ps. 9,34,37,119; Pro. 31:10ff and Lamentations 1-4
   12. curses – Num. 21:22-30
   13. taunt poems – Isa. 14:1-22; 47:1-15; Ezek. 28:1-23
   14. a book of war poems (Jashar) – Num. 21:14-15; Jos. 10:12-13; 2 Sam. 1:18

IV. GUIDELINE TO INTERPRETING HEBREW POETRY

A. Look for the central truth of the stanza or strophe (this is like a paragraph in prose.) The RSV was the first modern translation to identify poetry by stanzas. Compare modern translations for helpful insights.

B. Identify the figurative language and express it in prose. Remember this type of literature is very compact, much is left for the reader to fill in (see Special Topic: Wisdom Literature).

C. Be sure to relate the longer issue-oriented poems to their literary context (often the whole book) and historical setting. Try to express the central truth in your own words.

D. Judges 4 & 5 are very helpful in seeing how poetry expresses history. Judges 4 is prose and Judges 5 is poetry of the same event (also compare Exodus 14 & 15).

E. Attempt to identify the type of parallelism involved, whether synonymous, antithetical, or synthetic. This is very important.

21:20 "the top of Pisgah" This same mountain range is also called by one of the names of the sons of Reuben (cf. Num. 27:12). It is also known as Mt. Nebo (BDB 612 I, cf. Num. 33:47). It has been theorized that the relationshp between Nebo, Pisgah (BDB 820) and the mountains of Abiram (BDB 720) is the same as between Horeb and Sinai. One is referring to the ridge and the other to the peak, but this is simply uncertain. This mountain on the eastern side of the Dead Sea is going to be the perch on which YHWH would allow Moses to view the Promised Land, although he could not enter it. He will die on this mountain peak.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:21-30

[21]Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon, king of the Amorites, saying, [22]"Let me pass through your land. We will not turn off into field or vineyard; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the king's highway until we have passed through your border." [23]But Sihon would not permit Israel to pass through his border. So Sihon gathered all his people and went out against Israel in the wilderness, and came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. [24]Then Israel struck him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the sons of Ammon; for the border of the sons of Ammon *was* Jazer. [25]Israel took all these cities and Israel lived in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heshbon, and in all her villages. [26]For Heshbon was the city of Sihon, king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken all his land out of his hand, as far as the Arnon. [27]Therefore those who use proverbs say,

"Come to Heshbon! Let it be built!
So let the city of Sihon be established.
[28]For a fire went forth from Heshbon,
A flame from the town of Sihon;
It devoured Ar of Moab,
The dominant heights of the Arnon.
[29]Woe to you, O Moab!
You are ruined, O people of Chemosh!
He has given his sons as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To an Amorite king, Sihon.
[30]But we have cast them down,
Heshbon is ruined as far as Dibon,
Then we have laid waste even to Nophah,
Which *reaches* to Medeba."

21:21 "Amorites" See Special Topics: Amorites (following) and Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Num. 13:28-29.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE AMORITES (BDB 57, KB 67)

The term "Amorite" (Akkadian, "land to the west") is used in four senses.

1. one of the several indigenous tribes of Canaan (e.g., Gen. 10:16; 15:18-21; Exod. 3:817; Deut. 20:17; Jos. 24:11; Ezra 9:1; Neh. 9:8 [nomadic tribes from Akkadian texts])
2. a general name for people to the west of Mesopotamia (cf. Jdgs. 6:10; 2 Kgs. 21:11; Ezek. 16:3, also from Assyrian and Babylonian texts)
3. inhabitants of the highlands as opposed to Canaanites who occupy the lowlands (cf. Num. 13:29; Deut. 1:7,19,20; 3:2)
4. Canaanite and Amorite are both used to designate all the indigenous tribes of Palestine/Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:16; Jdgs. 6:10; Jos. 7:7; 1 Sam. 7:14; 1 Kgs. 21:26; 2 Kgs. 21:11)

21:22 The request to Sihon was just like the request to the king of Moab (cf. Num. 20:14-21).

21:24

NASB, NJB, LXX	**"Jazer"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"fortified"**
NRSV	**"strong"**
TEV	**"strongly defended"**
JPSOA	**"Az"**
REB	**"the country became difficult"**

The MT has the ADJECTIVE "strong" (BDB 738), which can denote "strong," "mighty," or "strength." This is reflected in the NKJV, NRSV, TEV. There are two suggested place names.

1. NASB, LXX – Jazer
2. JPSOA – Az

21:25 "villages" This is literally "daughters" (BDB 123 I). It is a Hebrew idiom for unwalled cities/villages.

21:27 "proverbs say" This is an example of Wisdom Literature which is very common to all the cultures of the ANE. This particular proverb seems to be an Amorite taunt song about their war with Moab, but Num. 21:30 has been adapted by the Israelites to their defeat of the Amorites. Originally, God's people attacked only the Canaanite tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan until Moab, one of the descendants of Lot, did them evil (cf. Numbers 22-24).

21:28 "A flame went forth. . .

A flame from. . ." This is imagery of war (cf. Zech. 12:10). Fire is often used of judgment or to describe YHWH's glory, but rarely as war imagery. See Special Topic: Fire at Num. 11:1b.

▣

NASB	**"the dominant heights"**
NKJV	**"the Lords of the heights"**
NRSV	**"swallowed up the heights"**
TEV	**"devoured the hills"**
NJB	**"engulfing the heights"**
JPSOA	**"the Lords of Bamoth"**

REB "swept the heights"
LXX "swallowed the steles"
Peshitta "the worshipers of the high places"

The MT has "the lords" (BDB 127), but the UBS Text Project, p. 237, gives it a "C" rating (i.e., considerable doubt).

Some translations emend the NOUN (ילעב) to a VERB (בעלב) (BDB 118 I), meaning "swallow" or "devour." This makes it parallel with "devoured," BDB 37, KB 46.

Notice that the JPSOA and Peshitta seem to link this word with the *Ba'al* (i.e., "the Baalim," see Special Topis: Fertility Worship of the ANE) worship in the high places of Arnon (i.e., Moab). Remember, ANE poetry is slippery stuff!

SPECIAL TOPIC: FERTILITY WORSHIP OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

I. Reasons For
   A. Ancient humans began as hunters-gatherers, but as nomadic life became settled, the need for crops and herds developed.
   B. Ancient Near Eastern inhabitants were vulnerable to the forces of nature. As civilizations developed around the major bodies of fresh water they became dependant on the regular order of the seasons.
   C. The forces of nature became gods who needed to be supplicated and controlled.

II. Where and Why
   A. Fertility religions developed in
      1. Egypt (Nile)
      2. Mesopotamia (Tigris and Euphrates)
      3. Canaan (Jordan)
   B. There is a basic commonality among the fertility cults of the Ancient Near East.
   C. The changing and unpredictable seasons and weather conditions caused the development of myths using human/divine analogies as the basis of life in the spiritual realm and on earth.

III. Who and How
   A. Who (the gods and goddesses)
      1. Egypt
         a. *Isis* (female)
         b. *Osiris* (male)
      2. Mesopotamia
         a. *Ishtar/Inanna* (female)
         b. *Tammuz/Dumuzi* (male)
      3. Canaan
         a. *Ba'al* (male)
         b. *Asherah, Astarte, Anath* (female)
   B. Each of these pairs were mythologized in similar ways
      1. one dies
      2. the other restores
      3. the pattern of dying and rising gods mimics the annual cycles of nature
   C. Imitation magic saw human sexual unions (i.e., marriage of the gods) as a way of insuring fertility of crops, herds, and people

IV. The Israelites
   A. YHWH's people were warned (i.e., Leviticus and Deuteronomy) to avoid the fertility cults (especially of Canaan).
   B. These cults were very popular because of the superstition of human beings and the added incentive of sexual activity.
   C. Idolatry involves the blessing of life to be sought in cultic or ritual ways instead of a personal faith and trust in YHWH.

V. Suggested Reading
   A. W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*
   B. J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*
   C. James G. Frazer
      1. *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*
      2. *Folklore in the Old Testament*
      3. *The Worship of Nature*
   D. C. H. Gordon, *Before the Bible*
   E. S. N. Kramer, *Mythologies of the Ancient World*

21:29 "Chemosh" See full note online at Jer. 48:7. Chemosh and Molech are linked in Ugaritic poems to Anath-chemosh. See Special Topic: *Molech*.

SPECIAL TOPIC: *MOLECH*

The Term (BDB 574, KB 592) is uncertain. There have been several theories.

1. associated with a deity of the underworld
   a. "*Malik*" from the Ebla Tablets (± 2,300 B.C from northern Syria)
   b. "*Maliku*" or "*Muluk*" from the Mari Tablets (± 1800-1750 B.C. from a Sumerian city located on the Euphrates River)
2. associated with a type of sacrifice from one of the Punic terms, "*molk*," from a North African stele from the 4th to 1st century B.C. It may have involved a substitute lamb being burned in place of a child (Eissfeldt). N. H. Snaith theorizes it means that children were given for cultic prostitution based on
   a. Lev. 18:19-23 is about sexual sins so verse 18 might be also
   b. this is the way the Talmud sees it also
3. possibly a confusion with *Milcom* (cf. *Molech* in 1 Kgs. 11:7, but note that *Milcom* is mentioned in 1 Kgs. 11:5,33; however, both gods are referred to in Ps. 106:35-39)
4. the word is a Hebrew word play from the consonants for "King" (*mlk*, BDB 591) combined with the vowels from "shame" (BDB 101 or 102). But even if this is true it does not identify the god or the cult.

The cult of *Molech* is described as a human sacrifice of children, by fire (whether burned alive or offered as a burnt offering after they were killed another way is uncertain). If this is true, it was

1. a type of fertility cult
2. a cult that worshiped the god of the underworld

This god was worshiped in Jerusalem in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, which became known as "Topheth" (cf. Isa. 30:33; 57:5; Jer. 7:31; 32:35). The worship is characterized by causing ones sons and daughters to pass through the fire (cf. Deut. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kgs. 16:3; 17:17,31; 21:6; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; Ezek. 16:20-21). The word itself appears in Lev. 18:21; 20:2,3,4,5; 1 Kgs. 11:7; 2 Kgs. 23:10; Jer. 32:35; possibly Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43. The cult is most associated by Judean Kings, Ahab and Manasseh, though it appears earlier in Jewish contacts with surrounding pagan fertility worship.

21:30

NASB	**"we have cast them down"**
NKJV, Rotherham	**"we have shot them"**
NRSV	**"their posterity perished"**
REV	**"their descendants are destroyed"**
NJB	**"their posterity has been destroyed"**
JPSOA	**"we have cast them down utterly"**
LXX	**"their offspring shall perish"**

The MT has "shoot" (BDB 434, KB 436, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*). The LXX translated it as a NOUN, "posterity" or "offspring" (BDB 630). The UBS Text Project, p. 237, gives the MT a "C" rating (i.e., considerable doubt). The LXX fits the context of "holy war" (i.e., *herem*) against these native inhabitants (cf. Gen. 15:12-21).

▣ **"Which *reaches* to Medeba"** The LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch supply the word "fire," which fits the context.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:31-32

[31]Thus Israel lived in the land of the Amorites. [32]Moses sent to spy out Jazer, and they captured its villages and dispossessed the Amorites who *were* there.

21:32 "dispossessed" The MT has BDB 439, KB 441, *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw*, but the Masoretic scholars altered it to a *Qal* IMPERFECT with *waw* (Qere). They tried to make the MT as contextual and accurate as possible based on their traditions and A.D. understanding of the MT text.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT:21:33-35

[33]Then they turned and went up by the way of Bashan, and Og the king of Bashan went out with all his people, for battle at Edrei. [34]But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have given him into your hand, and all his people and his land; and you shall do to him as you did to Sihon, king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon." [35]So they killed him and his sons and all his people, until there was no remnant left him; and they possessed his land.

21:33 See good brief discussion at NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1022-1023.

21:33-35 This refers to the Israeli defeat of another group of Canaanites close to the Sea of Galilee in the area known as Bashan (cf. Deut. 3:1-17). The city of Enderi is northeast of Ramoth-Gilead in the trans-Jordan area. Numbers 21:35 implies that they were also put under the ban and all of them were destroyed. See Special Topic: Curse at Num. 16:26.

21:34 "Do not fear him" This is a *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense (BDB 431, KB 432; see Special Topic: Fear.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FEAR (OT)

I. Notes from Genesis 22:12

This term (BDB 431, KB 432) occurs often in the OT in two senses. It can mean "fear" (cf. Gen. 3:10; 18:15; 20:8; 28:17; 32:8; 42:35; 43:18), but in certain contexts it transitions to "awe," "respect," or "honor" when describing a human's attitude toward Deity. Note the following texts: Gen. 42:18; Exod. 1:17; 9:30; 18:21; Lev. 19:14,32; 25:17,36,43; Deut. 6:2,24; 10:12,20; 14:23; 17:19; 25:18; 28:58; 31:12-13; Ps. 33:8. This "fear" should issue in worship and obedience (cf. Exod. 20:20; Deut. 6:13,24; see Special Topic: Keep). It is a lifestyle relationship, not a set of isolated events, places, creeds, or rules. Obedience flows from respect and love, not fear of reprisal. Disobedience is primarily against love, as well as law! One's relationship with God becomes the priority of life! That "Abraham believed God" (Gen. 15:56) was demonstrated in his life by his actions in Genesis 22.

II. Notes from Isaiah 41:10

This is a very common word from YHWH to His people (cf. Isa. 41:13,14; 43:1,5; 44:2,8; 51:7,12; 54:4,14). Notice why they should <u>not</u> fear.

1. YHWH is personally with them (i.e., Ps. 23:4)
2. YHWH is their covenant God (i.e., Gen. 15:1; Exod. 14:13; Jdgs. 6:23; Isa. 41:10)
3. He will strengthen them
4. He will help them (Isa. 41:10,14)
5. He will uphold them (Isa. 41:10,13)
6. all who oppose them will
   a. be shamed
   b. be dishonored
   c. be brought to nothing (Isa. 41:11-12)
   d. perish

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study <u>guide</u> commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Since YHWH promised them victory, why is the end of Num. 21:1 so problematic?
2. What is the difference between "a vow" and "an oath"?
3. Explain "utterly destroy" (*herem*).
4. Why were the people impatient?
5. Why did YHWH not take the snakes away in answer to Moses' prayer?
6. What happened to the "bronze serpent"?

NUMBERS 22

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Balak Sends Balaam	Balak Sends for Balaam	Balak and Balaam	The King of Moab Sends for Balaam	
22:1	22:1	22:1-6	22:1	The King of Moab Appeals to Balaam
22:2-14	22:2-14		22:2-6	22:2-3a
				22:3b-6
		22:7-14	22:7-8	22:7-14
			22:9	
			22:10-11	
			22:12	
			22:13-14	
22:15-20	22:15-21	22:15-21	22:15-17	22:15-21
			22:18-19	
			22:20-21	
22:21				
The Angel and Balaam	Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel		Balaam and His Donkey	Balaam's Donkey
22:22-30	22:22-30	22:22-30	22:22-28	22:22-23
				22:24-25
				22:26-27
				22:28-30
			22:29	
			22:30	
22:31-35	22:31-35	22:31-35	22:31-33	22:31-35
			22:34	
			22:35	
			Balak Welcomes Balaam	Balaam and Balak
22:36-40	22:36-40	22:36-40	22:36-37	22:36-38
			22:38-40	
	Balaam's First Prophecy (22:1-23:12)	The Four Oracles of Balaam (22:41-24:25)	Balaam's First Prophecy (22:41-23:12)	22:39-23:3
22:41	22:41	22:41	22:41-23:1	

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

BACKGROUND STUDY

A. Geographical
   1. This is the last major geographical section of Numbers, 22:1-36:3 (i.e., on the plains of Moab).
   2. It is the third lengthy encampment—Sinai, Kadesh, and now the plains of Moab.
   3. This is also the geographical setting of the book of Deuteronomy.

B. Theological
   1. Balaam is a true prophet but is not Hebrew.
   2. These chapters show that God's spiritual gifts can be abused.
   3. The Bible records no mythological type accounts. It does record several times when God utilized animals for His purposes.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:1

[1]Then the sons of Israel journeyed, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:2-14

[2]Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. [3]So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel. [4]Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. [5]So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, *in* the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. [6]Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." [7]So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the *fees for* divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him. [8]He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam. [9]Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" [10]Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent *word* to me, [11]'Behold, there is a people who came out of Egypt and they cover the surface of the land; now come, curse them for me; perhaps I may be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" [12]God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." [13]So Balaam arose in the morning and said to Balak's leaders, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to let me go with you." [14]The leaders of Moab arose and went to Balak and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

22:2 "Amorites" This refers to the defeated Canaanite tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan, located between Moab and Ammon. The *Macmillan Bible Atlas* is very helpful in geography and topology. See Special Topic: Amorites at Num. 21:21.

22:3 Israel's large numbers caused "fear" among
1. Egypt – Exod. 1:9-10
2. Edom – Exod. 15:15
3. Moab – Exod. 15:15; Num. 22:5-6,11

4. note Rahab's statement in Josh. 2:9-11
5. kings on Jordan's west side – Josh. 5:1

See Special Topic: Fear at Num. 21:34.

22:4 "the elders of Midian" This nomadic tribal group was widely spread over Arabia and the Sinai peninsula. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law was of this tribal group. Here, it refers to a tribal group that lived in Moab.

This name is used of different people/places in the OT.

1. a child of Abraham by Keturah sent away to the east (cf. Gen. 25:1-6; 1 Chr. 1:32)
2. a group of traders associated with the Ishmaelites (cf. Gen. 37:25-36)
3. some part of the Sinai peninsula where Moses fled (Exodus 2-4; esp. 3:1-2)
4. somewhere in the southern trans-Jordan area (1 Kgs. 11:18)
5. in Num. 22:4,7, its leaders are associated with Moab's leaders
6. enemies of Gideon in Judges (cf. Judges 6-8)
7. their five kings are listed in Jos. 13:21, which implies a city-state society, like the Philistines in the southern trans-Jordan area south to the eastern Gulf of Aqaba area

▣ **"will lick up. . .licks up"** This VERB (BDB 535, KB 525, *Piel*) is used in three metaphorical ways.

1. consume all the produce of the land (literal) or imagery for military defeat, as here
2. action of YHWH in 1 Kgs. 18:38 to prove He is real in comparison to *Ba'al*
3. symbol of humiliation (i.e., "lick the dust" in Ps. 72:9; Isa. 49:23; Micah 7:17)

22:5 "Pethor, which is near the River" Balaam was from Syria, near the head waters of the Euphrates. He was not of Abraham but apparently knew YHWH (i.e., Melchizedek, Gen. 14:17-20).

▣

NASB, NKJV,	
LXX	**"in the land of the sons of his people"**
NRSV, TEV	**"in the land of Amaw"**
NJB, REB	**"in the territory of the Amawites"**
JPSOA	**"in the land of his kinsfolk"**
Peshitta	**"of the land of the children of Ammon"**

The MT has "in the land of his people." The UBS Text Project, p. 240, gives "in the land of the children of Amaw" a "C" rating (considerable doubt). The exact location of Balaam's home area in Syria is unknown but he is surely not an Israelite. Yet, he knows YHWH.

The land of Amaw is known from cuneiform texts (JB, p. 201). It is 12 miles south of Carchemish on the west side of the Euphrates, about 400 miles north of Moab.

The Peshitta follows the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Vulgate. However, Ammon is not close to the River Euphrates. Possibly "Aram" was originally the geographical location.

22:6 "curse" For a good brief discussion, see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 491-493.

For the people of the ANE, cursing had an independent power to hurt, thwart, defeat a potential foe. YHWH would not allow Balaam to curse His people. Balaam was forced to publically/ritualistically bless Israel in the very presence of Balak.

▣ **"for I know that he whom. . ."** Balaam was a well known and effective prophet of God (see Num. 22:13,18). This shows that God communicated to more than just the Israelis (cf. Melchizedek, Genesis 14).

22:7 "elders" See Special Topic: Elder at Num. 1:16b.

▣ **"fees for divination"** This is literally "instruments of." It was a means of knowing God's will, which was prohibited to Israel (cf. Lev. 19:26; 20:27; Deut. 18:10-11; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kgs. 17:17). Israel was to use the Urim by means of th High Priests (cf. Num. 27:21). See Special Topic: Diviner.

SPECIAL TOPIC: DIVINER

This PARTICIPLE (BDB 890, KB 1116, *Qal* PARTICIPLE) means "one trying to know and control the future." Several different methods were used.

1. casting lots
2. consulting idols
3. examining sheep livers
4. necromancy
5. cloud reading
6. flight and perching of birds

Some typical texts are Num. 22:7; 23:23; Deut. 18:10,14; Jos. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:5; 15:23; 28:8; 2 Kgs. 17:17; Isa. 2:6; 3:2; 44:25; Jer. 14:14; 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 12:24; 13:6,7,9,23; 21:21,22,23,29; 22:28.

It is based on the pagan worldview that there

1. are spiritual beings active in this world who affect persons and events
2. is information about the future hidden in natural events and that gifted humans (i.e., diviners, mediums, spiritists, e.g., Lev. 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Deut. 18:11-12; 2 Chr. 33:6; false prophets, e.g., Jer. 14:13-16; 27:9; 29:8; Ezek. 13:6,9,23; 22:28) can know and influence this future

22:8 "the LORD" There are several names for Deity used in this chapter.

1. YHWH – the special covenant name for Israel's Deity, cf. Num. 22:8,13,18,28; 23:3,5,12,16,21; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, D at Num. 1:1
2. the Angel of the LORD – Num. 22:23,24,25,26,27,31,32,34,35; see Special Topic: The Angel of the LORD at Num. 20:16
3. *Elohim* – the general name for Deity (like *El*) in the ANE; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, C at Num. 1:1; it appears in Num. 22:9,10,20,22,38; 23:4,27; 24:4,5,16
4. *Eloah* – in the combined title of Num. 22:18, the singular form of *Elohim* is used
5. *El* – in Num. 23:8,19,22,23

This is an unusual variety of Divine names. It seems to imply that Balaam was not an Israelite but knew Israel's Deity (i.e., Melchizedek, Jethro).

22:9 Apparently God revealed Himself to Balaam by dreams (i.e., "spend the night here," Num. 22:8,19-20). This is similar to how YHWH communicated to Jacob (Gen. 28:10-17) and Joseph (i.e., Genesis 40-41). For other revelations by dreams (trance) see

1. Abraham – Gen. 15:12-21
2. Jacob – Gen. 28:10-22; 31:10-11
3. Joseph – Gen. 37:5-11; 40-41
4. Solomon – 1 Kgs. 3:4-15
5. here
6. Peter in Acts 10

▣ **"Who are these men with you"** Surely this is not a lack of information on YHWH's part, but like Gen. 3:9, is an attempt to get humans to think about their current situation. I reject the tenets of "Open Theism."

22:12 This verse is very specific and clear.

1. do not go with them
2. do not curse Israel
3. Israel is blessed

22:13 Balaam obeys YHWH's word from v. 12.

One wonders what changes in vv. 20,35. Was YHWH testing Balaam or was Balaam not willing to accept YHWH's word? The first option in context seems best. So, why did YHWH change His mind?

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:15-20

[15]Then Balak again sent leaders, more numerous and more distinguished than the former. [16]They came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, 'Let nothing, I beg you, hinder you from coming to me; [17]for I will indeed honor you richly, and I will do whatever you say to me. Please come then, curse this people for me.'" [18]Balaam replied to the servants of Balak, "Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything, either small or great, contrary to the command of the LORD my God. [19]Now please, you also stay here tonight, and I will find out what else the LORD will speak to me." [20]God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men have come to call you, rise up *and* go with them; but only the word which I speak to you shall you do."

22:17 "I will indeed honor you richly" This is an intensified grammatical form (an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 457, KB 455).

▣ **"come. . .curse"** These are both *Qal* IMPERATIVES used as a request, not a command.

22:18 "house full of silver and gold" Some see this as the noble attitude on the part of Balaam, but others see it as an attempt to raise the fee. The rest of Scripture (as well as Jewish tradition) sees this man's motives and actions in a negative light (cf. Num. 31:8,16; Deut. 23:4-5; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; and Rev. 2:14). Only God knows! There is the same problem with Saul's and Solomon's end-of-life motives.

22:20 There are two commands and two possible JUSSIVES (following an IMPERATIVE).

1. rise up – BDB 877, KB1086, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. go – BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, also see Num. 22:35
3. speak – BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* IMPERFECT, possibly used in a JUSSIVE sense
4. do – BDB 793, KB 889, *Qal* IMPERFECT, possibly in a JUSSIVE sense

Possibly the "God" of v. 20 is not the "LORD my God" of v. 18. This is only my speculation (because of v. 32) that YHWH gave one word (v. 12), but another word came from a false/evil dream (v. 20). However, this speculation seems not to fit v. 35, where the angel of the Lord gives the same message as v. 20!

Oh my, what is one to do? I want to pull out my "exegetical hair"!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:21

[21]So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:22-30

[22]But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. [23]When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand, the donkey turned off from the way and went into the field; but Balaam struck the donkey to turn her

back into the way. [24]Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path of the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. [25]When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she pressed herself to the wall and pressed Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again. [26]The angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right hand or the left. [27]When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam was angry and struck the donkey with his stick. [28]And the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" [29]Then Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have made a mockery of me! If there had been a sword in my hand, I would have killed you by now." [30]The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden all your life to this day? Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you?" And he said, "No."

22:22 "an adversary" This is the meaning of the Hebrew word (BDB 966) which is translated "Satan." See Special Topic: Satan.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SATAN

This is a very difficult subject for several reasons.

1. The OT does not reveal an archenemy of good, but a servant of YHWH (see A. B. Davidson, *OT Theology*, pp. 300-306), who offers mankind an alternative and also accuses mankind of unrighteousness. There is only one God (see Special Topic: Monotheism), one power, one cause in the OT—YHWH (cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6).
2. The concept of a personal archenemy of God developed in the interbiblical (non-canonical) literature under the influence of Persian dualistic religion (*Zoroastrianism*). This, in turn, greatly influenced rabbinical Judaism and the Essene community (i.e., Dead Sea Scrolls).
3. The NT develops the OT themes in surprisingly stark, but selective, categories.

   If one approaches the study of evil from the perspective of biblical theology (each book or author or genre studied and outlined separately), then very different views of evil are revealed.

   If, however, one approaches the study of evil from a non-biblical or extra-biblical approach of world religions or eastern religions, then much of the NT development is foreshadowed in Persian dualism and Greco-Roman spiritism.

   If one is presuppositionally committed to the divine authority of Scripture (as I am!), then the NT development must be seen as progressive revelation. Christians must guard against allowing Jewish folklore or western literature (Dante, Milton) to further influence the concept. There is certainly mystery and ambiguity in this area of revelation. God has chosen not to reveal all aspects of evil, its origin (see Special Topic: Lucifer), its development, its purpose, but He has revealed its defeat!

In the OT the term "satan" or "accuser" (BDB 966, KB 1317) can relate to three separate groups.

1. human accusers (cf. 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Kgs. 11:14,23,25; Ps. 109:6)
2. angelic accusers (cf. Num. 22:22-23; Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1)
3. demonic accusers (cf. 1 Chr. 21:1; 1 Kgs. 22:21; Zech. 13:2)

Only later in the intertestamental period is the serpent of Genesis 3 identified with Satan (cf. *Book of Wisdom* 2.23-24; *II Enoch* 31:3), and even later does this become a rabbinical option (cf. *Sot* 9b and *Sanh.* 29a). The "sons of God" of Genesis 6 become angels in *I Enoch* 54:6. I mention this, not to assert its theological accuracy, but to show its development. In the NT these OT activities are attributed to angelic, personified evil (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9).

The origin of personified evil is difficult or impossible (depending on your point of view) to determine from the OT. One reason for this is Israel's strong monotheism (see Special Topic: Monotheism; also note 1 Kgs. 22:20-22; Eccl. 7:14; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6). All causality (cf. Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6) was attributed to YHWH to demonstrate His uniqueness and primacy (cf. Isa. 43:11; 44:6,8,24; 45:5-6,14,18,21,22).

Sources of possible information are (1) Job 1-2, where Satan is one of the "sons of God" (i.e., angels) or (2) Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, where prideful near-eastern kings (Babylon and Tyre) are possibly used to illustrate the pride of Satan (cf. 1 Tim. 3:6). I have mixed emotions about this approach. Ezekiel uses Garden of Eden metaphors, not only for the king of Tyre as Satan (cf. Ezek. 28:12-16), but also for the king of Egypt as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Ezekiel 31). However, Isaiah 14, particularly vv. 12-14, seems to describe an angelic revolt through pride. If God wanted to reveal to us the specific nature and origin of Satan, this is a very oblique way and place to do it. We must guard against the trend of systematic theology of taking small, ambiguous parts of different testaments, authors, books, and genres and combining them as pieces of one divine puzzle.

I agree with Alfred Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, appendices XIII [pp. 748-763] and XVI [pp.770-776]) that rabbinical Judaism has been overly influenced by Persian dualism and demonic speculation. The rabbis are not a good source for truth in this area. Jesus radically diverges from the teachings of the Synagogue in this area. I think that the concept of an archangelic enemy of YHWH developed from the two high gods of Iranian dualism, *Ahkiman* and *Ormaza*, and were then developed by the rabbis into a biblical dualism of YHWH and Satan.

There is surely progressive revelation in the NT as to the personification of evil, but not as elaborate as the rabbis. A good example of this difference is the "war in heaven." The fall of Satan is a logical necessity, but the specifics are not given (see Special Topic: Fall of Satan and His Angels). Even what is given is veiled in apocalyptic genre (cf. Rev. 12:4,7,12-13). Although Satan is defeated in Jesus and exiled to earth, he still functions as a servant of YHWH (cf. Matt. 4:1; Luke 22:31-32; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20).

We must curb our curiosity in this area. There is a personal force of temptation and evil, but there is still only one God and we are still responsible for our choices. There is a spiritual battle, both before and after salvation. Victory can only come and remain in and through the Triune God. Evil has been defeated and will be removed (cf. Rev. 20:10)!

▣ **"the angel of the LORD"** This is often a personification of Deity. See Special Topic: The Angel of the LORD at Num. 20:16. This is obviously not a dream or a parable. It was day time and there were servants with him.

▣ **"because he was going"** This is a PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. The Rotherham's Emphasized Bible, p. 182, has an interesting footnote that tries to explain the seeming contradiction between v. 12 and v. 20.

> "Or 'was really going.' The emphasis here (strangely overlooked by both A.V. and R.V.) is significant. It seems to suggest that the command of ver. 20 scarcely even amounted to a permission, but was rather a piece of irony, or at most intimated this, if Balaam was determined to go, he would not be forcibly prevented. Like the hardening of Pharaoh's heart."

In Joshua 24:9-10 the text states YHWH reversed Balaam's original intent. This may support the above theory.

22:23 "donkey" She had more spiritual insight than the prophet!

I must confess that I am bothered by talking animals. I think the serpent in Genesis 3 is indwelt by a spiritual being (i.e., Satan), but here there is a conversation between Balaam and his donkey in which the text

does not show surprise. I wish I had more information from God and from the ANE! At this point in my life, the most helpful discussion about "myth" versus "history" is in G. B. Caird's *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, "part three: History, Myth and Eschatology," pp. 201-271. I hope it is also helpful for you.

The whole point of the incident is Balaam's lack of spiritual insight, though he is well known for it! This context side by side, gives Balaam a positive character and a negative character!

22:28 Notice YHWH opened the mouth of the donkey. See note at Num. 22:23.

22:30 "Have I ever been accustomed to do so to you" This phrase contains an intensified grammatical structure (i.e., an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a *Hiphil* PERFECT of the same root, BDB 698, KB 755).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:31-35

[31]Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground. [32]The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out as an adversary, because your way was contrary to me. [33]But the donkey saw me and turned aside from me these three times. If she had not turned aside from me, I would surely have killed you just now, and let her live." [34]Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back." [35]But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I tell you." So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak.

22:31 As the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey (v. 28), He now opens the eyes of Balaam (for a similar opening of eyes to the spiritual realm, see 2 Kings 6:15-17).

22:32

NASB	**"contrary to me"**
NKJV, NRSV	**"perverse before Me"**
TEV	**"you should not be making this journey"**
NJB	**"your road is blocked"**
JPSOA	**"for the errand is obnoxious"**
REB	**"you made straight for Me"**
LXX	**"your way is not pretty before me"**
Peshitta	**"you have directed your course contrary to Me"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 437, KB 438, *Qal* PERFECT) occurring only here and Job 16:11. You can see the confusion in the translations. The basic point seems to be that Balaam was acting out of his own will, not YHWH's (see notes at vv. 20 and 22).

22:34 Balaam responds to the angel in an appropriate way.

1. an acknowledgment of sin (for what, is not stated)
2. an acknowledgment of acting in ignorance about the angel's presence
3. an acknowledgment of a willingness to abort the trip

22:35 The angel speaks the same message as "God" of v. 20. This is confusing in the context of v. 12.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:36-40

[36]When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the Arnon border, at the extreme end of the border. [37]Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not

urgently send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really unable to honor you?" [38]So Balaam said to Balak, "Behold, I have come now to you! Am I able to speak anything at all? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I shall speak." [39]And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. [40]Balak sacrificed oxen and sheep, and sent *some* to Balaam and the leaders who were with him.

22:37-38 There are several examples of a Hebrew grammatical feature (i.e., INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and VERB of the same root) in this chapter.

1. Num. 22:17 – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB
2. Num. 22:30 – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a PERFECT VERB
3. Num. 22:37 – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and a PERFECT VERB ("Did I not urgently send to you?")
4. Num. 22:38 – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB ("Am I able to speak anything at all?")

Again, #4, to me, implies a positive word on Balaam's part. He is willing to follow God/YHWH's word (Num. 22:20,35; 23:5,12,16,26; 24:13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 22:41

[41]Then it came about in the morning that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the high places of Baal, and he saw from there a portion of the people.

22:41 "the high places of Baal" This shows Balak's spiritual orientation. *Ba'al* is the male Canaanite fertility god and *Ashterah* is the female fertility goddess. The high places are traditional sites of *Ba'al* worship, possibly because of the idea the mountains (or man-made platforms) were closer to heaven. See Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the ANE at Num. 21:28b and notes at Jdgs. 3:7 and Hos. 2:8; also see William Albright, *The Biblical Period From Abraham to Ezra*.

▣ Apparently to curse someone you had to see them. So Balak finds several different vantage points (here; Num. 23:13,27).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why was the king of Moab afraid of Israel?
2. Was Balaam a true prophet of YHWH?
3. What is divination" (v. 7)?
4. How are Num. 22:12 and 22:20 reconciled?
5. What is the implied irony of the donkey seeing the spiritual realm but Balaam doesn't?
6. How did the donkey speak?
7. Who is "the Angel of the Lord"?
8. Was Balak a worshiper of *Chemosh* (Num. 21:29) or *Ba'al* (Num. 22:41)? How were they alike?

NUMBERS 23

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Prophecies of Balaam	Balaam's First Prophecy (22:41-23:12)	The Four Oracles of Balaam (22:31-24:25)	Balaam's First Prophecy (22:41-23:12)	
	22:41-23:10	22:41-23:3	22:41-23:4	
23:1-3				Balaam's Prophecies
23:4-10 (7-10)		23:4-10		23:4-10 (7-10)
			23:5-6	
			23:7-10 (7-10)	
23:11-12	23:11-12	23:11-12	23:11	23:11-26
	Balaam's Second Prophecy		Balaam's Second Prophecy	
23:13-24	23:13-24	23:13-24	23:13-14	
			23:15	
(18b-24)	(18b) (19-20) (21-22) (23-24)	(18b-24)	23:16-24 (18-24)	(18b-24)
23:25-26	23:25-26	23:25-26	23:25	23:25-26
			23:26	
	Balaam's Third Prophecy (23:27-24:14)		Balaam's Third Prophecy (23:27-24:13)	
23:27-30	23:27-30	23:27-24:9	23:27-24:9	23:27-30

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Numbers 22-24 forms a literary unit (see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 436-437).

B. In this literary unit there are several oracles/poems/prophecies by Balaam.
   1. Num. 23:7-10
   2. Num. 23:18-24
   3. Num. 24:3-9
   4. Num. 24:15-19
   5. Num. 24:20
   6. Num. 24:21-22
   7. Num. 24:23-24

C. These oracles are now seen by scholarship as some of the oldest poetry in the Bible (i.e. Exodus 15).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:1-3

[1]Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here." [2]Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar. [3]Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering, and I will go; perhaps the LORD will come to meet me, and whatever He shows me I will tell you." So he went to a bare hill.

23:1 "seven altars" There are similar accounts recorded in Babylonian cuneiform tablets. The number seven is significant in the ANE. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #4, at Num. 11:16-18.

▣ **"prepare"** This VERB (BDB 465, KB 464, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE) denotes some sacrificial procedures.

1. ritual slaughter
2. removal of internal organs (such as the liver, possibly for divination purposes)
3. ritual dissection for burning
4. in v. 4 a SYNONYM is used (BDB 748, KB 828, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT with *waw*), which basically means "arrange in rows." It refers to the altars, not parts of the animals.

This would have been a big job that took several hours and several persons. See Special Topic: Sacrifices in Mesopotamia and Israel and Their Significance.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SACRIFICIAL SYSTEMS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

(These notes are part of my OT Survey notes online. Also note the chart in NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1020-1021.)

I. Ritual laws in Mesopotamia
   A. Sacrifice was primarily a meal offered to a god. The altar was the table of the god where the meal was placed. Beside the altar was the incense brazier which was to attract the god's attention. There was no ritual implication in the blood. The sword bearer cut the throat of the animal. The food was shared between the gods, the priest-king, and the attendants. The offerer received nothing.
   B. There was no expiatory sacrifice.
   C. Sickness or pain was punishment from the gods. An animal was brought and destroyed; this acted as a substitute for the offerer.
   D. Israel's ritual was different and distinct. It seems to have originated in a person giving back to God part of the results of his labor for necessary food (cf. Gen. 4:1-4; 8:20-22).

II. Ritual laws in Canaan (very similar to Israel's)
   A. Sources
      1. biblical accounts
      2. Phoenician literature
      3. Ras Shamra Tablets from Ugarit concerning Canaanite deities and mythology from about 1400 B.C.
   B. Israel's and Canaan's sacrifices are very much alike. However, there is no emphasis placed on the blood of the victim in Canaanite sacrifices.

III. Ritual Laws in Egypt
   A. Sacrifices were offered but not emphasized.
   B. The sacrifice was not important but the attitude of the sacrificer was.

C. Sacrifices were made to stop the wrath of the gods.

D. The offerer hoped for deliverance or forgiveness.

IV. Israel's Sacrificial System – Israel's sacrifices were closer to Canaan's although not necessarily related to them at all.

A. Descriptive Phrases

1. Sacrifice was a spontaneous expression of mankind's need for God.
2. The OT laws which regulate sacrifice cannot be said to initiate sacrifice (cf. Gen. 7:8; 8:20).
3. Sacrifice was an offering (animal or vegetable).
4. Must be an offering that was wholly or partially destroyed upon an altar in homage to God.
5. The altar was the place of sacrifice and symbolized the divine presence.
6. Sacrifice was an act of external worship (a prayer which was acted out).
7. The definition of sacrifice is "acted prayers" or "ritualized prayers." The significance of ritual and our cultural bias against it is revealed in Gordon J. Wenham (Tyndale, *Numbers*, p. 25-39). Leviticus and Numbers both contain large amounts of this type of material, which shows its importance to Moses and Israel.

B. Sacrifice Involved

1. Gifts to God
   a. involve acknowledgment that all of the earth is the Lord's
   b. all that a person has, he owes to God
   c. therefore, it is right that people bring tribute to God
   d. it was a special kind of tribute or gift. It was something that the man needed to sustain his own existence. It was more than just giving something, it was something he needed. It was giving a part of himself to God.
   e. by destroying the gift it cannot be reclaimed
   f. a burnt offering becomes invisible and goes up to God's realm
   g. earlier altars were erected in places where God appeared. The altar came to be looked upon as a holy place, therefore, the offering was brought there.
2. Expressing consecration of one's entire life to God
   a. The burnt offering was one of three voluntary sacrifices.
   b. The entire animal was burnt to express to God deep-felt homage.
   c. This was a very expressive gift to God.
3. Fellowship with God
   a. communion aspect of sacrifice
   b. an example would be the peace offering which symbolized God and man in fellowship
   c. sacrifice was made to obtain or regain this fellowship
4. Expiation of sin
   a. when man sinned he had to ask God to restore the relationship (covenant) which man had broken
   b. there was no communal meal with the sin offering because of the broken relationship
   c. the significance of blood
      (1) placed on altar for man
      (1) placed on veil for priest
      (2) placed on mercy seat for High Priest and the nation (Leviticus 16)

d. there were two types of sin offerings. The second is called the guilt offering or trespass offering. In it the offender was to restore to his fellow Israelite that which was taken or damaged, along with the animal sacrifice.

e. there was no sacrifice for premeditated or intentional sin, Lev. 4:2, 22, 27; 5:15-18; 22:14

V. Procedures from Leviticus for the Different Sacrifices

A. Leviticus 1, burnt offering

1. Introductory Formula, "The Lord spoke to Moses," Lev. 1:1-2; 4:1; 5:14; 6:1,19; 7:22,28
   a. From the herd or flock
   b. "When," Lev. 1:2, shows that this was not mandatory but voluntary
2. Burnt Offering, Lev. 1:3-17 (6:8-13)
   a. Altar
      (1) the brazen altar, also called altar of burnt offering, altar by door of Tabernacle, or altar of shittim wood, covered with bronze (cf. Exodus 27)
      (2) this distinguished it from the incense altar (golden altar) in the Holy Place (cf. Exodus 30)
      (3) coals from brazen altar were taken to incense altar
      (4) brazen altar was right in the middle of the entrance of the Tabernacle
      (5) altar had horns which were its most sacred part; the blood was applied to the horns (cf. Exod. 30:10)
      (6) The horns were possibly for:
         (a) symbol of hands to hold up the offering
         (b) symbol of strength or prevailing power (Deut. 33:17; 2 Sam. 22:3.)
         (c) later, anyone who grabbed the horns of the altar was safe until his case was decided by the court (1 Kgs. 1:50-51; 2:28)
   b. The Offering
      (1) bullock without blemish which was mentioned first because of its importance and cost, Lev. 1:3
      (2) male goat or sheep, Lev. 1:10
      (3) turtle doves or young pigeons, Lev. 1:14 (provision for the poor)
   c. Place of Burnt Offering was at the door of the Tent of Meeting
   d. Laying on of the Hands – this was only for the bulls, not for goats, sheep or birds, Lev. 1:4
      (1) the offerer did this himself (not the priest)
      (2) many feel it was a symbolic action of the transferring of guilt
      (3) some believe it meant that
         (a) this animal comes from this particular individual
         (b) the sacrifice was to be presented in the offerer's name
         (c) the fruit of this sacrifice belongs to the one who placed his hands on the animal
   e. Slaughtering
      (1) bull – "before the Lord" by the man making the sacrifice. The offerer had to kill, skin, and cut up the animal. The priest's role (except in case of public sacrifices) began when the man brought the animal to the altar.

(2) sheep or goat, Lev. 1:11 – "on north side of altar before the Lord." This designated a specific place for these lesser animals.

(3) bird – The priest killed and offered this sacrifice. The offerer had to remove the bird's crop.

f. Handling of the Blood

(1) animals

(a) The priest threw blood against the altar, and sprinkled it round about the altar.

(b) The life of the animal was in the blood (cf. Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:11). Life already belonged to God, therefore, the blood represented no part of the gift of the man.

(c) The bird's blood was drained on the side of the altar and not consumed in fire.

g. Handling of the Flesh

(1) bull, Lev. 1:6

(a) The offerer skinned the offering; the priest could keep the skin (cf. Lev. 7:8)

(b) The offerer cut it into pieces

(c) The priest placed the offering on the altar in an arrangement as it was when alive

(d) The legs and entrails were washed with water from the laver

(e) The priest burned the whole animal on altar

3. Occasion of Burnt Offerings

a. Feast of Tabernacles, Booths

b. Day of Atonement

c. Feast of Weeks, First Fruits, or Pentecost

d. Feast of Trumpets

e. Wave Sheaf (Leviticus 23)

f. Feast of Unleavened Bread, Passover

g. Beginning of months, New Moon

h. Sabbath

4. Significance of Burnt Offering

a. A gift to God

b. Seen as the most valuable kind of sacrifice

c. It seems to deal with the concept of sin in general or thanksgiving

d. Most perfect representation of sacrificial idea

e. Symbolic offering of one's life

f. Represents complete consecration of the life of an individual to the service of God

g. Graded value of offering

(1) bull

(2) sheep – goat

(3) birds

h. This shows that anyone conscious of spiritual need could approach God. God made provision for all men.

5. Special Instructions for Priest, Lev. 6:8-12

a. Burnt offering remained all night on hearth of the altar

b. Fire was to be kept burning continually under a burnt offering
c. Instructions involving the Priest's dress
d. Instructions involving the removal of the ashes

B. Leviticus 2:1-16 (6:14-23), grain offering
1. Introduction
a. This chapter deals with the grain offering
b. Grain offering was from the root meaning "gift." It became a technical term for non-animal, or vegetable gifts.
c. After the Exile the grain offering appears as a supplement to the burnt offering and peace offering and the rabbis say it could be offered alone by the very poor.
d. Salt covenant was also mentioned in Num. 18:19 and 2 Chr. 13:5. Salt was the opposite of leaven. It was used as a symbol of the covenant of God because it was non-corruptible and lasting.
2. The Grain Offering involved one's labor being given to God.
a. It was a gift to God from the daily food of the people.
b. It was generally a supplement (especially in post-exile days) to the burnt or peace offering.
c. Sacrifice was God's provision for the priest. Only a small part was burnt as a memorial of the whole.
d. The word "memorial" describes the offered portion, or that part which brings the whole before the Lord.
e. New Testament concept of the Lord's Supper as "memorial" expresses this Old Testament concept.
f. The distinction between the terms "holy" and "most holy" are:
(1) "holy" – priest and family could eat it at any clean place
(2) "most holy" – could only be eaten by the priests and in the court of the Tent of Meeting
3. Types
a. Unbaked flour (for the rich), Lev. 2:1-3
b. Baked loaves or cake, Lev. 2:4-11
c. Green ears of corn or wheat (for the poor), Lev. 2:12-16
(1) Unbaked flour was the highest offering. It was the very best of wheat flour.
(2) Baked cakes
(a) oil was an ingredient
(b) prepared in oven, Lev. 2:4.
(c) on a baking iron, Lev. 2:5.
(d) in an earthen frying pan, Lev. 2:7.
3. Green ears of corn or wheat
(a) must be parched
(b) broken into coarse grits
(c) arranged like a meal set before guests.
4. Ingredients
a. Fine flour corresponded to an animal without blemish

b. Oil was a symbol of prosperity and, therefore, a symbol of God's presence
(1) used for food, sacrificing, medicine, and anointing
(2) possibly use of oil was to replace offering of oil
c. Frankincense was from India or Arabia
(1) seen as a very pure thing with a wonderful fragrance
(2) symbolized prayer and praise
d. Salt
(1) life-giving as well as preserving qualities
(2) possibly more for table fellowship than for preserving
e. Elements excluded
(1) Leaven excluded, Lev. 2:11
(a) possibly because of fermentation
(b) leaven associated with corruption
(c) could be offered with first fruits and to priest
(2) Honey excluded
(a) syrup was from fruit not honey bee
(b) possibly because of its use in Canaanite ritual

5. Ritual of Offering
a. It was brought to the priest. He handled the whole ceremony (Lev. 2:2, 9,16).
b. Part of the offering was to be eaten by priest in the sanctuary. It was most holy.

6. Significance
a. Present from inferior to superior
b. Burning of a portion of it represented the consecration of a portion of one's labor to God
c. Apparent meaning
(1) Burnt offering – consecration of one's life
(2) Meal offering – dedication of one's daily labor

7. Special Instructions for Grain Offering, Lev. 6:14-23
a. Offering in front of altar
b. Labor offered the gift to God, but in reality it supported the priesthood

C. Leviticus 3:1-17 (7:13-34), Peace Offering
1. Introduction
a. Why
(1) communion offering
(2) covenant sacrifice
(3) corporate offering
(4) concluding sacrifice
b. It expressed thankfulness to God because of fellowship with God, family, and friends.
c. It was usually the final act in a series of sacrifices in which reconciliation had been established.
d. The burnt offering expressed the costliness of obedience, while the peace offering expressed the joy and happiness of fellowship with God.
e. Male or female but without blemish

f. Varieties of offering
(1) from herd; male or female
(2) the distinction that was made between the sheep and the goat was because of the fat of the tail of the sheep
(a) lamb of flock – male or female
(b) goat of flock – male or female

2. Ritual
a. Presentation of offering
(1) Laid hands on offering
(2) Killed it at door of the Tent of meeting
(3) Identification of sacrifice was the same as the burnt offering
(4) Sprinkling of blood around altar
(5) Burning of choice parts on altar to God
(a) fat (sheep-fatty tail) symbolized prosperity
(b) kidneys, lobe of liver symbolized the seat of the will and emotions
(c) fatty portions placed on offerer's burnt offering or on morning lamb offering
b. Thanksgiving offering included (Lev. 7:11-14)
(1) unleavened cake mixed with oil
(2) unleavened wafers spread with oil
(3) fine flour mixed with oil

3. Priest's Portion, Lev. 7:28-34
a. Breast belonged to priest as a wave offering
b. Waving involves the placing of the offering upon the offerer's hands and the priest's hands. It showed the offering offered by the offerer to God, and then its reception back by the priest.
c. Right thigh belonged to officiating priest
d. Heave offering was lifted to God and received back by the priest

4. Offerer's Portion, Lev. 7:15-18
a. A Thanksgiving Offering shall be eaten on day of giving, Lev. 7:15
b. A Votive (vow) or Freewill Offering shall be eaten on day of offering or on the next day, Lev. 7:16
c. This portion was all that was not given to God and by God to the priest
d. God symbolically eats with the offerer and his family and friends in this offering
e. This offering stresses that fellowship relationships have been restored

D. Leviticus 4:1-5:13 (6:24-30), sin offering
1. Introduction
a. This is the first offering in which atonement was the dominant element.
b. This sacrifice re-establishes the covenant between man and God. It restores fellowship.
c. This offering involves:
(1) Sins of ignorance
(2) Sins of inadvertence

(3) Sins of passion
(4) Sins of omission
(5) It did not atone for sins committed intentionally in haughty rebellion against God. There was no sacrifice for intentional, high handed, premeditated sin (cf. Num. 15:27-31).

2. Meaning
   a. This offering expiated the guilt and punishment for sins.
   b. This involved grace on God's part and faith on man's part.
   c. No sacrifice achieves anything by mere ritual offering. It was the offerer's faith behind the act.
   d. Yet, sacrifice was more than the mere expression of the offerer. It did something for him. It re-established the relationship with God.
   e. Ritual was a God-given means of restitution, not a substitute for personal faith.
   f. God hates any religious action without accompanying faith, Isa. 1:10-20; Amos 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8.

3. Ritual
   a. For the High Priest, Lev. 4:3-12
      (1) High priest – anointed priest
         (a) Sin, in leading people wrongly
         (b) Sin, in a personal nature
         (c) The high priest, being the spiritual representative of the community; if he sins, all sinned in him. This was the Jewish understanding of corporality (cf. Joshua 7; Romans 5:12ff).
      (2) Procedures
         (a) The High Priest brought a young bullock without blemish to altar
         (b) He laid hands on its head
         (c) The High Priest slaughtered animal
         (d) The High Priest sprinkled the blood before the veil 7 times
            i. this cleansed the Tabernacle
            ii symbolically opened the way to God
            iii. blood placed on horns of incense altar
            iv. remaining blood poured out at base of altar of burnt offering
         (e) He placed all the fat on the altar to be burned
         (f) All the rest of the animal will be taken outside the camp to a clean place, Lev. 4:12, where the ashes are poured out from altar. There, the remainder of the animal is burned.
   b. For the Nation, Lev. 4:13-21
      (1) They sinned when commands of the law were not met, Lev. 4:13-21
      (2) Procedures
         (a) The Elders brought a young bullock without blemish to altar
         (b) The Elders laid hands on head
         (c) The Elders slaughtered the animal

(d) The High Priest sprinkled the blood before veil 7 times
i. this cleansed Tabernacle
ii. symbolically opened the way to God
iii. blood placed on horns of incense altar
iv. rest poured out at base of altar of sacrifice
(e) All of it offered on the altar
(f) All the rest of the animal was taken outside the camp to a clean place, Lev. 4:12, where the ashes were poured out from the altar. There the remainder of the animal was burned.

c. For leader, Lev. 4:22-26
(1) Leader (ruler), Lev. 4:22-26
(a) Leader of tribe
(b) Responsible person in community
(c) Elder
(2) Procedures
(a) The leader brought a male goat (old, shaggy goat) to altar.
(b) The leader laid hands on its head.
(c) The leader slaughtered the animal.
(d) A High Priest placed blood on horns of altar of burnt offering-the rest of blood poured out at base of altar of sacrifice.
(e) All fat is burned on the altar.
(f) Priests ate the rest of the flesh.

d. For individual, Lev. 4:27-35
(1) For individual – when he learned he had sinned he was to make this offering
(2) Procedures
(a) The individual brought a female goat or female lamb.
(b) The individual laid hands on its head.
(c) The individual slaughtered the animal.
(d) A priest placed blood on horns of altar of sacrifice—rest poured out at base of altar.
(e) All fat placed on altar and burned.
(f) Priests ate the rest of the flesh.

e. Special cases involving the sin offering, Lev. 5:1-13 (These seem to involve intentional sin against a covenant partner)
(1) If a witness doesn't come forward and testify (failure to give information), Lev. 5:1
(2) Touching unclean animal, Lev. 5:2
(3) Touching unclean human, Lev. 5:3
(4) Speaking thoughtlessly with an oath, Lev. 5:4
(5) Offering for the above sins:
(a) Female goat or sheep
(b) Two turtledoves or two pigeons
(c) 1/10 ephah of fine flour

f. Sin offering ritual, Lev. 6:24-30
(1) Priest could eat what was left.
(2) If blood got on clothes, clothes must be washed.
(3) If blood got on earthen vessel, vessel was broken.
(4) If blood got on brass vessel, vessel was washed.
(5) If burnt offering's blood was brought into Holy Place, then the flesh must be burnt and not eaten by priest.

g. Significance of the sin offering
(1) There is no offering for premeditated sin—only for inadvertent sin or sins of ignorance, Lev. 5:15, 18.
(2) What does forgiveness involve:
(a) Man's part is faith
(b) God's part is mercy

E. Leviticus 5:14-19, guilt or trespass offering

1. Introduction
a. While the Sin Offering dealt with sin committed, the Guilt Offering had to do with the damage that was done to a covenant partner and what restitution was possible.
b. The sin and trespass offerings were very similar.
c. The rights of the individual were expressed in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5).
(1) home
(2) accumulation of good
(3) life
d. This offering emphasizes the harm done to a brother in sinning, and the restitution of the cost of that which was damaged plus 1/5 more.

2. Sins Requiring an Offering
a. Against God or that which belongs to Him
(1) first fruits
(2) firstborn, Lev. 5:14-16
(3) tithe
(4) offering given incorrectly
(5) gifts of inferior value
b. "If a person sins and does any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty, and shall bear his punishment."

F. Ancient sacrifices were offered to
1. appease an angry deity
2. feed a deity
3. communicate with a deity
4. praise a deity
5. foster a sense of forgiveness or reconciliation

▣ **"bulls. . .rams"** This was an expensive offering. Balak repeats it three times (vv. 1,14,29) to try to influence God to curse Israel.

Possibly parts of the animals were used in the divination process (i.e., the livers; see NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 945-950).

23:3 "stand beside your burnt offering" This IMPERATIVE (BDB 426, KB 427) is repeated in v. 15 and implied in v. 30. Apparently it was a way of identifying Balak and his request with the sacrifices (similar in Israel to laying one's hands on the head of a sacrifice), cf. Num. 23:6.

▣ **"perhaps the LORD will come to me"** This was not a dream (Num. 22:8,19). The "bare hill" may refer to a fertility worship site.

▣ **"LORD"** Throughout this episode with Balaam, there are several names for Deity used. See full note at Num. 22:8.

▣ **"a bare hill"** This place may be contextually linked to "the high places of *Ba'al*" in Num. 22:41. Fertility worship was practiced at these "high places" (cf. Deut. 12:2; Jer. 2:20; 3:2; 17:2).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:4-10

[4]Now God met Balaam, and he said to Him, "I have set up the seven altars, and I have offered up a bull and a ram on each altar." [5]Then the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and you shall speak thus." [6]So he returned to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, he and all the leaders of Moab. [7]He took up his discourse and said,

"From Aram Balak has brought me,
Moab's king from the mountains of the East,
'Come curse Jacob for me,
And come, denounce Israel!'
[8]"How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?
And how can I denounce whom the LORD has not denounced?
[9]"As I see him from the top of the rocks,
And I look at him from the hills;
Behold, a people *who* dwells apart,
And will not be reckoned among the nations.
[10]"Who can count the dust of Jacob,
Or number the fourth part of Israel?
Let me die the death of the upright,
And let my end be like his!"

23:5 This implies

1. Balaam was a prophet of YHWH
2. YHWH is using a Syrian diviner to make His message known (like the witch of Endor, cf. 1 Samuel 28)

For me, option #1 seems best in the context of Numbers 22.

23:7

NASB	**"discourse"**
NKJV, NRSV, REB	**"oracle"**
TEV	**"prophecy"**
NJB	**"poem"**

JPSOA **"theme"**
LXX, Peshitta **"parable"**

This is the Hebrew *mashall* (BDB 605 II, KB 648 I; NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 1134-1136), which means "a proverb," "a parable," "a riddle," or "a wise saying." Here, it is a prophetic message (cf. Num. 24:3,15, 20,21,23; Isa. 14:4; Mic. 2:4; Hab. 2:6).

▣ **"Aram"** This would be another name for Syria. The exact site is given in Num. 22:5.

▣ These last two poetic lines of v. 7 have four IMPERATIVES (very emphatic) which state Balak's purpose in summoning Balaam.

Notice YHWH's people go by the corporate title of

1. Jacob
2. Israel

See Special Topics: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Num. 11:12b and Hebrew Poetry at Num. 21:18.

23:8-10 Balaam expresses YHWH's unique covenant relationship with the descendants of Abraham.

1. how can I curse whom God has not cursed? (cf. Gen. 12:1-3)
2. synonymous parallel in Num. 23:8b
3. a people *who* dwells apart, Num. 23:9c (cf. Exod. 19:5-6)
4. a synonymous parallel in Num. 23:9d
5. Israel's phenomenal numerical growth in Egypt under YHWH's blessing, Num. 23:10 (i.e., direct fulfillment of YHWH's promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:2; 13:16)

23:10 "dust" This is one of three metaphors used to describe Abraham's many descendants.

1. dust – Gen. 13:16; 28:14; here
2. stars – Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4
3. sand – Gen. 22:17; 32:12; Exod. 32:13

It is this explosive growth of Israel's population that terrified

1. Pharaoh
2. Balak
3. the native tribes of Canaan

▣

NASB, Peshitta **"the fourth part"**
NKJV (footnote), NRSV
JPSOA **"dust cloud"**
NJB **"the cloud"**
REB **"the myriads"**
LXX **"divisions"**

The BDB 917 defines this root as "fourth part" (cf. 2 Kgs. 6:25). KB lists the option (1181 II) as "dust cloud" (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 1043), which makes a better parallel with "dust" in the previous line of poetry.

▣ The last two poetic lines are JUSSIVES. Balaam requests that YHWH let him

1. die an upright person (by not cursing YHWH's special covenant people)
2. end his life in the blessing of YHWH as Israel is in the blessing of YHWH

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:11-12

[11]Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have actually blessed them!" [12]He replied, "Must I not be careful to speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?"

23:11-12 These verses express Balak's shock at Balaam's prophecy. Instead of "cursing" them he actually blesses them (a PERFECT VERB and an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE of the same root, BDB 138, KB 159, *Piel*; usually the INFINITIVE comes first and is in the IMPERFECT stem).

Balaam had told Balak several times that he must speak exactly what YHWH revealed to him (cf. Num. 22:20,35; 23:5,16,26; 24:13).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:13-24

[13]Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place from where you may see them, although you will only see the extreme end of them and will not see all of them; and curse them for me from there." [14]So he took him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar. [15]And he said to Balak, "Stand here beside your burnt offering while I myself meet *the LORD* over there." [16]Then the LORD met Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." [17]He came to him, and behold, he was standing beside his burnt offering, and the leaders of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD spoken?" [18]Then he took up his discourse and said,

"Arise, O Balak, and hear;
Give ear to me, O son of Zippor!
[19]God is not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent;
Has He said, and will He not do it?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
[20]Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
When He has blessed, then I cannot revoke it.
[21]He has not observed misfortune in Jacob;
Nor has He seen trouble in Israel;
The Lord his God is with him,
And the shout of a king is among them.
[22]God brings them out of Egypt,
He is for them like the horns of the wild ox.
[23]For there is no omen against Jacob,
Nor is there any divination against Israel;
At the proper time it shall be said to Jacob
And to Israel, what God has done!
[24]Behold, a people rises like a lioness,
And as a lion it lifts itself;
It will not lie down until it devours the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain."

23:13 It seems that Balak thought a different location would change the effectiveness of

1. his offerings
2. Balaam's intercession

He tried three different locations where he could see part of the camp of Israel in the plains of Moab (the VERB, "see," BDB 906, KB 1157, is used three times in v. 13).

23:14

NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV	**"Zophim"**
NJB	**"lookouts'"**
JPSOA (footnote)	**"lookout point"**
REB	**"watchers"**
LXX	**"look-out place"**
Peshitta	**"watchmen"**

In the MT this is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE (BDB 859 I, KB 1044 I), which means "look out," "spy," or "keep watch."

The other part of the NOUN CONSTRUCT is (BDB 961)

1. field, open country
2. highland (new lexical suggestion based on Num. 23:14; Jdgs. 5:18; 2 Sam. 1:21; Ps. 50:11; Jer. 13:27; 17:3; 18:14)

Here, a high point on Mt. Pisgah/Nebo, where they could see s significant portion of the camp of Israel.

23:18 There are three IMPERATIVES by God directed at Balak.

1. arise – BDB 877, KB 1086, *Qal* (i.e., imagery for "listen clearly")
2. hear – BDB 1033, KB 1570, *Qal*
3. give ear – BDB 24, KB 27, *Hiphil*

Balak was <u>not</u> listening. He thought he could change God's mind to his will (cf. Num. 23:19).

23:19 This is a theological affirmation that God's will cannot be altered (cf. 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 40:8; 55:11; Jer. 4:28). There are times when God does "repent" or "change His mind" in response to His covenant people's repentance and prayer (cf. Exod. 32:14; 2 Sam. 24:16; Ps. 106:45; Jer. 18:7-8; 26:13,19), but not a pagan king. YHWH also sometimes changes His mind even towards pagans (cf. Jon. 3:10; 4:2). See Special Topics: Intercessory Prayer at Num. 11:2 and Characteristics of Israel's God (OT) at Num. 11:18. Also see *Hard Sayings of the Bible,* pp. 333-334, and Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 80-81.

▣ **"man. . .son of man"** Notice the parallelism, like Ps. 8:14. "Son of Man" is a Hebrew idiom for humanity (i.e., Ezek. 2:1). See Special Topic: Son of Man.

SPECIAL TOPIC: SON OF MAN (taken from Dr. Utley's notes on Daniel 7:13)

The Aramaic phrase ("ben *enosh*," BDB 1085 CONSTRUCT 1081) "son of man" is different from the similar Hebrew phrase ("ben *adam*") found in Psalms and Ezekiel. Both phrases are used in parallel in Job 25:6; Ps. 8:4; 90:3; 144:3; Isa. 13:12. This obviously refers to the Messiah and it links His humanity (cf. Dan. 8:17; Job 25:6; Ps. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1 [and many more in Ezekiel]), which is the meaning of the Aramaic and Hebrew phrases, "son of man," with His Deity because the clouds are the transportation of deity (cf. Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Rev. 1:7; 14:14).

Jesus uses the phrase to refer to Himself in the NT. It was not used of the Messiah in rabbinical Judaism. It had no exclusivistic, nationalistic, militaristic connotations. It uniquely describes the Messiah as fully human and fully God (cf. 1 John 4:1-3). Daniel's usage is the first which focuses on its divine aspect!

Jesus used the phrase for Himself in three senses.

1. His suffering and death (e.g. Mark 8:31; 10:45; 14:21; Luke 9:22,44)

2. His coming as Judge (e.g. Matt. 16:27; 25:31; John 5:27)
3. His coming in glory to set up His kingdom (e.g. Matt. 16:28; 19:28; Mark 13:26-27; 14:62)

From *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1657 (also see George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 136-139), the later Jewish tradition about this text in Daniel is listed.

1. This context is Messianic (cf. I Enoch 46:1; 48:10; 4 Ezra [2 Esdras] chapter 13; b. Sanh. 98a)
2. All predictions in this context are already fulfilled (cf. b. Sanh. 97b)
3. This context does not refer to the end-time (cf. Gen. Rab. 98:2)
4. This context represents Israel (cf. Ibn Ezra and Rashi)

23:22 This verse begins with a *Hiphil* PRESENT ACTIVE PARTICIPLE. YHWH is still in the process of the full deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The conquest is surely a major part of the divine resettlement program.

23:21-24 This part of the poem lists several things YHWH has done/will not do to Israel.

1. YHWH has sent a blessing that cannot be revoked, Num. 23:20.
2. YHWH has seen Israel's problems (cf. Exod. 3:9) but has not counted their sin against them, Num. 23:21a,b.
3. YHWH is uniquely with them, Num. 23:21c.
4. YHWH has established Himself as their King (Exod. 15:18; Deut. 33:5; 1 Sam. 8:7; 12:12; 1 Kgs. 22:19; Isa. 6:5), Num. 23:21d.
5. YHWH brought them out of Egypt with a strong hand (i.e., imagery of the horns of a wild ox), Num. 23:22.
6. YHWH cannot be affected by an "omen" or "divination." He is for Israel, Num. 23:23; see Special Topic: Diviner at Num. 22:7b.
7. Israel will be powerful, like a young lioness, Num. 23:24 (i.e., the lioness was the hunter, protector, and provider of the pride).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:25-26

[25]Then Balak said to Balaam, "Do not curse them at all nor bless them at all!" [26]But Balaam replied to Balak, "Did I not tell you, 'Whatever the LORD speaks, that I must do'?"

23:25 This verse contains two emphatic grammatical features.

1. do not curse them at all – INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 866, KB 1060
2. bless them at all – same emphatic construction as #1 but different root, BDB 138, KB 159

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 23:27-30

[27]Then Balak said to Balaam, "Please come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will be agreeable with God that you curse them for me from there." [28]So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor which overlooks the wasteland. [29]Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me here." [30]Balak did just as Balaam had said, and offered up a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why does Balak move the location of the sacrifices three times?
2. How are the sacrifices related to divination?
3. Why are the different names for Deity used in Numbers 22-23?
4. How is Israel characterized in Num. 23:9-10?
5. Does God ever change His mind?

NUMBERS 24

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Prophecy From Peor	Balaam's Third Prophecy (23:27-24:14)	The Four Oracles of Balaam (22:41-24:25)	Balaam's Third Prophecy (23:27-24:14)	Balaam's Prophecies (23:4-24:25)
24:1-9 (3-9)	24:1-9 (3-4) (5-7a) (7b) (8-9a) (9b)	24:1-9 (3b-9)	24:1-9 (3-9)	24:1-9 (3b-9)
24:10-14	24:10-14	24:10-14	24:10-11 24:12-13 Balaam's Final Prophecies	24:10-19
	Balaam's Fourth Prophecy		24:14-19	
24:15-19 (15-19)	24:15-19 (15-16) (17) (18-19)	24:15-19 (15-19)		(15b-19)
24:20	24:20 (20b)	24:20 (20b)	24:20 (20b)	24:20 (20b)
24:21-22	24:21-22	24:21-22 (21b) (22b)	24:21-24 (21b-24)	24:21-22 (21b-22)
24:23-24 (23b-24)	24:23-24 (23b-24)	24:23-24 (23b-24)		24:23-24 (23b)
24:25	24:25	24:25	24:25	24:25

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:1-9

[1]When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to seek omens but he set his face toward the wilderness. [2]And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him. [3]He took up his discourse and said,

"The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened;
[4]The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered,
[5]How fair are your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwellings, O Israel!
[6]Like valleys that stretch out,

Like gardens beside the river,
Like aloes planted by the Lord,
Like cedars beside the waters.
[7]Water will flow from his buckets,
And his seed *will be* by many waters,
And his king shall be higher than Agag,
And his kingdom shall be exalted.
[8]God brings him out of Egypt,
He is for him like the horns of the wild ox.
He will devour the nations *who are* his adversaries,
And will crush their bones in pieces,
And shatter *them* with his arrows.
[9]He couches, he lies down as a lion,
And as a lion, who dares rouse him?
Blessed is everyone who blesses you,
And cursed is everyone who curses you."

24:1
NASB, NRSV,
TEV, NJB,
JPSOA, LXX "omens"
NKJV "sorcery"
REB, Peshitta "divination"

The MT has a NOUN (BDB 638), meaning
1. divination, cf. Num. 23:23b
2. enchantment, Num. 23:23a

The VERB (BDB 638) means "observing signs" in Gen. 30:27 and probably 1 Kgs. 20:33. See Special Topic: Magic and *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 524-528.

It is difficult to know if Balaam is a true prophet or diviner. The text gives hints in both directions!

SPECIAL TOPIC: MAGIC

In ancient times there appear to have been several types of individuals and groups involved in different kinds of magic. Magic was a form of religious practice.

1. The first appearance of magic is found in the first written culture (i.e., Sumer) in its creation accounts.
   a. a chief deity, *Ea-Enki*, is called "Lord of Incantation" because he killed *Apsu* by the aid of a spell
   b. his son, *Marduk*, defeats *Tiamat* because of his father's magic spells and potions
   c. see E. Reiner, *Surpu: A Collection of Sumerian and Akkadian Incantations*
2. Magic was very prominent in Egypt involving *Thoth* and *Isis*. There was no distinction made between good and evil magic as in #1 and #3. usually it was connected to
   a. healings
   b. dream interpretation
   c. political activities

d. passage to the realm of death

3. Magic in Anatolia (Hittite culture) was similar to #1. There was good magic and evil magic. The first was supported and the second condemned. Often older women were used along with priests. It, like all ANE peoples, saw magic as a valid part of any military campaign.
4. There is a priestly caste from Medea involved in astrology called "Chaldeans" (cf. Dan. 1:20; 2:2,10,27; 4:7,9; 5:11; Matt. 2:1,7,16). Herodotus calls them "Medean priests." They were involved in foretelling and controlling future events based on the movement and configuration of astral gods (i.e., planets, stars, constellations, comets).
5. There is very little surviving literature about the magic of Canaan (i.e., Ugaritic). Obviously *El* had great power and healed a Ugarit King by magic (see "The Legend of King Keret," ANET. 148b).
6. Most magical groups were made up of persons who claimed to be able to manipulate the supernatural or natural forces of nature (cf. Gen. 41:8,24; Exod. 7:11,22; 8:7,19; 9:11). Often these forces (or gods) were seen to be in conflict with humanity and by taking the side of this force or that force the possessor of the knowledge could control the forces for personal gain (cf. the magical papyri of the third and fourth centuries A.D.). These individuals would:
   a. foretell future events
   b. control future events
   c. interpret future events and dreams
   d. curse or protect other individuals, cities, nations, armies, etc.
7. Magicians, as in Acts 8:9,11, claimed to be able to manipulate the impersonal forces of nature or the personal (demonic) forces to perform their will. This often involved magical rites and incantation.

   "True" magicians often attacked other magicians who did not perform the rites and liturgies correctly. These were called charlatans or deceivers (cf. Acts 13:6,8; 19:13).
8. The power of the gospel is seen in Paul's ministry in Ephesus where former magicians converted to faith in Christ, and burned their expensive magic books (i.e., how to properly perform incantations, rites and liturgies, cf. Acts 19:19) publicly instead of selling them.
9. For further reading
   a. Susan Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil*, Fortress Press, 1989
   b. Merrill Unger, *Biblical Demonology*, Scripture Press, 1967
   c. Hendrik Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers,* Herald Press, 1977
   d. Waller Wink, *Naming the Powers,* Fortress Press, 1984
   e. Clinton Arnold, *Three Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare*, Baker, 1997
10. All of these magic, ocultic practices are an abomination to YHWH and forbidden to His people (see notes on Deut. 18:10-14, online).

▣ **"but he set his face toward the wilderness"** This is an idiom meaning "he looked at the camp of Israel" (cf. Num. 23:28; 24:2).

24:2 "the Spirit of God came upon him" This phrase is often associated with ecstatic actions or trances in the OT (cf. Num. 11:26; 1 Sam. 10:6; 1 Kgs. 22:10-22). See Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17.

In the OT the "Spirit" is an impersonal influence that facilitates YHWH's will in the world. The full personality of the Spirit is not clearly revealed until the NT (i.e., progressive revelation).

Please see the following Special Topics.

1. The Personhood of the Spirit

2. Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17
3. The Trinity

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE PERSONHOOD OF THE SPIRIT

In the OT "the Spirit of God" (i.e., *ruach*) was a force which accomplished YHWH's purpose, but there is little hint that it was personal (i.e., OT monotheism, see Special Topic: Monotheism). However, in the NT the full personality and personhood of the Spirit is revealed:

1. He can be blasphemed (cf. Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29)
2. He teaches (cf. Luke 12:12; John 14:26)
3. He bears witness (cf. John 15:26)
4. He convicts, guides (cf. John 16:7-15)
5. He is called "who" (i.e., *hos*) (cf. Eph. 1:14)
6. He can be grieved (cf. Eph. 4:30)
7. He can be quenched (cf. 1 Thess. 5:19)
8. He can be resisted (cf. Acts 7:51)
9. He advocates for believers (cf. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7)
10. He glorifies the son (cf. John 16:14)

Trinitarian texts (here are three of many, see Special Topic: Trinity) also speak of three persons.

1. Matt. 28:19
2. 2 Cor. 13:14
3. 1 Pet. 1:2

Although the Greek word spirit" (*pneuma*) is NEUTER when referring to the Spirit, the NT often uses MASCULINE DEMONSTRATIVE ADJECTIVE (cf. John 16:8,13-14).

The Spirit is linked to human activity.

1. Acts 15:28
2. Rom. 8:26
3. 1 Cor. 12:11
4. Eph. 4:30

At the very beginning of Acts the Spirit's role is emphasized (as in the Gospel of John). Pentecost was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. Jesus always had the Spirit. His baptism was not the beginning of the work of the Spirit, but a new chapter. The Spirit is the effective means of the Father's purpose for the restoration of all humans made in His image (see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan)!

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TRINITY

Notice the activity of all three Persons of the Trinity in unified contexts. The term "trinity," first coined by Tertullian, is not a biblical word, but the concept is pervasive.

A. the Gospels
    1. Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19 (and parallels)
    2. John 14:26

B. Acts – Acts 2:32-33, 38-39
C. Paul
    1. Rom. 1:4-5; 5:1,5; 8:1-4,8-10
    2. 1 Cor. 2:8-10; 12:4-6
    3. 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 13:14
    4. Gal. 4:4-6
    5. Eph. 1:3-14,17; 2:18; 3:14-17; 4:4-6
    6. 1 Thess. 1:2-5
    7. 2 Thess. 2:13
    8. Titus 3:4-6
D. Peter – 1 Pet. 1:2
E. Jude – vv. 20-21

A plurality in God is hinted at in the OT.

A. Use of PLURALS for God
    1. Name *Elohim* is PLURAL (see Special Topic: Names for Deity), but when used of God always has a SINGULAR VERB
    2. "Us" in Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7
B. "The Angel of the Lord" (see Special Topic: The angel of the LORD) was a visible representative of Deity
    1. Genesis 16:7-13; 22:11-15; 31:11,13; 48:15-16
    2. Exodus 3:2,4; 13:21; 14:19
    3. Judges 2:1; 6:22-23; 13:3-22
    4. Zechariah 3:1-2
C. God and His Spirit are separate, Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 104:30; Isa. 63:9-11; Ezek. 37:13-14
D. God (YHWH) and Messiah (*Adon*) are separate, Ps. 45:6-7; 110:1; Zech. 2:8-11; 10:9-12
E. The Messiah and the Spirit are separate, Zech. 12:10
F. All three are mentioned in Isa. 48:16; 61:1

The Deity of Jesus and the personality of the Spirit caused problems for the strict, monotheistic (see Special Topic: Monotheism), early believers.

1. Tertullian – subordinated the Son to the Father
2. Origen – subordinated the divine essence of the Son and the Spirit
3. Arius – denied Deity to the Son and Spirit
4. Monarchianism – believed in a successive, chronological manifestation of the one God as Father, then Son, and then Spirit

The Trinity is a historically developed formulation informed by the biblical material

1. the full Deity of Jesus, equal to the Father, was affirmed in A.D. 325 by the Council of Nicea (cf. John 1:1; Phil. 2:6; Titus 2:13)
2. the full personality and Deity of the Spirit equal to the Father and Son was affirmed in A.D. 381 by the Council of Constantinople

3. the doctrine of the Trinity is fully expressed in Augustine's work *De Trinitate*

There is truly mystery here. But the NT affirms one divine essence (monotheism) with three eternal personal manifestations (Father, Son, and Spirit).

24:3 "discourse. . .oracle" The first word (BDB 669) occurs several times in this literary unit (i.e., chapters 22-24, cf. Num. 23:7,18; 24:3,15,20,21,23). See full note at Num. 23:7.

The second term, "oracle" (BDB 610), refers to a divine revelation through a prophet in a trance or ecstatic state (cf. Num. 24:3,15).

▣ **"eye is opened"** This refers to spiritual insight. Balaam can now see, like his donkey!

24:3-4,15-16 Notice how Balaam characterizes himself.

1. the man whose eye is opened, Num. 24:3c, 15c (LXX, "who truly sees," JPSOA, "whose eye is true")
2. the man who hears the words of God, Num. 24:4a, 15b
3. the man who sees the vision of the Almighty, Num. 24:4b
4. the man falling down, yet having his eyes opened, Num. 24:4c, 16d (the LXX, "has fallen asleep," which would denote a dream)
5. the man who knows the knowledge of the Most High, Num. 24:16c

This is OT imagery for receiving and communicating God's message.

Notice the imagery.

1. Num. 24:1, literally, "it was good in the eyes of the YHWH"
2. Num. 24:2, Balaam saw all of Israel
3. Num. 24:3-4,15-16, Balaam claims to truly see the truth now!
4. Balaam looks at the different ethnic groups, Num. 24:17,20,21

24:4 "the Almighty" This is the Hebrew word, *Shaddai*, which is the patriarchal name for God (i.e., *El Shaddai*, cf. Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Exod. 6:3). Modern etymological study has shown that it may refer to a woman's (Arabic root) breast, thus meaning "the all sufficient One." See Special Topic: *El Shaddai* at Num. 1:6.

24:6 Notice the agricultural parallelism. The word translated "valleys" (BDB 636 I) can mean "palm tree" (BDB 636 II).

One wonders if this was meant to be an allusion to (1) the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2-3 or possibly (2) an eschatological reference (cf. Isa. 58:11). For sure the description in Num. 24:6-7 describes the Promised Land "flowing with milk and honey" (cf. Exod. 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3).

24:7 The LXX, Peshitta, and Targums have a different Hebrew exemplar,

"a person will come forth from his offspring,
and he shall rule over many nations,
and reign of him shall be beyond God
and his reign shall be increased"

▣ **"his king. . .his kingdom"** Although YHWH is said to be king in Num. 23:21, here it seems to refer to a future human king (notice vv. 8-9; cf. Gen. 17:5,16; 35:11; Ps. 89:18; both Saul and David defeated Agag or Amalekites).

It is possible that all of the VERBS in Num. 24:7 are JUSSIVE (one, for sure).

▣ **"Agag"** This (BDB 8) name might be a royal title, like "Hadad," "Pharaoh."

24:8 "the horns of the wild ox" This imagery was used of YHWH in Num. 23:22. Here, it is transferred to Israel but her power is their God's power!

▣

NASB, NKJV,
NATIONS, JPSOA,
REB, LXX,
Peshitta **"the nations"**
NJB **"corpses"**

The MT has "nations" (BDB 156) but JB and NJB see a related root "corpses" (BDB 156), which fits the imagery of the next four poetic lines.

▣ **"crush their bones"** This is imagery for destruction, using the eating habits of lions (cf. Isa. 38:13; Dan. 6:24).

24:9 This is another description of Israel (Num. 23:24).

▣ The concluding two lines of this verse reflect Gen. 12:3; 27:29. See Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Num. 11:12b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:10-14

[10]Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times! [11]Therefore, flee to your place now. I said I would honor you greatly, but behold, the LORD has held you back from honor." [12]Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying, [13]'Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the Lord, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak'? [14]And now, behold, I am going to my people; come, *and* I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the days to come."

24:10 "struck his hands together" This was a cultural idiom of disgust. See full note online at Lamentations 2:15 and Ezekiel 6:11.

24:11 "I said I would honor you greatly" This is another intensified form (i.e., INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 457, KB 455). Balak is really angry!

The term "honor" (i.e., *kabod;* see Special Topic: Glory in the OT at Num. 14:10b) refers to the promised large payment from Balak to Balaam. Balaam went home empty handed but did not disobey YHWH's mandate to speak only His word (i.e., bless Israel, cf. Num. 24:13).

24:12-13 This repeats Balaam's response to Balak's messenger from Num. 22:17-18. Balaam asserts several times that he can speak only what YHWH says to him (cf. Num. 22:38; 23:3,12; 24:13).

24:14 This verse is in response to Balak's command in v. 11 (i.e., "flee," BDB 137, KB 156, *Qal* IMPERATIVE).

Balaam responds with two commands of his own about Israel and the future.

1. come – BDB 229, KB 246, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. I will advise you – BDB 419, KB 421, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a COHORTATIVE sense

▣

NASB, NRSV, NJB, JPSOA, REB **"in the days to come"**
NKJV, Peshitta **"in the latter days"**
TEV **"in the future"**
LXX **"at the end of days"**

The MT has BDB 31 CONSTRUCT BDB 398, which could denote

1. the final days of a people's existence
   a. Amaleck – Num. 24:20
   b. Israel – Deut. 32:20,29
   c. the wicked of Israel – Ps. 73:17
   d. Israel – Jer. 12:4
2. the final or future days of history
   a. Num. 24:14
   b. Deut. 41:30 (??)
   c. Deut. 31:29
   d. note Isaiah 2 and Micah 4-5

This could imply Israel's near term (i.e., united monarchy, divided monarchy, exile) or far term (eschatology). Balaam sees a future but not an immediate one.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:15-19

[15]He took up his discourse and said,
"The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
[16]The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
And knows the knowledge of the Most High,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered.
[17]I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near;
A star shall come forth from Jacob,
A scepter shall rise from Israel,
And shall crush through the forehead of Moab,
And tear down all the sons of Sheth.
[18]Edom shall be a possession,
Seir, its enemies, also will be a possession,
While Israel performs valiantly.
[19]One from Jacob shall have dominion,
And will destroy the remnant from the city."

24:15-24 This describes the future of several nations.

1. Israel
   a. a star shall come forth from Jacob – Gen. 49:10 (PROPHETIC PERFECT)
   b. a scepter shall rise from Israel – Gen. 49:10 (both a. and b. are parallel, as well as Messianic)
   c. Israel shall be victorious in battle – Num. 24:18c; 19a
2. Moab – shall be crushed, Num. 24:17e,f (cf. Ps. 68:21)
3. Edom – shall be possessed, Num. 24:18a,b

4. Amalekites – shall be destroyed, Num. 24:20c
5. Kenites – shall be destroyed, Num. 24:21-24

This type of prediction of future national non-existence is a theological point of YHWH's love for Israel in Mal. 1:2-5.

24:16 Notice the three different titles/names for Deity.

1. *El*, Num. 24:16a; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, A. at Num. 1:1, cf. 24:4
2. "Most High" (literally *Elyon*), Num. 24:16b; see Special Topic: Names for Deity, B
3. the Almighty (lit. *Shaddai*); see Special Topic: The Almighty (*Shaddai*) at Num. 1:6, cf. 24:4

This is literary variety not meant to carry theological distinctions.

24:17 "Moab" See notes online at Gen. 19:30-38.

▣

NASB, REB,	
LXX, Peshitta	**"Sheth"**
NKJV, NEB	**"tumult"**
NRSV	**"Shethites"**
TEV, NJB,	
JPSOA	**"Seth"**
TEV (footnote)	**"who are proud and violent"**

Since these will be a people group defeated by Israel, the descendants of the third son of Adam (i.e., Gen. 4:25) does not fit. There have been some suggestions.

1. instead of שת, some translations change to שתא, meaning "tumult" or "devastation" (cf. Jer. 48:45; Lam. 3:47)
2. a small tribe of this area ("Sotu") mentioned in Egyptian documents from 1900 B.C.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:20

[20]And he looked at Amalek and took up his discourse and said,
"Amalek was the first of the nations,
But his end *shall be* destruction."

24:20 "Amalek" This Arab tribe became a metaphor for evil and treachery (cf. Exod. 17:8-16; Num. 14:43-45; Deut. 25:17; and Jdgs.. 6:3,33). See full note online at Deut. 25:17.

▣ **"the first of the nations"** Amalek was never the most powerful tribe in its region. This may mean "the first" to attack Israel after they left Egypt (cf. Exod. 17:8-16).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:21-22

[21]And he looked at the Kenite, and took up his discourse and said,
"Your dwelling place is enduring,
And your nest is set in the cliff.
[22]Nevertheless Kain will be consumed;
How long will Asshur keep you captive?"

24:22 "Asshur" There have been several theories about to whom this name (BDB 78, KB 94) refers.

1. the later, large empire of Mesopotamia, Assyria (cf. 2 Kings 15; Isa. 10:5)
2. a descendant of Abraham and Keturah (BDB 78) that later became a tribe, Gen. 25:3
3. a descendant of Ishmael, Gen. 25:18
4. Asher (BDB 79 or BDB 81), a tribe of Israel that did not destroy all the Canaanite population in their allotted land, Jdgs. 1:31-32; 2 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 83:8

None of these seems to fit this context.

1. Assyria (#1) is too big and later
2. #2 and #3 are too small and obscure
3. #4 is one of the tribes of Israel who defeats this group

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:23-24

[23]Then he took up his discourse and said,
"Alas, who can live except God has ordained it?
[24]But ships *shall come* from the coast of Kittim,
And they shall afflict Asshur and will afflict Eber;
So they also *will come* to destruction."

24:23 "who can live except God has ordained it" In this context of national non-existence, this refers to YHWH's control of nations (cf. Deut. 32:8; Isa. 10:13d; Amos 9:7). He is in control of history because He is creator of time and space!

The LXX and Peshitta, following a different Hebrew text, have:
"and when he saw Og and took up his parable, he said,
'Alas, alas, who shall live
when God ordains these things'"

24:24 "Eber" This (BDB 720 II) may refer to

1. a city close to Asshur
2. imagery of the coast line of the eastern Mediterranean being invaded by "the Sea Peoples"
3. a place name in northern Mesopotamia (i.e., "Eber-Perat" from Targum Onkelos; ABD, vol. 2, p. 260)
4. an ancestor of the Israelites (cf. Gen. 10:21-24; 11:14-17) and, therefore, referring to Israel (i.e., LXX, Peshitta, Vulgate)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 24:25

[25]Then Balaam arose and departed and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. What does it imply that "the Spirit of God came upon him"?
2. What is Balaam asserting in Num. 24:3-4?
3. Explain the imagery of Num. 24:6-7.
4. In a previous oracle the imagery of vv. 8-9 was used of YHWH, but here who does it refer to?
5. Who is Num. 24:17 referring to?
6. Who is Sheth in Num. 24:17?
7. What does Num. 24:23b imply?
8. Who is "Asshur" in Num. 24:24?

NUMBERS 25

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Sin of Peor	Israel's Harlotry in Moab	Incident of Apostasy in Moab	The People of Israel at Peor	Israel at Peor
25:1-5	25:1-5	25:1-5	25:1-5	25:1-3
				25:4-5
25:6-9	25:6-9	25:6-9	25:6-9	25:6-9
The Zeal of Phinehas				
25:10-13	25:10-13	25:10-13	25:10-13	25:10-13
25:14-15	25:14-15	25:14-15	25:14-15	25:14-15
25:16-18	25:16-18	25:16-18	25:16-18	25:16-18

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:1-5

[1]While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. [2]For they invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. [3]So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel. [4]The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and execute them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel." [5]So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor."

25:1 "Shittim" This place name is called "Abel-shittim" in Num. 33:49. It was on the east side of Jordan on the plains of Moab. It was from this campsite that Joshua sent the two spies to Jericho (cf. Josh. 2:1).

TEV translates this as "the Acacia Valley." See Special Topic: Acacia Wood and NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 94-95.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ACACIA WOOD

According to *UBS Fauna and Flora of the Bible* (pp. 87-88), this was a common, desert evergreen tree. It normally grew in dry conditions (i.e., wadis), which made its growth slow and its wood hard. Therefore, it was good for building furniture or, in this case, the tabernacle structure and furniture. Its wood was a brownish orange (BDB 1005).

▣ **"the people began to play the harlot"** This is a way of describing fertility worship. YHWH was viewed as a father or husband (cf. Hosea 1-3). To worship other gods was "spiritual adultery." In this case it was both literal (see Special Topic: Fertility Worship of the ANE at Num. 21:28b) and figurative.

This incident is so shocking. Israel, with all of YHWH's blessing and presence (cf. Rom. 9:4), turned away so quickly! There is much about this event that is surprising.

1. it happens suddenly with the mention of a sacrificial meal (Num. 25:2)

2. it involves Midianite (Num. 25:6,14), not Moabite women (Num. 25:1, but note Num 22:4,7)
3. two different words for how to put offenders to death (i.e., Num. 25:4,5)
4. the execution by judges verses a divine plague (Num. 25:9); the NET Bible, p. 328, suggests that the "leaders" of the tribes who allowed this or participated in it were publicly executed by the Levite judges, but the others involved were killed by the divine plague
5. Is this related somehow to Balaam? He is put to death by Israel (cf. Num. 31:8,16).

All of this causes one to think this is a composite account.

25:2 This verse clearly states how the social interaction between Israelites and Canaanites was so dangerous to Israel's faith (cf. Deut. 7:1-5). Many, if not most, of the seemingly trivial laws of Moses are directed against any kind of social/religious contact (i.e., food laws, sacrificial, ritual, Sabbath regulations, etc.).

25:3

NASB, NKJV,
Peshitta **"joined themselves to"**
NRSV **"yoked itself"**
NJB **"committed to"**
JPSOA **"attached itself"**
REB **"joined in the worship"**
LXX (probably from Herodotus 4.79) **"was initiated to"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 855, KB 1032, *Niphal* IMPERFECT with *waw*), which means

1. in *Niphal* stem, "to be joined with"
2. in *Pual* stem, "to be strapped to" or "yoked to" (same root, different vowels)
3. in *Hiphil* stem, "to be harnessed to"

This implies intimate association with (cf. Deut. 4:3; Hos. 9:10). Notice how the text characterizes it.

1. they ate a sacrificial meal, Num. 25:2
2. they bowed down to the god, Num. 25:2
3. they joined themselves to the god, Num. 25:3 (cf. Ps. 106:28)
4. they were involved in imitation magic, fertility ritual, Num. 25:6,8

▣ **"Baal of Peor"** *Ba'al* was the male storm god of the Canaanite pantheon (see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 422-428). *Han* was worshiped by imitation magic (i.e., sexual union) to insure annual agricultural fertility.

Ba'al worship was very popular in the ANE (i.e., Deut. 12:2-3; 1 Kgs. 57:3,5,7,8; Jer. 2:20; 3:6; Ezek. 6:13). Every city, village, and locality had its own *Ba'al* worship site, usually a raised platform with an uplifted stone and a carved/live tree.

25:4-5 Sin and rebellion always have consequences! This public violation of YHWH's laws (i.e., Num. 25:6-9) called for a public judgment. This time it was both.

1. by the hands of Levitical judges (Num. 25:5)
2. and by the hand of God (i.e., the plague of Num. 25:9)

There are several commands.

1. take all the leaders (i.e., those tribal leaders who participated or allowed this event) – BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* IMPERATIVE
2. execute them in broad daylight – BDB 429, KB 431, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE; see Special Topic: The Death Penalty in Israel at Num. 15:35
3. so that YHWH's fierce anger may turn away – BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* JUSSIVE

4. each judge was to slay his own tribal offenders – BDB 246, KB 255, *Qal* IMPERATIVE (the number is not stated, but the 24,000 of v. 9 seems high); Num. 25:5 seems to be Moses limiting the execution to offenders only (cf. Jewish Study Bible, p. 335)

25:4

NASB, TEV	**"execute"**
NKJV, RSV (Rashi)	**"hang"**
NRSV, NJB, JPSOA	**"impale"**
REB, NJB (Arabic root)	**"hurl them down to their death"**
LXX	**"make an example of them"**
Peshitta	**"expose them"**
Vulgate	**"crucify"**
Targums	**"stone to death and then hang up"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 429, KB 431, *Hiphil* IMPERATIVE), which means publicly expose (cf. 2 Sam. 21:6,9,13), possibly by impaling a dead body with broken legs and arms, possibly from a fall off a cliff (KB, *Hiphil* stem). The NEB and REB follow the BDB definition.

In Num. 25:5, which is parallel, another VERB (BDB 246, KB 255, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) is used which, in this context, means "judicial killing by men" at God's command (cf. Exod. 32:27; Lev. 20:15,16; Deut. 13:10; Ezek. 9:6).

These deaths were to be a public, communal rejection of *Ba'al* worship among YHWH's people!

It is hard for modern westerners to feel the emotional reactions of ANE people to

1. an improper burial
2. public exposure (i.e., Saul in 1 Sam. 31:9-10)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:6-9

[6]Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. [7]When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation and took a spear in his hand, [8]and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. [9]Those who died by the plague were 24,000.

25:6,8 An Israelite, in the presence of Israel, gathered at the tent of meeting, took a Midianite girl into his tent to participate in *Ba'al* ritual sex. This must have been a later event than vv. 2-3, but a related event. It shocked the gathered Israelite worshipers.

It is surprising that

1. this occurs right after Balaam's blessing
2. the woman is Midianite, not Moabite
3. the leaders are to kill the offenders, yet in v. 9, it is a "plague" from YHWH

25:6 "while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting" We are not told why the Israelites were "weeping." In the larger context it is probably related to the worship of *Ba'al* (Num. 25:1-3).

While Israel was repenting of fertility worship, one of them flaunted his union (maritally or ritually) with a pagan woman, within the camp.

25:8
NASB, NKJV,
NRSV "into the tent"
NJB, LXX "the alcove"
JPSOA "the chamber"
REB "the nuptial tent"
Peshitta "the private chamber"
Vulgate "brothel"

This is not the normal word for "tent" (BDB 13, cf. v. 6). KB 1060 I has several suggestions (word used only here).

1. inner part of a private tent
2. a small cultic tent given to rituals

This is either

1. a violation of idol worship
2. a marriage to a non-Israelite (cf. Deut. 7:1-5)

It is obvious from the context that this event is separated in time from Num. 25:2-3, but it is surely related to them.

▣ **"through the body"** This is literally "belly" (BDB 867, KB 1060), which is related to "tent" (BDB 866, KB 1060). They are the same root but different vowels. So, the options are

1. in the belly (euphemism for genitalia)
2. in the inner room or cultic room

25:9 "the plague" There are several questions related to this plague. There had been divine plagues before for disobedience. This one may have come because Moses altered YHWH's word about killing the "leaders of the people" in v. 4, to killing just those involved in fertility religion. But this is "contextual speculation."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:10-13

[10]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [11]"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away My wrath from the sons of Israel in that he was jealous with My jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in My jealousy. [12]Therefore say, 'Behold, I give him My covenant of peace; [13]and it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God and made atonement for the sons of Israel.'"

25:11 Phinehas makes a very public obedience to YHWH's command in Num. 25:4-5. He felt and expressed YHWH's anger over this covenant violation.

▣ **"jealous"** This root (BDB 888, KB 1109; NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 917-939) occurs several times in this context.

1. VERB, Num. 25:11, *Piel* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT
2. NOUN, Num. 25:11 (twice)
3. VERB, Num. 25:13, *Piel* PERFECT

This term (BDB 888) is derived from something dyed an intense red (i.e., when anger or zeal caused the blood to flush the face). Human emotions are used to describe YHWH's emotions (anthropomorphism). He is zealous for His people (cf. Isa. 26:11). This zealousness can turn to jealousy (cf. Ezek. 5:13; 16:38,42; 23:25; 36:5,6; 38:19; Zeph. 1:18; 3:8).

25:12 "My covenant of peace" This phrase and "an everlasting covenant" are synonymous (cf. Ezek. 37:26). This symbolism is used several ways.

1. Noah – Isa. 54:10 (i.e., Gen. 9:8-17)
2. the Patriarchs – Ps. 105:9-10 (i.e., Gen. 12:1-3)
3. David – 2 Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89:3,4,34; Isa. 55:3 (i.e., 2 Samuel 8)
4. Israel – Gen. 17:7,13,19; Jer. 32:40; Ezek. 34:25
5. the new covenant of Jer. 31:31-34 – Isa. 59:21 (explained in Ezek. 36:22-36)
6. a way of referring to "the two ways" – Mal. 2:4-5 (see Deut. 30:15,19; Psalm 1)

Peace was dependent on obedience (see Special Topics: Covenant at Num. 10:33b and Keep at Num. 17:10b). The term "eternal" must be interpreted in context. It has a wide semantic field (cf. Num. 25:13; see Special Topic: Forever at Num. 10:8).

25:13 Phinehas' act of devotion to YHWH and His word was counted as a sin offering which "made atonement" (BDB 497, KB 493, *Piel* IMPERFECT with *waw*). See Special Topic: Atonement at Num. 5:7b.

This is Hebrew corporality. One act covered the guilt of many acts (i.e., substitutionary atonement, cf. Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:14-15

[14]Now the name of the slain man of Israel who was slain with the Midianite woman, was Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's household among the Simeonites. [15]The name of the Midianite woman who was slain was Cozbi the daughter of Zur, who was head of the people of a father's household in Midian.

25:14-15 This is very specific, eyewitness documentation. See Special Topic: OT Historical Narrative at Intro. to Numbers VIII, A.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 25:16-18

[16]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [17]"Be hostile to the Midianites and strike them; [18]for they have been hostile to you with their tricks, with which they have deceived you in the affair of Peor and in the affair of Cozbi, the daughter of the leader of Midian, their sister who was slain on the day of the plague because of Peor."

24:17-18 Surprisingly, these are not IMPERATIVES. Because the Midianites were

1. hostile – BDB 865 II, KB 1058
2. tricked – BDB 647 (NOUN)
3. deceived – BDB 647, KB 699, *Piel* PERFECT

they must be struck down (BDB 645, KB 697, *Hiphil* PERFECT with *waw*). The sending of Midian women into the camp of Israel for the purpose of luring them into fertility worship acts was a planned agenda to cause YHWH to judge (i.e., not bless His own people)!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Is Num. 25:1-5 related directly to Num. 25:6-9? Why or why not?
2. How are *Chemosh* and *Ba'al* related?
3. Did Moses change YHWH's command about "the leaders"?
4. Who are "the judges" in Num. 25:5?
5. How is Midian related to the Moabites?
6. What is a "covenant of peace"?
7. How can the death of two sinners make atonement?

NUMBERS 26

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Census of a New Generation	The Second Census of Israel	A Second Census	The Second Census	The Census
26:1-4a	26:1-4	26:1-4a	26:1-4a	26:1
				26:2
				26:3-4
26:4b		26:4b	26:4b	
26:5-11	26:5-11	26:5-11	26:5-11	26:5-7
				26:8-11
26:12-14	26:12-14	26:12-14	26:12-14	25:12-14
26:15-18	26:15-18	26:15-18	26:15-18	26:15-18
26:19-22	26:19-22	16:19-22	26:19-22	26:19-22
26:23-25	26:23-25	26:23-25	26:23-25	26:23-25
26:26-27	26:26-27	26:26-27	26:26-27	26:26-27
26:28-34	26:28-34	26:28-34	26:28	26:28
			26:29-34	26:29-34
26:35-37	26:35-37	26:35-37	26:35-37a	26:35-37a
			26:37b	26:37b
26:38-41	26:38-41	26:38-41	26:38-41	26:38-41
26:42-43	26:42-43	26:42-43	26:42-43	26:42-43
26:44-47	26:44-47	26:44-47	26:44-47	26:44-47
26:48-50	26:48-50	26:48-50	26:48-50	26:48-50
26:51	26:51	26:51	26:51	26:51
26:52-56	26:52-56	26:52-56	26:52-56	26:52-56
				Census of Levites
26:57-62	26:57-62	26:57-62	26:57-62	26:57
				26:58a
				26:58b-61
				26:62
26:63-65	26:63-65	26:63-65	26:63-65	26:63-65

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This book of Moses is called “Numbers” because of the two “censuses,” chapters 1 and 26.

B. List of tribes and their numbers.

		Numbers 1	Numbers 26
1.	Reuben	46,500	43,730
2.	Simeon	59,300	22,200
3.	Gad	45,650	40,500
4.	Judah	74,000	46,500
5.	Issachar	54,400	64,300
6.	Zebulun	54,400	60,500
7.	Ephraim	40,500	32,500
8.	Manasseh	32,200	52,700
9.	Benjamin	35,400	45,600
10.	Dan	62,700	64,400
11.	Asher	41,500	53,400
12.	Naphtali	43,400	45,400
		603,550	601,730

C. These numbers seem far too large. It is possible the term "thousand" is the key to a smaller number. See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*) at Num. 10:36 and
   1. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel,* pp. 65-67
   2. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 51-54
   3. Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, pp. 129-134

   If Israel were this large she would have no problem defeating the Canaanites but she needs YHWH's help.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:1-4a

[1]Then it came about after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying, [2]"Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' households, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel." [3]So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho, saying, [4]"*Take a census of the people* from twenty years old and upward, as the LORD has commanded Moses."

26:1 "the plague" This refers to Num. 25:6-9. See notes there.

26:2 This is parallel to Num. 1:2-3. It is a military census. Israel is about to enter Canaan.

However, in this case the current size of the tribes would determine how large their land allotment was (cf. Num. 26:52-56).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:4b

[4b]Now the sons of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt *were*:

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:5-11

[5]Reuben, Israel's firstborn, the sons of Reuben: *of* Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the family of the Palluites; [6]of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. [7]These are the families of the Reubenites, and those who were numbered of them were 43,730. [8]The son of Pallu: Eliab. [9]The sons of Eliab: Nemuel and Dathan and Abiram. These are the Dathan

and Abiram who were called by the congregation, who contended against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD, [10]and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, so that they became a warning. [11]The sons of Korah, however, did not die.

26:9 The rebellion of Korah and some families of Reuben is recorded in Numbers 15. See notes there.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:12-14

[12]The sons of Simeon according to their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; [13]of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. [14]These are the families of the Simeonites, 22,200.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:15-18

[15]The sons of Gad according to their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; [16]of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; [17]of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites. [18]These are the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were numbered of them, 40,500.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:19-22

[19]The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. [20]The sons of Judah according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Perezites; of Zerah, the family of the Zerahites. [21]The sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. [22]These are the families of Judah according to those who were numbered of them, 76,500.

26:20 "Perez" This will become the line of David, the line of Jesus.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:23-25

[23]The sons of Issachar according to their families: *of* Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puvah, the family of the Punites; [24]of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. [25]These are the families of Issachar according to those who were numbered of them, 64,300.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:26-27

[26]The sons of Zebulun according to their families: of Sered, the family of the Seredites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. [27]These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were numbered of them, 60,500.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:28-34

[28]The sons of Joseph according to their families: Manasseh and Ephraim. [29]The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir became the father of Gilead: of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. [30]These are the sons of Gilead: *of* Iezer, the family of the Iezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; [31]and *of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; and *of* Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; [32]and *of* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; and *of* Hepher, the family of the

Hepherites. [33]Now Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but only daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. [34]These are the families of Manasseh; and those who were numbered of them were 52,700.

26:29 "Gilead" This person (BDB 166) is listed as a descendant of Manasseh (same variety with "Shechem," Num. 26:31). This is a good name to show how these functioned in the OT.

1. a person – here; Jdgs. 11:1-2
2. a tribe – here; Jdgs. 5:17
3. a region – Josh. 22:9; Jdgs. 10:17
4. sometimes a city

This is true of many of the names and one is not always sure which possibility is meant.

26:33 See note at Num. 26:46.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:35-37

[35]These are the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthelahites; of Becher, the family of the Becherites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. [36]These are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. [37]These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were numbered of them, 32,500. These are the sons of Joseph according to their families.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:38-41

[38]The sons of Benjamin according to their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; [39]of Shephupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. [40]The sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: *of Ard*, the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. [41]These are the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were 45,600.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:42-43

[42]These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan according to their families. [43]All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, were 64,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:44-47

[44]The sons of Asher according to their families: of Imnah, the family of the Imnites; of Ishvi, the family of the Ishvites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. [45]Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. [46]The name of the daughter of Asher *was* Serah. [47]These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them, 53,400.

26:46 No reason is given why this one "daughter" is mentioned. Daughters are mentioned when there are no sons in Num. 26:33 (cf. Num. 27:1-11; 36:1; Josh. 17:3).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:48-50

[48]The sons of Naphtali according to their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; [49]of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. [50]These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were 45,400.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:51

[51]These are those who were numbered of the sons of Israel, 601,730.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:52-56

[52]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [53]"Among these the land shall be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names. [54]To the larger *group* you shall increase their inheritance, and to the smaller *group* you shall diminish their inheritance; each shall be given their inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. [55]But the land shall be divided by lot. They shall receive their inheritance according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. [56]According to the selection by lot, their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller *groups*."

26:53-56 This procedure is also mentioned in Num. 33:54; 34:13. It is done in Joshua 12-19. See Special Topic: Urim and Thummim.

SPECIAL TOPIC: URIM AND THUMMIM

These two words first appear in Exod. 28:30, where they refer to a physical means of determining the will of God for the nation, later kings, through the High Priest (cf. Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65).

There has been no consensus about the Semitic roots from which they originate. Traditionally they are associated with

1. light – BDB 22, KB 25
2. perfection – BDB 1070, KB 1743

They were kept in a pouch behind the High Priest's breastplate. They probably were some type of lot oracle (i.e., stones engraved with "yes" or "no," cf. LXX, 1 Sam. 14:41).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:57-62

[57]These are those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. [58]These are the families of Levi: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korahites. Kohath became the father of Amram. [59]The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and she bore to Amram: Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. [60]To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. [61]But Nadab and Abihu died when they offered strange fire before the LORD. [62]Those who were numbered of them were 23,000, every male from a month old and upward, for they were not numbered among the sons of Israel since no inheritance was given to them among the sons of Israel.

26:57-62 The Levites are numbered for service not for war (cf. Numbers 3). They do not receive a land inheritance. They do receive 48 cities (cf. Numbers 35; Joshua 20-21).

26:60-61 This reflects Leviticus 10. See notes there.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 26:63-65

[63]These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan at Jericho. [64]But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest, who numbered the sons of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. [65]For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." And not a man was left of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

26:63-65 This new census was necessary

1. for military purposes
2. to adjust the number because of the judgment of YHWH on the generation that believed the spies' report (i.e., Numbers 13)

26:65 "They shall surely die" This is an intensified grammatical feature (an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 559, KB 562). This is a fulfillment of Num. 14:26-39.

▣ **"except Caleb. . .Joshua"** These are the two spies who brought a positive report. Only these two of that whole generation entered Canaan (cf. Num. 14:30,38). Not even Moses, Aaron, or Miriam entered.

NUMBERS 27

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
A Law of Inheritance	Inheritance Laws	Inheritance of Property by Women	The Daughters of Zelophehad	The Inheritance of Daughters
27:1-5	27:1-5	27:1-4	27:1-4	27:1-4
		27:5-11	27:5-11	27:5-11
27:6-11	27:6-11			
	Joshua the Next Leader of Israel	Joshua Commissioned to Succeed Moses	Joshua Is Chosen as Successor to Moses	Joshua the Head of the Community
27:12-14	27:12-14	27:12-23	27:12-14	27:12-14
Joshua to Succeed Moses				
27:15-23	27:15-17		27:15-17	27:15-21
	27:18-23		27:18-23	
				27:22-23

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

BRIEF OUTLINE (Numbers 27-30)

A. Inheritance rights for daughters, Num. 27:1-7.

B. Moses prays for a successor (i.e., Joshua), Num. 27:12-23.

C. Various sacrifices, Numbers 28
   1. The continual
   2. Sabbath days
   3. New Moons
   4. Passover
   5. First Fruits
   6. Feast of Weeks

D. The feast of the seventh month, Numbers 29.
   1. Blowing of trumpets
   2. Day of Atonement
   3. Feast of Booths

E. Special restrictions on vows, Numbers 30.
   1. a man
   2. a young woman living at home
   3. an engaged woman
   4. a widow or divorced woman
   5. a wife

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:1-5

[1]Then the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph, came near; and these are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah and Hoglah and Milcah and Tirzah. [2]They stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the leaders and all the congregation, at the doorway of the tent of meeting, saying, [3]"Our father died in the wilderness, yet he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons. [4]Why should the name of our father be withdrawn from among his family because he had no son? Give us a possession among our father's brothers." [5]So Moses brought their case before the LORD.

27:1 "Then the daughters of Zelophehad" This particular event is also discussed in Num. 26:33; Numbers 36; and Josh. 17:3.

27:2 This shows three different levels or types of leadership: (1) Moses and Eleazar; (2) the elders; and (3) all of the congregation. This same type of three-leveled authority structure can be seen in the NT between apostles, elders, and the entire congregation. It seems that all three polity types, episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational, have their different proof texts and spheres of influence within the biblical material. See notes online on Acts 15:2.

27:3 "but he died in his own sin, and he had no sons" Calvin points out the great faith of these young girls:

1. The wars for the Promised Land had not even begun but they were confident that God would give their people the land.
2. Their affirmation of their father's sin shows that they did not question God's justice or fairness concerning the wilderness wandering.

Some have asserted that the reason they mention that their father was not involved in Korah' rebellion is that possibly those who were killed or banished from the camp because of this apostasy forfeited their inheritance rights as well as their property. The further complication about who these girls could marry is discussed in Numbers 36.

One wonders what "sin" the daughter is referring to.

1. part of the generation that did not accept the spies' report
2. those who took part in the unauthorized invasion after YHWH's pronounced judgment
3. some unknown personal sin that resulted in no male heirs
4. just a way of emphatically asserting he was not part of the rebellion against Moses' and Aaron's leadership (i.e., Jewish tradition)

27:5-11 "So Moses brought their case before the LORD" This is extremely important because it shows that Moses is not simply giving his own opinion but that the Bible is the revelation of God. It also shows the probable way in which laws were developed. YHWH gave a general law about a subject and when exceptions or a need to adjust that law came up, they were brought back before the Lord (i.e., Num. 9:8; 15:34).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:6-11

[6]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [7]"The daughters of Zelophehad are right in *their* statements. You shall surely give them a hereditary possession among their father's brothers, and you shall transfer the inheritance of their father to them. [8]Further, you shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. [9]If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. [10]If he has no brothers, then you shall

give his inheritance to his father's brothers. [11]If his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his nearest relative in his own family, and he shall possess it; and it shall be a statutory ordinance to the sons of Israel, just as the Lord commanded Moses.'"

27:7 "You shall surely give. . ." This is the intensified grammatical feature (an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root, BDB 678, KB 733). This is YHWH's strong affirmation of the daughters' inheritance rights!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:12-14

[12]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel. [13]When you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was; [14]for in the wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to treat Me as holy before their eyes at the water." (These are the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.)

27:12 "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up to this mountain of Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the sons of Israel" The "mountain of Abarim" is an interesting phrase because it contains one of the names of the sons of Reuben (cf. Num. 16:1). Some have asserted that it is simply a similar name (BDB 260, cf. Num. 33:47) and there is no correspondence. This is possible but the land in which it is located happens to be the tribal allocation of the sons o Reuben. Maybe this mountain was later named after one of these boys as a memorial of some type. This same mountain also is called "Pisgah" in Deut. 34:1 and Num. 21:20 and "Mount Nebo" in Num. 33:47; Deut. 32:49. This will be the high mountain from which Moses will be allowed by God to see the Promised Land before he dies.

Some say that the reason this section is included here is because Moses, after the positive request of the daughters of Zelophehad was answered, made his petition one more time to the Lord about his own ban from the Promised Land (cf. Num. 20:2-13).

27:13 "you too will be gathered to your people" Aaron died earlier (cf. Num. 20:24) and this same phrase is used. It seems to imply a belief in some type of family reunion and fellowship after death (i.e., Gen. 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:29,33; Num. 31:2; Deut. 32:56). The older parts of the OT seem to assume a conscious but joyless existence in *Sheol*. See Special Topic: Where Are the Dead? at Num. 16:30.

27:14 "in the wilderness of Zin" This is the account mentioned in Num. 20:2-13 and Deut. 3:23-27, where Moses, in his anger at the grumbling of the people, struck the rock instead of speaking to it. See Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 27:15-23

[15]Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, [16]"May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, [17]who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD will not be like sheep which have no shepherd." [18]So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; [19]and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight. [20]You shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey *him*. [21]Moreover, he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of the Urim before the LORD. At his command they shall go out and at his command they shall come in, *both* he and the sons of Israel with him, even all the congregation." [22]Moses did just as the LORD commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before

Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. [23]Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

27:16 "the God of the spirits of all flesh" A similar phrase is used in Num. 16:22; see note there.

This is the Hebrew word *ruah* (BDB 924, KB 1197), which seems to speak of "wind," "spirit," or "breath." Here, it seems to infer that God is the source of all life, which is the implication of the name YHWH, which comes from the Hebrew VERB "to be" (cf. Exod. 3:14).

See Special Topics: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17 and Names for Deity, D at Num. 1:1.

▣ **"appoint a man over the congregation"** Here, Moses asks for a successor to guide the Israelites. We are not sure how this request is related to Deut. 18:15, where Moses prays for a prophet like himself, which seems to be a Messianic (see Special Topic: Messiah) reference. This particular account refers to Joshua. See Special Topic: Prophecy in the OT at Num. 11:25.

SPECIAL TOPIC: MESSIAH (from commentary notes at Daniel 9:25-26)

The difficulty in interpreting this term is because of the different usages associated with the term "Messiah" or "anointed one" (BDB 603, KB 645). The term was used of placing a special oil on a person to denote God's call and equipping for an assigned leadership task.

1. used of Jewish kings (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:10; 12:3; 24:6,10; 2 Sam. 19:21; 23:1; Ps. 89:51; 132:10,17; Lam. 4:20; Hab. 3:13; "anointed prince" in Dan. 9:25)
2. used of Jewish priests (i.e., "anointed priests," Exod. 29:7; Lev. 4:3,5,16; 6:15; 7:36; 8:12; possibly Ps. 84:9-10; and 133:2)
3. used of Patriarchs as prophets (cf. Gen. 26:7, 1 Chr. 16:22; Ps. 105:15), which refers to the covenant people corporately (possibly Hab. 3:13)
4. used of prophets (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:16; possibly 1 Chr. 29:22)
5. used of Cyrus (cf. Isa. 45:1)
6. #1 and #2 are combined in Psalm 110 and Zechariah 4
7. used of God's special coming, Davidic King to bring in the new age of righteousness
   a. line of Judah (cf. Gen. 49:10)
   b. house of Jesse (cf. 2 Samuel 7)
   c. universal reign (cf. Psalm 2; Isa. 9:6; 11:1-5; Mic. 5:1-4ff)
   d. ministry to the needy (cf. Isa. 61:1-3)

I personally am attracted to the identification of "an anointed one" with Jesus (cf. John 1:41; 4:25) of Nazareth because of

1. the introduction of an eternal Kingdom in Daniel 2 during the fourth empire
2. the introduction of "a son of man" in Dan. 7:13 being given an eternal kingdom
3. the redemptive clauses of Dan. 9:24, which point toward a culmination of fallen world history
4. Jesus' use of the book of Daniel in the NT (cf. Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14)

It must be admitted this is a rare title in the OT, possibly only Dan. 9:25-26.

It must also be acknowledged that Jesus does not fit the OT general description of the Messiah.

1. not a leader in Israel
2. not officially anointed by a priest
3. not just savior of Israel
4. not only "son of man," but shockingly "Son of God"

27:17 "who will go out and come in before them" There has been some difference of opinion on this Hebrew phrase. Some assume that it refers to daily activity, while others believe it has a military connotation (cf. Josh. 14:11; 1 Kgs. 22:17).

It is obvious in this verse that the pastoral metaphor is used; this metaphor is found often, not only in the OT (i.e., 1 Kgs. 22:17; 2 Chr. 18:16; Psalm 23; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 44:28; Zechariah 10; 11), but also in the NT (cf. John 10; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25).

"Shepherd" was a royal title in the ANE.

1. YHWH – Gen. 48:15; 49:24; Ezek. 34:11-31
2. David – 2 Sam. 5:2
3. Nebuchadnezzar (i.e., Babylon) – Jer. 43:12
4. Sin-Shar-Ishkun (Assyrian) – Nah. 3:18
5. Cyrus II (Persia) – Isa. 44:28
6. Messiah – Zech. 10:2-3; 13:7-9 (Ezek. 34:11-31 is imagery of the Messiah)

27:18 "a man in whom is the Spirit" It is unfortunate to use a strong dichotomy between the Spirit in the OT and the Spirit in the New. There is a distinction between the OT use of "spirit." In the OT it is a way to asssert YHWH acting in the world but in the NT, the Spirit becomes

1. a person – see Special Topic: Personhood of the Spirit at Num. 24:2b
2. a divine person – See Special Topic: The Trinity at Num. 24:2b
3. see Special Topic: Spirit in the Bible at Num. 11:17

▣ **"lay your hand on him"** It is obvious that God empowered people to do His will in both. It is also interesting to note that the Spirit did not come to Joshua by the laying on of hands but was already present (cf. Num. 11:25-29; Deut. 34:9). The laying on of hands is to be identified and defined by means of the sacrificial system. When a man laid hands on an animal it became his substitute or was identified with that man. Joshua became identified as the successor of Moses. See Special Topic: Laying on of Hands in the Bible at Num. 8:9.

27:19 "commission him in their sight" This VERB (BDB 845, KB 1010) in the *Piel* stem means "to give someone authority or charge." It is used often in the OT (BDB gives five major connotations with several items under each).

In this context, Moses' leadership will pass to Joshua.

1. stand before Eleazar, Num. 27:19
2. stand before all the congregation, Num. 27:19
3. commission him in their sight, Num. 2:19
4. put some of your authority (i.e., from YHWH) on him, Num. 27:20
5. for the purpose of commanding all Israel, Num. 27:20,21
6. inquire of Urim and Thummim, Num. 27:21; (see Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Num. 26:53-56

27:20-21 "put some of your authority on him" There will be a difference in how YHWH speaks to Moses and how He will speak to Joshua. In Num. 27:21 we see that instead of YHWH speaking directly to Joshua on every occasion, he must go to the High Priest and consult the Urim and Thummim to discern God's will (cf. Exod. 28:30; Lev. 8:8).

27:20 The word "authority" (BDB 217, KB 241) means

1. splendor (linked with BDB 214 in Ps. 21:5; 96:6; 109:1)
2. majesty (KB)
3. vigor (cf. Pro. 5:9; Dan. 10:8)
4. BDB #3b, "majesty, dignity, authority of Moses"

It is used as a descriptive title for

1. YHWH – Ps. 8:1; 45:3-4; 104:1
2. Solomon – 1 Chr. 29:25
3. Josiah – Jer. 22:18
4. Messiah – Ps. 21:5; Zech. 6:12-13

Moses bore and represented YHWH's person, power, and presence. The LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate translate it "glory."

27:22 This verse highlights Moses' obedience, which was the hallmark of his leadership.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How does Num. 27:1-11 show how laws developed in ancient Israel?
2. What sin did Zelophehad's father commit?
3. Where is Mt. Abarim?
4. Why was Moses not allowed to lead Israel into Canaan?
5. What does the divine title "the God of the spirits of all flesh" imply?
6. What did laying on of hands imply?

NUMBERS 28

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Laws for Offerings	Daily Offerings	Offerings for Various Occasions	The Regular Offerings	Regulations for Sacrifices
28:1-8	28:1-8	28:1-8	28:1-8	28:1-2
				28:3a
				a. Daily Sacrifices
				28:3b-8
				b. The Sabbath
28:9-10	28:9-10	28:9-10	28:9-10	28:9-10
	Monthly Offerings		The Offering on the First Day	c. The Feast of New Moon
28:11-15	28:11-15	28:11-15	28:11-15	28:11-15
	Offerings at Passover		The Offerings at the Festival of Unleavened Bread	d. The Feast of Unleavened Bread
28:16-25	28:16-25	28:16-25	28:16-25	28:16-25
	Offerings at the Feast of Weeks		The Offerings at the Harvest Festival	e. The Feast of Weeks
28:26-31	28:26-31	28:26-31	28:26-30	28:26-30:1

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. The sacrificial system of Israel was YHWH's way to
   1. provide for sinful Israel to obtain forgiveness
   2. stay in fellowship with a holy God

B. It also served as a way to remind Israel of God's presence and a way to teach their children their faith.

C. These types of sacrifices showed YHWH's ownership of all things.
   1. time
   2. possessions
   3. crops
   4. land

D. This is a supplement to Leviticus 23. It adds information about the daily and monthly rituals. Why it is placed here in Numbers is uncertain.
   1. some suggest just before war with Midian when the Israelites would have many more animals
   2. just before entering Canaan where regular settled society will occur (i.e., Tabernacle or Temple worship)

E. Numbers 28-29 forms a literary unit on sacrifices inserted into the historical narrative of Numbers.

F. Can you imagine the smell of the sacrificial area? Can you imagine the priestly work it took to
   1. kill
   2. prepare
   3. offer (perform full ritual)
   4. clean up the ashes

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:1-8

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'You shall be careful to present My offering, My food for My offerings by fire, of a soothing aroma to Me, at their appointed time.' [3]You shall say to them, 'This is the offering by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs one year old without defect *as* a continual burnt offering every day. [4]You shall offer the one lamb in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; [5]also a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with a fourth of a hin of beaten oil. [6]It is a continual burnt offering which was ordained in Mount Sinai as a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. [7]Then the drink offering with it *shall be* a fourth of a hin for each lamb, in the holy place you shall pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the LORD. [8]The other lamb you shall offer at twilight; as the grain offering of the morning and as its drink offering, you shall offer it, an offering by fire, a soothing aroma to the LORD.

28:2 "You shall be careful to present My offering, My food for My offerings by fire, of a soothing aroma to Me, at their appointed time" This chapter discusses several types of sacrifices in order, from those which occur the most often to those which occur the least. It has been estimated that over one thousand and eighty lambs, one hundred and thirteen bulls, thirty-two rams, thirty-two goats, one hundred and seven gallons of oil, one hundred and forty gallons of wine, and one hundred and twelve bushels of flour are involved annually in the sacrifices of Israel. This was in addition to individual, voluntary sacrifices (i.e., Leviticus 1-3).

1. the daily morning and evening offering (i.e., "the continual"), Num. 28:2-8
   a. a morning offering
      (1) one male lamb, one year old
      (2) a tenth of an ephah of fine flour
      (3) a fourth of a hin of beaten oil
      (4) a fourth of a hin of strong drink
   b. a twilight offering of the same type as "a." above
2. the Sabbath offering (mentioned only here in the Pentateuch)
   a. two male lambs, one year old
   b. two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil
   c. a libation
   d. this was in addition to #1
3. the first of each month
   a. two bulls
   b. one ram
   c. seven male lambs, one year old
   d. three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each bull
   e. two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for the ram
   f. a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for each lamb

g. a libation for each
(1) half a hin of wine for each bull
(2) a third of a hin of wine for the ram
(3) a fourth of a hin of wine for each lamb
h. a male goat for a sin offering with its wine libation
i. this was in addition to #1

4. Passover – on the 14th of the first month followed by the seven-day feast of unleavened bread, starting on the 15th
a. two bulls with the accompaning offerings (see #3, d-g)
b. one ram
c. seven lambs
d. one male goat for a sin offering
e. this was in addition to #1
f. these offerings were offered each day for seven days
g. special holy convocation on the seventh day

5. the Day of First Fruits, also known as Feast of Weeks
a. a holy convocation
b. two young bulls
c. one ram
d. seven lambs, one year old
e. with their grain offerings (see #3, d-g)
f. one male goat for a sin offering
g. in addition to #1

See the related Special Topics.

1. Soothing Aroma at Num. 15:3
2. Without Blemish at Num. 6:14
3. ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b
4. Wine and Strong Drink
5. ANE Calendars at Intro. to Numbers, V. A. 1.
6. Passover at Num. 9:2
7. Feasts of Israel
8. Sacrificial Systems of the ANE at Num. 23:1b

SPECIAL TOPIC: ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

I. Biblical Terms

A. Old Testament

1. *Yayin* – This is the general term for wine (BDB 406, KB 409), which is used 141 times. The etymology is uncertain because it is not from a Hebrew root. It always means fermented fruit juice, usually grape. Some typical passages are Gen. 9:21; Exod. 29:40; Num. 15:5,10.
2. *Tirosh* – This is "new wine" (BDB 440, KB 1727). Because of climatic conditions of the Near East, fermentation started as soon as six hours after extracting the juice. This term refers to wine in the process of fermenting. For some typical passages see Deut. 12:17; 18:4; Isa. 62:8-9; Hos. 4:11.
3. *Asis* – This is obviously alcoholic beverages ("sweet wine," BDB 779, KB 860, e.g. Joel 1:5; Isa. 49:26).

4. *Sekar* – This is the term "strong drink" (BDB 1016, KB 1500). The Hebrew root is used in the term "drunk" or "drunkard." It had something added to it to make it more intoxicating. It is parallel to *yayin* (cf. Pro. 20:1; 31:6; Isa. 28:7).

B. New Testament
1. *Oinos* – the Greek equivalent of *yayin*
2. *Neos oinos* (new wine) – the Greek equivalent of *tirosh* (cf. Mark 2:22).
3. *Gleuchos vinos* (sweet wine, *asis*) – wine in the early stages of fermentation (cf. Acts 2:13).

II. Biblical Usage

A. Old Testament
1. Wine is a gift of God (Gen. 27:28; Ps. 104:14-15; Eccl. 9:7; Hos. 2:8-9; Joel 2:19,24; Amos 9:13; Zech. 10:7).
2. Wine is a part of a sacrificial offering (Exod. 29:40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:7,10; 28:14; Deut. 14:26; Jdgs. 9:13).
3. Wine is used as medicine (2 Sam. 16:2; Pro. 31:6-7).
4. Wine can be a real problem (Noah – Gen. 9:21; Lot – Gen. 19:33,35; Nabal – 1 Sam. 25:36; Uriah – 2 Sam. 11:13; Amnon – 2 Sam. 13:28; Elah – 1 Kgs. 16:9; Benhadad – 1 Kgs. 20:12; Rulers – Amos 6:6; and Ladies – Amos 4).
5. Wine can be abused (Pro. 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isa. 5:11,22; 19:14; 28:7-8; Hosea 4:11).
6. Wine was prohibited to certain groups (priests on duty, Lev. 10:9; Ezek. 44:21; Nazirites, Numbers 6; and rulers, Pro. 31:4-5; Isa. 56:11-12; Hosea 7:5).
7. Wine is used in an eschatological setting (Amos 9:13; Joel 3:18; Zech. 9:17).

B. Interbiblical
1. Wine in moderation is very helpful (Ecclesiasticus 31:27-33).
2. The rabbis say, "Wine is the greatest of all medicine, where wine is lacking, then drugs are needed." (BB 58b).

C. New Testament
1. Jesus changed a large quantity of water into wine (John 2:1-11).
2. Jesus drank wine (Matt. 11:18-19; Luke 7:33-34; 22:17ff).
3. Peter accused of drunkenness on "new wine" at Pentecost (Acts 2:13).
4. Wine can be used as medicine (Mark 15:23; Luke 10:34; 1 Tim. 5:23).
5. Leaders are not to be abusers. This does not mean total abstainers (1 Tim. 3:3,8; Titus 1:7; 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:3).
6. Wine used in eschatological settings (Matthew 22:1ff; Rev. 19:9).
7. Drunkenness is deplored (Matt. 24:49; Luke 12:45; 21:34; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 13:13-14).

III. Theological Insight

A. Dialectical tension
1. Wine is the gift of God.
2. Drunkenness is a major problem.
3. Believers in some cultures must limit their freedoms for the sake of the gospel (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1- 23; 1 Corinthians 8-10; Romans 14).

B. Tendency to go beyond given bounds
1. God is the source of all good things.

a. food – Mark 7:19; Luke 11:41; 1 Cor. 10:25-26
b. all things clean – Rom. 14:14,20; 1 Tim. 4:4
c. all things lawful – 1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23
d. all things pure – Titus 1:15

2. Fallen mankind has abused all of God's gifts by taking them beyond God-given bounds.

C. Abuse is in us, not in things. There is nothing evil in the physical creation (see B. 1 above).

IV. First Century Jewish Culture and Fermentation

A. Fermentation begins very soon, approximately 6 hours after the grape is crushed.

B. Jewish tradition says that when a slight foam appeared on the surface (sign of fermentation), it is liable to the wine-tithe (*Ma aseroth* 1:7). It was called "new wine" or "sweet wine."

C. The primary violent fermentation was complete after one week.

D. The secondary fermentation took about 40 days. At this state it is considered "aged wine" and could be offered on the altar (*Edhuyyoth* 6:1).

E. Wine that had rested on its lees (old wine) was considered good, but had to be strained well before use.

F. Wine was considered to be properly aged usually after one year of fermentation. Three years was the longest period of time that wine could be safely stored. It was called "old wine" and had to be diluted with water.

G. Only in the last 100 years with a sterile environment and chemical additives has fermentation been postponed. The ancient world could not stop the natural process of fermentation.

V. Closing Statements

A. Be sure your experience, theology, and biblical interpretation do not depreciate Jesus and first century Jewish/Christian culture! They were obviously not total-abstainers.

B. I am not advocating the social use of alcohol. However, many have overstated the Bible's position on this subject and now claim superior righteousness based on a cultural/denominational bias.

C. For me, Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-10 have provided insight and guidelines based on love and respect for fellow believers and the spread of the gospel in our culture, not personal freedom or judgmental criticism. If the Bible is the only source for faith and practice, then maybe we must all rethink this issue.

D. If we push total abstinence as God's will, what do we imply about Jesus, as well as those modern cultures that regularly use wine (e.g., Europe, Israel, Argentina)?

SPECIAL TOPIC: FEASTS OF ISRAEL

A. Leviticus 23 is divided into several different special days.

1. the Sabbath, Lev. 23:2-3
2. Feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover, Lev. 23:4-8
3. Feast of First Fruits, Lev. 23:9-14
4. Feasts of Weeks or Pentecost, Lev. 23:15-22
5. Feast of Trumpets (i.e., New Year), Lev. 23:23-25
6. Fast Day of Atonement, Lev. 23:26-32
7. Feast of Booths, Tabernacles, Lev. 23:33-44

Does this imply that there were five annual feast days (three were required for all males to appear at the central sanctuary) and one fast day? The problem is in Leb. 23:9-14! Is it an annual feast or a one-time feast as Israel entered Canaan?

B. Mosaic Annual Feasts (cf. Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-26; Leviticus 23; Numbers 28:16-29; Deuteronomy 16; Ezek. 45:18-25)

1. All male Jews were required to attend three annual feasts (cf. Exod. 23:14,17; 34:23) if possible.
2. These feasts had agricultural, as well as national significance.
3. Each was a day of rest, worship, and community fellowship.
4. The three required annual feasts (Exod. 23:14,17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16)
   a. the first feast called
      (1) Unleavened Bread – Exod. 23:15; 34:18-20; Lev. 23:5-8
      (2) Passover – Exodus 12; 34:25; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16-25; Deut. 16:1-8; Ezek. 45:21-25
      (3) see Special Topic: Passover
      (4) significance
         (a) thanksgiving and dedication of the barley harvest
         (b) commemorating the exodus
         (c) it was followed by a seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread (cf. Exod. 12:15-20; 34:18-20)
   b. the second feast called (beginning of harvest)
      (1) Feast of Harvest – Exod. 23:16; Num. 28:26
      (2) Feast of Weeks – Exod. 34:22; Num. 28:26; Deut. 16:9-12
      (3) "Fifty Days" (Pentecost) – Lev. 23:15-21; Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8
      (4) First Fruits – Lev. 23:9-14; Num. 28:26
      (5) see Special Topic: Pentecost
      (6) significance
         (a) thanksgiving and dedication of the grain harvest
         (b) commemorating the giving of the torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai by rabbinical reckoning
   c. the third feast called (end of harvest)
      (1) Feast of Ingathering – Exod. 23:16
      (2) Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (*Succoth*) – Lev. 23:34-44; Num. 29:12-40; Deut. 16:13-17
      (3) significance
         (a) thanksgiving for the general harvest
         (b) commemorating the beginning of the wilderness wandering period
         (c) it was followed by an eight-day feast (cf. Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35-38)

C. Other annual feasts

1. New Year Celebration (*Rosh Hashanah*)
   a. see Lev. 23:23-25; Num. 10:9-10; 29:1-6
   b. this day of rest and sacrifice was held on the first day of *Tishri*
   c. the feast aspect of this day, so common in the NT era, is unspecified in the Torah

2. Day of Atonement – "day of covering" or *Yom Kippur* (the only corporate fast day)
   (a) a day of rest, fasting, and repentance for the whole community
   (b) a ritual for the removal of unintentional corporate uncleanness (Tabernacle, priests, and people)
   (c) see Exod. 30:10; Leviticus 16; 23:26-32; 25:9; Num. 29:7-11
   (d) it is difficult to pin down when this feast was re-instituted after the exile

D. Other Mosaic Feast Days
   1. The Sabbath (see Special Topic: Sabbath)
      a. weekly day of rest and worship
      b. see Gen. 2:1-3; Exod. 16:22-30; 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-16; 34:21; Lev. 23:1-3; Num. 28:9-10
   2. Sabbath Year
      a. every seventh year the land rested (no sowing)
      b. see Exod. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7; Deut. 15:1
      c. it signified that YHWH owned the land and gave it to Israel
      d. all slaves were set free (cf. Exod. 21:2-6) and all debts were forgiven (cf. Deut. 15:1-6)
   3. Jubilee Year
      a. every seventh Sabbath year (i.e., 50th year)
      b. see Lev. 25:8-18; 27:17-24
      c. release of debt and returning of land, freeing of slaves (cf. Lev. 25:10,13, very similar to Sabbath Year)
      d. its inauguration is never recorded
   4. New Moon (NIDOTTE, vol. 3, pp. 1020-1021)
      a. special offerings and a day of rest
      b. see Num. 10:10; 28:11-15; 29:6; Ps. 81:3
      c. possibly commemorated the setting up of the Tabernacle (cf. Exod. 40:2,17)
      d. Jewish calendar is based on lunar cycles

E. These rituals and regulations show a development over time. These feasts and one fast may have had a beginning in pagan calendars (see Special Topic: Moon Worship), but developed into uniquely Jewish praise and devotion to YHWH. Nature (seasonal), agricultural (planting, rain, and harvest), and national events (Exodus, giving of the Law, etc.) combined to highlight certain times of the year for worship.

   It has proved to be difficult to discuss these special annual feasts because
   1. the historical development
   2. the different names the Bible and later Judaism used for the same feast
   3. the different kinds of "fruits"
      a. early ripening barley could be eaten if roasted
      b. later barley harvest
      c. later wheat harvest
   4. it is possible Lev. 23:9-14 could be an initial requirement which later became included in #3, a. or b.
   5. the possible use of two calendars, one sacred and one civil, by the ancient Israelites

▣ **"My food"** The offerings in Israel were not viewed as food for YHWH. See notes at Lev. 3:11.

▣ **"at their appointed time"** Each special day/offering had its appointed time (i.e., Num. 29:39). See Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:2.

28:3 "two lambs one year old without defect as a continual burnt offering every day" This is what is commonly called "the continual" (cf. Num. 28:6). We see it first in Exod. 29:38-42. The symbol of a lamb being on the altar continually was a symbol of God perpetually forgiving Israel's sin. Later Judaism would sacrifice a lamb at 9 AM and 3 PM.

The symbol of being "without defect" seems to mean that the lamb was innocent and it took the place of sinful Israel. It became a type of the Messiah (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).

28:4 "at twilight" Literally this is "between the two evenings" (cf. Num. 28:4,8). This phrase is often used in the discussion of the sacrificial system. It is interpreted in various ways even by the rabbis.

1. Some say it is after the heat of the day.
2. Some say it is between the time when the sun starts to go below the horizon and when it actually does.
3. Some say it is after the sun has gone down but before the first star appears.

Option #1 seems to have been chosen by the Temple authorities because they offered a lamb at 3 PM daily.

28:5 "ephah. . .hin" These are two types of ancient measurements. The exact amount of each is uncertain because the terms vary from time to time, even in the biblical material. The best source of information about measurements in Israel is Roland deVaux's *Ancient Israel Social Institutions*, vol. 1. See Special Topic: ANE Weights and Volumes at Num. 3:46b.

28:7 "a fourth of a hin. . .you shall pour out a libation of strong drink to the LORD" The term "strong drink" (BDB 1016) is usually differentiated from wine. Some say that strong drink was used because wine was not available during the wilderness wandering period.

This does refer to fermented drink (cf. Exod. 38:40). As a matter of fact, strong drink measn a highly fermented drink, which shows that fermentation itself was not evil. Here, it is used in several sacrifices. We need to rethink our view of wine and the mind of the OT Jew (cf. Ps. 104:14-15; Pro. 31:6; Eccl. 2:3; Jdgs. 9:13; John 10:1-11; 1 Tim. 5:23). See Special Topic: Wine and Strong Drink at Num. 28:2.

▣ **"the holy place"** This refers to the outer part of the shrine tent. It held the incense altar, table of show bread, and the lampstand. See Special Topic: Chart of the Tabernacle at Num. 2:2d.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:9-10

9"'Then on the sabbath day two male lambs one year old without defect, and two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering: 10This is the burnt offering of every sabbath in addition to the continual burnt offering and its drink offering.'

28:9 "on the sabbath day" A double offering was made on the sabbath day. See Special Topics: Sabbath (OT) at Num. 15:17-21 and Sabbath (NT).

SPECIAL TOPIC: SABBATH (NT)

This is from the Hebrew word (BDB 992, KB 1409) meaning "rest" or "cessation." It is connected to the seventh day of creation (see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*) where God ceased His labor after finishing initial creation and rested (cf. Gen. 2:1-3). God did not rest because He was tired, but because

1. creation was complete and good (cf. Gen. 1:31) and
2. to give mankind a regular pattern for worship and rest

The usage as a day of worship starts with Gen. 2:2-3, where YHWH uses His rest as a pattern for animals (cf. Exod. 23:12) and mankind (humans need a regular schedule of work, rest, and worship). The Sabbath begins like all the days of Genesis 1, at twilight; therefore, twilight on Friday to twilight on Saturday was the official time period. All the details of its observance are given in Exodus (especially chapters 16,20,31, and 35) and Leviticus (especially chapters 23-26). The first specialized use of this day by Israel was in Exod. 16:25-26 in the gathering of manna. It then becomes part of "the Ten Words" (cf. Exod. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15). This is one example where the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 are slightly different from the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 5. Deuteronomy is preparing Israel for the settled, agricultural life in Canaan.

The Pharisees had taken these regulations and, by their oral discussions, interpreted them (i.e., the Oral Traditions) to include many rules. Jesus often performed miracles, knowingly violating their picky rules so as to enter into a theological dialogue with them (i.e., Matthew 12). It was not the Sabbath that Jesus rejected or belittled, but their self-righteous legalism and lack of love (cf. Mark 2:27-28).

The early church worshiped on both the Sabbath and the first day of the week (i.e., Sunday, resurrection day, cf. John 20:1,19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). The Synagogue addressed the growing Christian movement by demanding members to reject Jesus as the Messiah (i.e., The Eighteen Benedictions). At this point (i.e., A.D. 70) the Christians began to meet exclusively on Sunday.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:11-15

11"'Then at the beginning of each of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls and one ram, seven male lambs one year old without defect; 12and three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, for each bull; and two-tenths of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, for the one ram; 13and a tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering for each lamb, for a burnt offering of a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. 14Their drink offerings shall be half a hin of wine for a bull and a third of a hin for the ram and a fourth of a hin for a lamb; this is the burnt offering of each month throughout the months of the year. 15And one male goat for a sin offering to the LORD; it shall be offered with its drink offering in addition to the continual burnt offering.'

28:11 "at the beginning of each of your months" This refers to the feasts known as New Moons. We can see something of the festival in Num. 10:10.

28:14 "burnt offering. . .sin offering" We learn from Leviticus 1-5 that there are several different kinds of offerings usually offered in sequence, each symbolizing a progress from a total consecration to forgiveness of sin and to freewill offerings. See full notes online in Leviticus 1-5.

28:15 "and one male goat" Literally this means "one kid of the hairy ones" (BDB 972 CONSTRUCT BDB 777). Many translations try to make this a male but this is uncertain.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:16-25

[16]"'Then on the fourteenth day of the first month shall be the Lord's Passover. [17]On the fifteenth day of this month *shall be* a feast, unleavened bread *shall be* eaten for seven days. [18]On the first day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. [19]You shall present an offering by fire, a burnt offering to the LORD: two bulls and one ram and seven male lambs one year old, having them without defect. [20]For their grain offering, you shall offer fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for a bull and two-tenths for the ram. [21]A tenth *of an ephah* you shall offer for each of the seven lambs; [22]and one male goat for a sin offering to make atonement for you. [23]You shall present these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a continual burnt offering. [24]After this manner you shall present daily, for seven days, the food of the offering by fire, of a soothing aroma to the LORD; it shall be presented with its drink offering in addition to the continual burnt offering. [25]On the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work.'

28:16 "Passover" The Passover, recorded in Exodus 12, and further identified in Lev. 23:4-8 and Deuteronomy 16, is combined with the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, making it an eight-day feast. See Special Topic: Passover at Num. 9:2.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 28:26-31

[26]"'Also on the day of the first fruits, when you present a new grain offering to the LORD in your *Feast of* Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. [27]You shall offer a burnt offering for a soothing aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs one year old; [28]and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [29]a tenth for each of the seven lambs; [30]also one male goat to make atonement for you. [31]Besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, you shall present *them* with their drink offerings. They shall be without defect.'"

28:26 "the day of the first fruits. . .*Feast of* Weeks" This is also discussed in Lev. 23:15-21 and is often called Pentecost, which means "fifty," because it comes fifty days after Passover. There is some distinction between the material in Leviticus and here in Numbers but the exact reason for the difference is uncertain. Leviticus contains the stipulations about wave offerings, which is omitted in Numbers. See Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:2.

NUMBERS 29

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Offerings of the Seventh Month	Offerings At the Feast of Trumpets	Offerings for Various Occasions	The Offerings at New Year Festival	f. The Feast of Acclamation
29:1-6	29:1-6	29:1-6	29:1-6	29:1-6
	Offerings On the Day of Atonement		The Offerings at the Day of Atonement	g. The Day of Expiation
29:7-11	29:7-11	29:7-11	29:7-11	29:7-11
	Offerings at the Feast of Tabernacles		The Offerings at the Festival of Shelters	h. The Feast of Shelters
29:12-16	29:12-16	29:12-16	29:12-16	29:12-16
29:17-19	29:17-19	29:17-19	29:17-19	29:17-19
29:20-22	29:20-22	29:20-22	29:20-22	29:20-22
29:23-25	29:23-25	29:23-25	29:23-25	29:23-25
29:26-28	29:26-28	29:26-28	29:26-28	29:26-28
29:29-31	29:29-31	29:29-31	29:29-31	29:29-31
29:32-34	29:32-34	29:32-34	29:32-34	29:32-34
29:35-38	29:35-38	29:35-38	29:35-38	29:35-38
29:39	29:39	29:39	29:39	29:39-30:1 (v. 40 is 30:1 in MT)
29:40	29:40	29:40	29:40	29:40

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:1-6

[1]"Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you a day for blowing trumpets. [2]You shall offer a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, *and* seven male lambs one year old without defect; [3]also their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, [4]and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. [5]*Offer* one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you, [6]besides the burnt offering of the new moon and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD."

29:1 "in the seventh month" The seventh month was an extremely important month for the Israelites because it contained several of their annual feast days. It denoted the end of one agricultural season and the beginning of another. The first one mentioned, the "blowing of the trumpets" on the first day of the seventh month, in later Judaism, it will become their new year festival called Rosh Hashanah (cf. Lev. 23:23-25). See Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:2 and ANE Calendar at Intro. to Numbers V. A. 1.

Remember there are two calendars in use in the ANE. One begins in the fall (month of *Tishri*) and one in the spring (*Nisan*).

29:1,12 "a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work" This implies a special religious gathering at the Tabernacle/Temple (cf. Num. 28:18,25,26).

Exactly what "laborious work" meant is uncertain but surely it meant a rest day like the Sabbath, where covenant people focused on YHWH and not their vocation or chores.

▣ **"a day for blowing trumpets"** This refers to the shophar, which was the left horn of a flat-tailed sheep. It was about eighteen inches long, was soaked in water, and then stretched out to form a slow curve; it made a distinct sound. See Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel at Num. 10:2.

29:2 "a burnt offering" See note at Leviticus 1.

▣ **"a soothing aroma"** See Special Topic: A Soothing Aroma at Num. 15:3d.

▣ **"seven"** See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture at Num. 11:16-18.

29:5 This was a sin offering (cf. Num. 29:11). See notes at Leviticus 4.

29:6 There was always a series of offerings.

1. an animal (often of several kinds)
2. grain
3. libation

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:7-11

[7]"Then on the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall humble yourselves; you shall not do any work. [8]You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD *as* a soothing aroma: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs one year old, having them without defect; [9]and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, [10]a tenth for each of the seven lambs; [11]one male goat for a sin offering, besides the sin offering of atonement and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings."

29:7 "on the tenth day of this seventh month. . .you shall humble yourselves" This refers to the Day of Atonement, the only real fast day in all of Israel's worship days (cf. Leviticus 16; 23:26-32). See full notes online at Leviticus 16. See Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:2.

▣ **"you shall not do any work"** Notice this is a complete cessation of all work, which is different from "no laborious work" in Num. 28:18,25,26; 29:1,12,35. The latter rabbis developed an extensive oral tradition around these admonitions in an attempt to protect the individual worshiper from inadvertently violating YHWH's law.

29:8 "without defect" See Special Topic: Without Blemish at Num. 6:14.

29:11 "for a sin offering" This is repeated everyday, cf. Num. 29:11,19,25,31,34,38. See notes online at Leviticus 4.

▣ **"atonement"** See Special Topic: Atonement at Num. 5:7b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:12-16

[12]"Then on the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall observe a feast to the LORD for seven days. [13]You shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire as a soothing aroma to the LORD: thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old, which are without defect; [14]and their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, [15]and a tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; [16]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering."

29:12-38 "on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. . ." Numbers 29:12-38 describes the sacrifices of the different days of the Feasts of Booths (cf. Lev. 23:33-36,39-44). See Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:2.

The offerings for each day of the eight-day feast are specified.

1. day one
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 13 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 14 lambs
   b. grain offering for each (different amounts)
   c. libations for each animal
   d. 1 male goat for a sin offering (cf. Num. 29:11,19,25,31,34,38)
   e. besides the regular continual offering (cf. Num. 28:3-8)
2. day two
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 12 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 4 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations for each animal
   d. 1 male goat for a sin offering (Leviticus 4)
3. third day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 11 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 14 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations
   d. 1 male goat for a sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)
4. fourth day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 10 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 14 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations
   d. 1 male goat for sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)
5. fifth day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)

(1) 9 bulls
(2) 2 rams
(3) 14 male lambs

b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
c. libations
d. 1 male goat for sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)

6. sixth day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 9 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 14 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations
   d. 1 male goat for sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)
7. seventh day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 7 bulls
      (2) 2 rams
      (3) 14 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations
   d. 1 male goat for sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)
8. eighth day
   a. burnt offerings (cf. Leviticus 1)
      (1) 1 bull
      (2) 1 ram
      (3) 7 male lambs
   b. grain offering (cf. Leviticus 2)
   c. libations
   d. 1 male goat for sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:17-19

[17]"Then on the second day: twelve bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [18]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [19]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their drink offerings."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:20-22

[20]"Then on the third day: eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [21]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [22]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:23-25

[23]"Then on the fourth day: ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [24]their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their

number according to the ordinance; [25]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:26-28

[26]"Then on the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [27]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [28]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:29-31

[29]"Then on the sixth day: eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [30]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [31]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offerings."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:32-34

[32]"Then on the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; [33]and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [34]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering, its grain offering and its drink offering."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:35-38

[35]"On the eighth day you shall have a solemn assembly; you shall do no laborious work. [36]But you shall present a burnt offering, an offering by fire, as a soothing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs one year old without defect; [37]their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; [38]and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:39

[39]"You shall present these to the LORD at your appointed times, besides your votive offerings and your freewill offerings, for your burnt offerings and for your grain offerings and for your drink offerings and for your peace offerings.'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 29:40

[40]Moses spoke to the sons of Israel in accordance with all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

29:39-40 Basically there are two types of sacrificed which are explained in detail in Leviticus 1-3. There are three voluntary:

1. the burnt offering
2. the grain offering
3. the peace offering

There are two required sacrifices (Leviticus 4-5):

1. the sin offering
2. the quilt offering

The difference between the sin and guilt offering is that the guilt offering involves restitution, which may be made to a covenant brother.

NUMBERS 30

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Law of Vows	The Law Concerning Vows	On Vows Made by Women	Rules About Vows	Laws Concerning Vows (MT versing)
30:1-5	30:1-5	30:1-2	30:1-2	
				30:2
		30:3-5	30:3-5	30:3
				30:4-6
30:6-8	30:6-8	30:6-15	30:6-8	
				30:7-9
30:9-12	30:9		30:9	
	30:10-15		30:10-15	30:10
				30:11-13
30:13-15				
				30:14
				30:15-16
30:16	30:16	30:16	30:16	
				30:17

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading**")**

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. This is about vows/oaths to YHWH. It may contextually relate to the voluntary actions of Num. 29:39.

B. If vowed, one must perform the vow but there are some contingencies (notice the number of "ifs," BDB 49, cf. Num. 30:5,6,8,10,12,14,15). Married women's vows must be confirmed by the husband (or if unmarried, the father).

Widowed or divorced women's vows do not need to be confirmed (Num. 30:9).

C. There are four intensified grammatical features (i.e., the INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB from the same root).
1. Num. 30:6 – "if she should marry"
2. Num. 30:12 – "if her husband indeed annuls them"
3. Num. 30:14 – "if her husband indeed says nothing"
4. Num. 30:15 – "but if he indeed annuls them"

D. There are four conditions relating to a woman's male guardian.
1. a young woman still living at home, Num. 30:4-5
2. a betrothed woman still living at home, Num. 30:6-9

3. a widowed or divorced woman, Num. 30:9
4. a married woman, Num. 30:10-12

E. The plight of women in the ANE was surely a "second class" existence but Jesus changed everything. See Special Topic: Women in the Bible at Num. 6:2.

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:1-5

[1]Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the word which the LORD has commanded. [2]If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth. [3]Also if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by an obligation in her father's house in her youth, [4]and her father hears her vow and her obligation by which she has bound herself, and her father says nothing to her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she has bound herself shall stand. [5]But if her father should forbid her on the day he hears *of it*, none of her vows or her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will forgive her because her father had forbidden her."

30:2 "If a man makes a vow to the LORD" Numbers 30 basically deals with laws connected with making vows/pledges/oaths to YHWH ("if. . ."). We can see how important making a vow was by reading Deut. 23:21-23. The book of Leviticus discusses vows at some length (cf. Lev. 7:16; 22:18-23; 23:38; 27:1ff). When men vowed, they were required to fulfill it, no exceptions!

Notice the parallels.

1. "vows a vow" – VERB (BDB 623, KB 674, *Qal* IMPERFECT) plus the NOUN (BDB 623)
2. "swears a swear" – VERB (BDB 989, KB 1396, *Niphal* INFINITIVE) plus NOUN (BDB 64)
3. "bind a binding obligation" – VERB (BDB 63, KB 75, *Qal* INFINITIVE) plus NOUN (BDB 64)
4. the three word plays are characterized:
   a. he shall not violate his word
   b. he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth

In the OT oaths and blessings, once spoken, had a spiritual force to fulfillment (i.e., Genesis 27, Isaac's blessing). This is surely true of God's word (cf. Isa. 55:9-11).

▣ **"vows"** The difference between a vow and an oath/pledge is that a vow has a conditional element based on God's actions, while an oath/pledge is a human promise with no condition on God's part.

30:3 "if a woman makes a vow to the LORD" Basically this chapter is a discussion of how a woman's vows can and cannot be limited by the male authority figure in her life. This will move from her father when she is young, to her betrothed husband, and then to her husband. Also, stipulation is made for a widow and a divorced woman being responsible for their vows. Some have asserted that this is another sign of the male dominance in the OT. I think the probable reason was that women did not own property themselves and they could not commit property or their own time to the Lord without permission of the one to whom they were bound.

30:5 "if her father should forbid her on the day he hears *of it*" This same phrase is used quite often. It means that the minute that the male involved heard the vow, he had to renounce it at that point and not wait until a later time.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:6-8

6"However, if she should marry while under her vows or the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself, 7and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears *it*, then her vows shall stand and her obligations by which she has bound herself shall stand. 8But if on the day her husband hears *of it*, he forbids her, then he shall annul her vow which she is under and the rash statement of her lips by which she has bound herself; and the LORD will forgive her."

30:6

NASB	**"rash statement"**
NKJV	**"rash utterance**
NRSV	**"thoughtless"**
TEV	**"carelessly"**
NJB	**"without due reflection"**

The MT has a NOUN CONSTRUCT (BDB 105, plus 973). BDB 105 occurs only here and v. 8. A related form occurs in Lev. 5:4; Ps. 166:33; Pro. 12:18. See NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 642, #6 and vol. 2, p. 838. Believers must be careful what they promise God, even when the motive is good, the reality of the promise may be unrealistic.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:9-12

9"But the vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, everything by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her. 10However, if she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an obligation with an oath, 11and her husband heard *it*, but said nothing to her *and* did not forbid her, then all her vows shall stand and every obligation by which she bound herself shall stand. 12But if her husband indeed annuls them on the day he hears *them*, then whatever proceeds out of her lips concerning her vows or concerning the obligation of herself shall not stand; her husband has annulled them, and the LORD will forgive her."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:13-15

13"Every vow and every binding oath to humble herself, her husband may confirm it or her husband may annul it. 14But if her husband indeed says nothing to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all her obligations which are on her; he has confirmed them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard them. 15But if he indeed annuls them after he has heard them, then he shall bear her guilt."

30:15 This, like Leviticus 27, shows the vow and the problem with trying to play fast and loose with making promises to God.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 30:16

16These are the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, *as* between a man and his wife, *and as* between a father and his daughter, *while she is* in her youth in her father's house.

30:16 "the statutes" See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Num. 10:8.

NUMBERS 31

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
The Slaughter of Midian	Vengeance on the Midianites	Holy War Against Midian (30:16-31:54)	The Holy War Against Midian	The Holy War Against Midian
31:1-12	31:1-11	31:1-12	31:1-2	31:1-2
			31:3-4	31:3-4
			31:5-8	31:5-6
				31:7-12
	Return From the War		31:9-12	
	31:12-20		The Army Returns	The Slaughter of the Women and Purification
31:13-20		31:13-20	31:13-20	31:13-20
31:21-24	31:21-24	31:21-24	31:21-24	31:21-23
				31:24
Division of the Booty	Division of the Plunder		Division of the Loot	The Allocation of the Booty
31:25-31	31:25-31	31:25-30	31:25-31	31:25
				31:26-30
		31:31		31:31-41
31:32-35	31:32-41	31:32-35	31:32-41	
31:36-41		31:36-41		
31:42-47	31:42-47	31:42-47	31:42-47	31:42-47
				The Offerings
31:48-54	31:48-54	31:48-54	31:48-54	31:48-52
				31:53-54

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:1-12

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Take full vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites; afterward you will be gathered to your people." [3]Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm men from among you for the war, that they may go against Midian to execute the LORD's vengeance on Midian. [4]A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war." [5]So there were furnished from the thousands of Israel, a thousand from each tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. [6]Moses sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the war, and Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, to the war with them, and the holy vessels and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand. [7]So they made war against Midian, just as the LORD had commanded Moses, and they killed every male. [8]They killed the kings of Midian along with the *rest of* their slain: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba,

the five kings of Midian; they also killed Balaam the son of Beor with the sword. [9]The sons of Israel captured the women of Midian and their little ones; and all their cattle and all their flocks and all their goods they plundered. [10]Then they burned all their cities where they lived and all their camps with fire. [11]They took all the spoil and all the prey, both of man and of beast. [12]They brought the captives and the prey and the spoil to Moses, and to Eleazar the priest and to the congregation of the sons of Israel, to the camp at the plains of Moab, which are by the Jordan opposite Jericho.

31:2 "Take full vengeance" This VERB (BDB 667, KB 721, *Qal* IMPERATIVE) relates to YHWH's justice against the Midianites for being involved in the purposeful trap of involving Israel's fertility worship at Peor (cf. Num. 25:1-3,16-18).

Notice the VERB is followed by the NOUN of the same root (BDB 668), a COGNATE ACCUSATIVE for emphasis. What Moab and Midian desired for Israel is now given to them.

▣ **"afterward you will be gathered to your people"** This refers to the imminent death of Moses (cf. Num. 27:12-14), which is related to his disobedience at Num. 20:8-13,24.

In the OT, at death people went to the holding place of the dead (i.e., *Sheol*, see Special Topic: Where are the Dead? at Num. 16:30) to await resurrection/judgment day (cf. Isa. 25:8; 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; Dan. 12:2). It was a gloomy, silent existence. Only with the progressive revelation of the NT does the picture become clearer.

Often in the OT the afterlife is expressed by the idiom "slept with their fathers." This does not imply an unconscious state but a gathering of the family.

31:2-4 Moses directs a portion of the army (i.e., one thousand or one military unit from each tribe). See Special Topic: Thousand (*eleph*) at Num. 10:36.

1. arm men – BDB 323, KB 321, *Niphal* IMPERATIVE
2. go against Midian – BDB 224, KB 243, *Qal* IMPERFECT used in a JUSSIVE sense

31:3 "Arm men from among you for war" This VERB (BDB 323 II, KB 321, *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE) seems to mean "conscript." Apparently these were not professional soldiers but just men of the different tribes (like Gideon's men in Judges 7).

31:6 Then Phinehas, the zealous priest from Numbers 25, went into battle with them (i.e., symbol of YHWH's presence and power with them). He took with him

1. "the holy vessels," which may refer to
   a. the ark of the covenant (cf. Num. 10:35-36; 14:44; Josh. 6:6-7; 1 Sam. 4:3-11; see Special Topic: Ark of the Covenant at Num. 1:50-51b)
   b. JPSOA footnote, following Targums, cf. Num. 27:21, the Urim, cf. Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 14:41; 28:6
   c. the silver trumpets, cf. Josh 6:6-7
2. The trumpets, which refers to the silver trumpets of Num. 10:1-10; see Special Topic: Horns Used by Israel at Num. 10:2)

31:7-12 This was YHWH's war against Midian but it was not "holy war," as Jericho was, where everything that breathed was killed and all the spoils belonged to YHWH (i.e., "under the ban"). See Special Topic: Curse (OT) at Num. 16:26 and Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 258-267.

Here, only selected people were put to the sword.

1. the kings (five are listed by name, which is a very specific historical detail)
2. every male of fighting age (in Israel that would be 20 years old and above)

3. Balaam is killed (cf. Num. 31:16) because apparently he was part of the purposeful plan to involve Israel in fertility worship so YHWH would judge them.

Why Balaam is with the Midianites is not stated. Numbers 31:16 is the most negative verse about Balaam in all this context (i.e., chapters 22-24).

Everyone was not killed (v. 11).

1. all women
2. all children
3. all animals

This was not a complete destruction of Midian because they reappear in great numbers in Judges 6.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:13-20

[13]Moses and Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the congregation went out to meet them outside the camp. [14]Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, who had come from service in the war. [15]And Moses said to them, "Have you spared all the women? [16]Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord. [17]Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately. [18]But all the girls who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves. [19]And you, camp outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person and whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves, you and your captives, on the third day and on the seventh day. [20]You shall purify for yourselves every garment and every article of leather and all the work of goats' *hair*, and all articles of wood."

31:13-20 "Moses and Eleazar" It seems from v. 6 that Phinehas, the zealous priest, was with the Israelite soldiers and was part of the decision-making process that allowed some to be spared.

But Moses, Eleazar, and the tribal leadership were angry at the Midian women for their purposeful participation in the trickery of Peor (v. 16). For this reason a "partial holy war" judgment was issued against

1. all married women or those involved in fertility worship
2. all the male children

What a gruesome scene this must have been (i.e., ritual slaughter). This is so offensive to modern western individualism. But remember this is a theocratic, monotheistic community surrounded by pagan polytheism. Preventing the spiritual corruption of the covenant people was crucial. YHWH's love for all will later be expressed in the Messiah (cf. Isaiah 53; see Special Topic: YHWH's Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29).

31:16

NASB, NKJV	**"trespass"**
NRSV	**"act treacherously"**
TEV, NJB	**"to be unfaithful"**
REB	**"disloyalty"**

This VERB (BDB 588, KB 608, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) is used twice in this chapter (only in this chapter) with very different senses.

1. Num. 31:5 – "provided," "selected," or "assigned to"
2. Num. 31:6 – KB, "to become the occasion for apostasy "
   – BDB, "offer (commit) a trespass against"

31:18 All the virgins were spared and incorporated into Israel (i.e., Deut. 20:14; 21:10-14). This, like Rahab and Ruth, shows Israel was not primarily an ethnic focus but a religious focus. The initial promise was to Abraham and his seed, but the NT show the purposeful widening of the inclusion (i.e, Rom. 2:8,29; Gal. 3:23-

29; 4:12-31; Eph. 2:11-22; see Special Topic: YHWH' Eternal Redemptive Plan at Num. 11:29 and OT Predictions of the Future vs. NT Predictions.

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHY ARE THE END-TIME EVENTS SO CONTROVERSIAL?

Through the years of my study of eschatology I have learned that most Christians do not have or want a developed, systematized, end-time chronology. There are some Christians who focus or major on this area of Christianity for theological, psychological, or denominational reasons. These Christians seem to become obsessed with how it will all end, and somehow miss the urgency of the gospel! Believers cannot affect God's eschatological (end-time) agenda, but they can participate in the gospel mandate (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Most believers affirm a Second Coming of Christ and an end-time culmination of the promises of God. The interpretive problems arising from how to understand this temporal culmination come from several biblical paradoxes.

1. the tension between Old Covenant prophetic models and New Covenant apostolic models
2. the tension between the Bible's monotheism (one God for all) and the election of Israel (a special people)
3. the tension between the conditional aspect of biblical covenants and promises ("if. . .then") and the unconditional faithfulness of God to fallen mankind's redemption
4. the tension between Near Eastern literary genres and modern western literary models
5. the tension between the Kingdom of God as present, yet future
6. the tension between belief in the imminent return of Christ and the belief that some events must happen first.

Let us discuss these tensions one at a time.

FIRST TENSION (OT racial, national, and geographical categories vs. all believers over all the world)

The OT prophets predict a restoration of a Jewish kingdom in Palestine centered in Jerusalem where all the nations of the earth gather to praise and serve a Davidic ruler, but Jesus nor the NT Apostles ever focus on this agenda. Is not the OT inspired (cf. Matt. 5:17-19)? Have the NT authors omitted crucial end-time events?

There are several sources of information about the end of the world.

3. OT prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)
4. OT apocalyptic writers (cf. Ezekiel 37-39; Daniel 7-12; Zechariah)
5. intertestamental, non-canonical Jewish apocalyptic writers (like I Enoch, which is alluded to in Jude)
6. Jesus Himself (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21)
7. the writings of Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 5; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thess. 2)
8. the writings of John (1 John and Revelation).

Do these all clearly teach an end-time agenda (events, chronology, persons)? If not, why? Are they not all inspired (except the Jewish intertestamental writings)?

The Spirit revealed truths to the OT writers in terms and categories they could understand. However, through progressive revelation the Spirit has expanded these OT eschatological concepts to a universal scope ("the mystery of Christ," cf. Eph. 2:11-3:13). Here are some relevant examples:

1. The city of Jerusalem in the OT is used as a metaphor for the people of God (Zion), but is projected into the NT as a term expressing God's acceptance of all repentant, believing humans (the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22). The theological expansion of a literal, physical city into the new people of God (believing Jews and Gentiles) is foreshadowed in God's promise to redeem fallen

mankind in Gen. 3:15, before there even were any Jews or a Jewish capital city. Even Abraham's call (cf. Gen. 12:1-3) involved the Gentiles (cf. Gen. 12:3; Exod. 19:5).

2. In the OT the enemies of God's people are the surrounding nations of the Ancient Near East, but in the NT they have been expanded to all unbelieving, anti-God, Satanically-inspired people. The battle has moved from a geographical, regional conflict to a worldwide, cosmic conflict (cf. Colossians).
3. The promise of a land which is <u>so</u> integral in the OT (the Patriarchal promises of Genesis, cf. Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7,15,16; 17:8) has now become the whole earth. New Jerusalem comes down to a recreated earth, not the Near East only or exclusively (cf. Revelation 21-22).
4. Some other examples of OT prophetic concepts being expanded are
   a. the seed of Abraham is now the spiritually circumcised (cf. Rom. 2:28-29)
   b. the covenant people now include Gentiles (cf. Hos. 1:10; 2:23, quoted in Rom. 9:24-26; also Lev. 26:12; Exod. 29:45, quoted in 2 Cor. 6:16-18 and Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2, quoted in Titus 2:14)
   c. the temple is now Jesus (cf. Matt. 26:61; 27:40; John 2:19-21) and through Him the local church (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16) or the individual believer (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19)
   d. even Israel and its characteristic descriptive OT phrases now refer to the whole people of God (i.e.,"Israel," cf. Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16, i.e.,"kingdom of priests," cf. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9-10; Rev. 1:6)

The prophetic model has been fulfilled, expanded, and is now more inclusive. Jesus and the Apostolic writers do not present the end-time in the same way as the OT prophets (cf. Martin Wyngaarden, *The Future of The Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfillment*). Modern interpreters who try to make the OT model literal or normative twist the Revelation into a very Jewish book and force meaning into atomized, ambiguous phrases of Jesus and Paul! The NT writers do not negate the OT prophets, but show their ultimate universal implication. There is no organized, logical system to Jesus' or Paul's eschatology. Their purpose is primarily redemptive or pastoral.

However, even within the NT there is tension. There is no clear systemization of eschatological events. In many ways the Revelation surprisingly uses OT allusions in describing the end instead of the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13)! It follows the literary genre initiated by Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, but developed during the intertestamental period (Jewish apocalyptic literature). This may have been John's way of linking the Old and New Covenants. It shows the age-old pattern of human rebellion and God's commitment to redemption! But it must be noted that although Revelation uses OT language, persons, and events, it reinterprets them in light of first century Rome (cf. Rev. 1:7).

SECOND TENSION (monotheism vs. an elect people)

The biblical emphasis is on one personal, spiritual, creator-redeemer, God (cf. Exod. 8:10; Isa. 44:24; 45:5-7,14,18,21-22; 46:9; Jer. 10:6-7). The OT's uniqueness in its own day was its monotheism. All of the surrounding nations were polytheists. The oneness of God is the heart of OT revelation (cf. Deut. 6:4). Creation is a stage for the purpose of fellowship between God and mankind, made in His image and likeness (cf. Gen.1:26-27). However, mankind rebelled, sinning against God's love, leadership, and purpose (cf. Genesis 3). God's love and purpose was so strong and sure that He promised to redeem fallen humanity (cf. Gen. 3:15)!

The tension arises when God chooses to use one man, one family, one nation to reach the rest of mankind. God's election of Abraham and the Jews as a kingdom of priests (cf. Exod. 19:4-6) caused pride instead of service, exclusion instead of inclusion. God's call of Abraham involved the intentional blessing of all mankind (cf. Gen. 12:3). It must be remembered and emphasized that OT election was for service, not salvation. All Israel was never right with God, never eternally saved based solely on her birthright (cf. John 8:31-59; Matt. 3:9), but by personal faith and obedience (cf. Gen. 15:6, quoted in Rom. 4:2,9,22; Gal. 3:6). Israel lost her

mission (the church is now a kingdom of priests, cf. Rev. 1:6; 2 Pet.2:5,9), turned mandate into privilege, service into a special standing! God chose one to choose all!

THIRD TENSION (conditional covenants vs. unconditional covenants)

There is a theological tension or paradox between conditional and unconditional covenants. It is surely true that God's redemptive purpose/plan is unconditional (cf. Gen. 15:12-21). However, the mandated human response is always conditional!

The "if. . .then" pattern appears in both OT and NT. God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. This tension has caused much confusion. Interpreters have tended to focus on only one "horn of the dilemma," God's faithfulness or human effort, God's sovereignty or mankind's free will. Both are biblical and necessary.

This relates to eschatology, to God's OT promises to Israel. If God promises it, that settles it! God is bound to His promises; His reputation is involved (cf. Ezek. 36:22-38). The unconditional and conditional covenants meet in Christ (cf. Isaiah 53), not Israel! God's ultimate faithfulness lies in the redemption of all who will repent and believe, not in who was your father/mother! Christ, not Israel, is the key to all of God's covenants and promises. If there is a theological parenthesis in the Bible, it is not the Church, but Israel (cf. Acts 7 and Galatians 3).

The world mission of gospel proclamation has passed to the Church (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It is still a conditional covenant! This is not to imply that God has totally rejected the Jews (cf. Romans 9-11). There may be a place and purpose for end-time, <u>believing</u> Israel (cf. Zech. 12:10).

FOURTH TENSION (Near Eastern literary models vs. western models)

Genre is a critical element in correctly interpreting the Bible. The Church developed in a western (Greek) cultural setting. Eastern literature is much more figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic than modern, western culture's literary models. It focuses on people, encounters, and events more than succinct propositional truths. Christians have been guilty of using their history and literary models to interpret biblical prophecy (both OT and NT). Each generation and geographical entity has used its culture, history, and literalness to interpret Revelation. Every one of them has been wrong! It is arrogant to think that modern western culture is the focus of biblical prophecy!

The genre in which the original, inspired author chooses to write is a literary contract with the reader. The book of Revelation is not historical narrative. It is a combination of letter (chapters 1-3), prophecy, and mostly apocalyptic literature. It is as wrong to make the Bible say more than was intended by the original author as it is to make it say less than what he intended! Interpreters' arrogance and dogmatism are even more inappropriate in a book like Revelation.

The Church has never agreed on a proper interpretation of Revelation. My concern is to hear and deal with the whole Bible, not some selected part(s). The Bible's eastern mind-set presents truth in tension-filled pairs. Our western trend toward propositional truth is not invalid, but unbalanced! I think it is possible to remove at least some of the impasse in interpreting Revelation by noting its changing purpose to successive generations of believers. It is obvious to most interpreters that Revelation must be interpreted in light of its own day and its genre. An historical approach to Revelation must deal with what the first readers would have, and could have, understood. In many ways modern interpreters have lost the meaning of many of the symbols of the book. Revelation's initial main thrust was to encourage persecuted believers. It showed God's control of history (as did the OT prophets); it affirmed that history is moving toward an appointed terminus, judgment or blessing (as did the OT prophets). It affirmed in first century Jewish apocalyptic terms God's love, presence, power, and sovereignty!

It functions in these same theological ways to every generation of believers. It depicts the cosmic struggle of good and evil. The first century details may have been lost to us, but not the powerful, comforting truths. When modern, western interpreters try to force the details of Revelation into their contemporary history, the pattern of false interpretations continues!

It is quite possible that the details of the book may become strikingly literal again (as did the OT in relation to the birth, life, and death of Christ) for the last generation of believers as they face the onslaught of an anti-God leader (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2) and culture. No one can know these literal fulfillments of the Revelation until the words of Jesus (cf. Matthew 24; Mark 13; and Luke 21) and Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; and 2 Thessalonians 2) also become historically evident. Guessing, speculation, and dogmatism are all inappropriate. Apocalyptic literature allows this flexibility. Thank God for images and symbols that surpass historical narrative! God is in control; He reigns; He comes!

Most modern commentaries miss the point of the genre! Modern western interpreters often seek a clear, logical system of theology rather than being fair with an ambiguous, symbolic, dramatic genre of Jewish apocalyptic literature. This truth is expressed well by Ralph P. Martin in his article, "Approaches to New Testament Exegesis," in the book *New Testament Interpretation*, edited by I. Howard Marshall:

> "Unless we recognize the dramatic quality of this writing and recall the way in which language is being used as a vehicle to express religious truth, we shall grievously err in our understanding of the Apocalypse, and mistakenly try to interpret its visions as though it were a book of literal prose and concerned to describe events of empirical and datable history. To attempt the latter course is to run into all manner of problems of interpretation. More seriously it leads to a distortion of the essential meaning of apocalyptic and so misses the great value of this part of the New Testament as a dramatic assertion in mythopoetic language of the sovereignty of God in Christ and the paradox of his rule which blends might and love (cf. Rev. 5:5,6; the Lion is the Lamb)" (p. 235).

W. Randolph Tate in his book *Biblical Interpretations*:

> "No other genre of the Bible has been so fervently read with such depressing results as apocalypse, especially the books of Daniel and Revelation. This genre had suffered from a disastrous history of misinterpretation due to a fundamental misunderstanding of its literary forms, structure, and purpose. Because of its very claim to reveal what is shortly to happen, apocalypse has been viewed as a road map into and a blueprint of the future. The tragic flaw in this view is the assumption that the books' frame of reference is the reader's contemporary age rather than the author's. This misguided approach to apocalypse (particularly Revelation) treats the work as if it were a cryptogram by which contemporary events can be used to interpret the symbol of the text. . .First, the interpreter must recognize that apocalyptic communicates its messages through symbolism. To interpret a symbol literally when it is metaphoric is simply to misinterpret. The issue is not whether the events in apocalyptic are historical. The events may be historical; they may have really happened, or might happen, but the author presents events and communicates meaning through images and archetypes" (p. 137).

From *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, edited by Ryken, Wilhost and Longman III:

> "Today's readers are often puzzled and frustrated by this genre. The unexpected imagery and out-of-this-world experiences seem bizarre and out of sync with most of Scripture. Taking this literature at face value leaves many readers scrambling to determine 'what will happen when,' thus missing the intent of the apocalyptic message" (p. 35).

FIFTH TENSION (the Kingdom of God as present yet future)

The kingdom of God is present, yet future. This theological paradox becomes focused at the point of eschatology. If one expects a literal fulfillment of all OT prophecies to Israel then the Kingdom becomes mostly a restoration of Israel to a geographical locality and a theological pre-eminence! This would necessitate that the Church is secretly raptured out at chapter 5 and the remaining chapters relate to Israel (but note Rev. 22:16).

However, if the focus is on the kingdom being inaugurated by the promised OT Messiah, then it is present with Christ's first coming, and then the focus becomes the incarnation, life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Christ. The theological emphasis is on a current salvation. The kingdom has come, the OT is fulfilled in Christ's offer of salvation to all, not His millennial reign over some!

It is surely true that the Bible speaks of both of Christ's comings, but where is the emphasis to be placed? It seems to me that most OT prophecies focus on the first coming, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom (cf. Daniel 2). In many ways this is analogous to the eternal reign of God (cf. Daniel 7). In the OT the focus is on the eternal reign of God, yet the mechanism for that reign's manifestation is the ministry of the Messiah (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26-27). It is not a question of which is true; both are true, but where is the emphasis? It must be said that some interpreters become so focused on the millennial reign of the Messiah (cf. Revelation 20) that they have missed the biblical focus on the eternal reign of the Father. Christ's reign is a preliminary event. As the two comings of Christ were not obvious in the OT, neither is a temporal reign of the Messiah!

The key to Jesus' preaching and teaching is the kingdom of God. It is both present (in salvation and service), and future (in pervasiveness and power). Revelation, if it focuses on a Messianic millennial reign (cf. Revelation 20), is preliminary, not ultimate (cf. Revelation 21-22). It is not obvious from the OT that a temporal reign is necessary; as a matter of fact, the Messianic reign of Daniel 7 is eternal, not millennial.

SIXTH TENSION (imminent return of Christ vs. the delayed *Parousia*)

Most believers have been taught that Jesus is coming soon, suddenly, and unexpectedly (cf. Matt. 10:23; 24:27,34,44; Mark 9:1; 13:30; Rev. 1:1,3; 2:16; 3:11; 22:7,10,12,20). But every expectant generation of believers so far has been wrong! The soonness (immediacy) of Jesus' return is a powerful promised hope of every generation, but a reality to only one (and that one a persecuted one). Believers must live as if He were coming tomorrow, but plan and implement the Great Commission (cf. Matt. 28:19-20) if He tarries.

Some passages in the Gospels and 1 and 2 Thessalonians are based on a delayed Second Coming (*Parousia*). There are some historical events that must happen first:

1. world-wide evangelization (cf. Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10)
2. the revelation of "the man of Sin" (cf. Matt. 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 13)
3. the great persecution (cf. Matt. 24:21,24; Revelation 13)

There is a purposeful ambiguity (cf. Matt. 24:42-51; Mark 13:32-36)! Live every day as if it were your last but plan and train for future ministry!

CONSISTENCY AND BALANCE

It must be said that the different schools of modern eschatological interpretation all contain half truths. They explain and interpret well some texts. The problem lies in consistency and balance. Often there is a set of presuppositions which use the biblical text to fill in the pre-set theological skeleton. The Bible does not reveal a logical, chronological, systematic eschatology. It is like a family album. The pictures are true, but not always in order, in context, in a logical sequence. Some of the pictures have fallen out of the album and later generations of family members do not know exactly how to put them back. The key to proper interpretation of Revelation is the intent of the original author as revealed in his choice of literary genre. Most interpreters try to carry their exegetical tools and procedures from other genres of the NT into their interpretations of Revelation. They focus on the OT instead of allowing the teachings of Jesus and Paul to set the theological structure and let Revelation act as illustrative.

I must admit that I approach this commentary on Revelation with some fear and trepidation, not because of the curse of Rev. 22:18-19, but because of the level of controversy the interpretation of this book has caused and continues to cause among God's people. I love God's revelation. It is true when all men are liars (cf. Rom. 3:4)! Please use this commentary as an attempt to be thought provoking and not definitive, as a sign post and not a road map, as a "what if," not a "thus says the Lord." I have come face to face with my own inadequacies, biases, and theological agenda. I have also seen those of other interpreters. It almost seems that people find in Revelation what they expect to find. The genre lends itself to abuse! However, it is in the Bible

for a purpose. Its placement as the concluding "word" is not by accident. It has a message from God to His children of each and every generation. God wants us to understand! Let us join hands, not form camps; let us affirm what is clear and central, not all that may be, might be, could be true. God help us all!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:21-24

[21]Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to battle, "This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded Moses: [22]only the gold and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead, [23]everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water. [24]And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may enter the camp."

31:21-24 The spoils of war must be

1. cleansed (Num. 31:23)
   a. by fire
   b. by the water of the red heifer's ashes
   c. by washing their clothes (Num. 31:24)
2. shared with the priests and Levites (Num. 31:28)

31:21 "the statute of the law" See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Num. 10:8.

31:23 "fire" See Special Topic: Fire at Num. 11:1b.

▣ **"purified with water"** This seems to refer to the ashes of the Red Heifer (cf. Num. 19:1-10).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:25-31

[25]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [26]"You and Eleazar the priest and the heads of the fathers' *households* of the congregation take a count of the booty that was captured, both of man and of animal; [27]and divide the booty between the warriors who went out to battle and all the congregation. [28]Levy a tax for the LORD from the men of war who went out to battle, one in five hundred of the persons and of the cattle and of the donkeys and of the sheep; [29]take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest, as an offering to the LORD. [30]From the sons of Israel's half, you shall take one drawn out of every fifty of the persons, of the cattle, of the donkeys and of the sheep, from all the animals, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." [31]Moses and Eleazar the priest did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

31:25-31 This is a discussion of a percentage of the spoils that belongs to the tribe of Levi (i.e., priest, v. 4 and Levites, v. 47). It was a symbolic way of acknowledging that the victory was YHWH's victory!

Notice that the Levites received much more than the priests. This must mean there were many more Levites than priests. Only the family of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam were priests. All the other Levite families were Levites who serve the Tabernacle and the priests.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:32-35

[32]Now the booty that remained from the spoil which the men of war had plundered was 675,000 sheep, [33]and 72,000 cattle, [34]and 61,000 donkeys, [35]and of human beings, of the women who had not known man intimately, all the persons were 32,000.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:36-41

[36]The half, the portion of those who went out to war, was *as follows*: the number of sheep was 337,500, [37]and the LORD's levy of the sheep was 675; [38]and the cattle were 36,000, from which the LORD's levy was 72; [39]and the donkeys were 30,500, from which the LORD's levy was 61; [40]and the human beings were 16,000, from whom the LORD's levy was 32 persons. [41]Moses gave the levy *which was* the LORD's offering to Eleazar the priest, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

31:40 It is unstated how the virgins dedicated to YHWH were used.

1. wives of priests (normally priests married from tribe of Levi)
2. servants at the temple (i.e., Exod. 38:8; 1 Sam. 2:22)

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:42-47

[42]As for the sons of Israel's half, which Moses separated from the men who had gone to war— [43]now the congregation's half was 337,500 sheep, [44] and 36,000 cattle, [45] and 30,500 donkeys, [46] and the human beings were 16,000— [47] and from the sons of Israel's half, Moses took one drawn out of every fifty, both of man and of animals, and gave them to the Levites, who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 31:48-54

[48]Then the officers who were over the thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, approached Moses, [49]and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a census of men of war who are in our charge, and no man of us is missing. [50]So we have brought as an offering to the LORD what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD." [51]Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from them, all kinds of wrought articles. [52]All the gold of the offering which they offered up to the LORD, from the captains of thousands and the captains of hundreds, was 16,750 shekels. [53]The men of war had taken booty, every man for himself. [54]So Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it to the tent of meeting as a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD.

31:48-54 The military leaders informed Moses that during the military action against Midian not one Israeli soldier was killed. In gratitude and recognition of YHWH's power/mercy, they wanted to give an extra gift from the spoils to YHWH. It became a "memorial" in the Tabernacle.

31:50 The voluntary gifts of precious metals were to make atonement for the slaughter of so many people. They felt guilty being in contact with dead bodies. This is one of the very few OT examples of a non-bloody, atonement sacrifice.

31:52 The amount of gold is shocking, as are all the numbers in the latter part of this chapter. One wonders if

1. it is literal
2. it is symbolic
3. it is textual error

Even the NET Bible, p. 328, is uncomfortable with these large numbers, "Until a solution for numbers in the book can be found, or the current translation confirmed, one must remain cautious in interpretation."

These large numbers were a cultural (ANE) way to show the power of Israel's God (i.e., Jdgs. 7:2-8). The victory was not the 12,000 of Israel but the wrath of God on Midian's evil schemes and lifestyle choices. The religious purity of Israel was the main issue.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. How is Numbers 31 related to Numbers 25?
2. Why could the High Priest not go into battle with the Israeli soldiers?
3. What did Phinehas take with him from the Tabernacle into battle (v. 6)?
4. Is the war against Midian "holy war"? Define "Holy War."
5. Why was Balaam with Midian? Why was he killed?
6. Why were the women and male children killed?
7. Why is the tax for Levites so much higher than for priests?
8. How does one deal honestly with these huge numbers?

NUMBERS 32

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Reuben and Gad Settle in Gilead	The Tribes Settling East of the Jordan	The Allotment of Land in Trans Jordan	The Tribes East of the Jordan	The Allocation of the Trans-Jordan
32:1-5	32:1-5	32:1-5	32:1-5	32:1-5
32:6-15	32:6-15	32:6-15	32:6-15	32:6-15
32:16-19	32:16-19	32:16-19	32:16-19	32:16-19
32:20-24	32:20-27	32:20-24	32:20-24	32:20-24
32:25-27		32:25-27	32:25-27	32:25-27
32:28-32	32:28-32	32:28-32	32:28-30	32:28-30
			32:31-33	32:31-33
32:33-42	32:33-42	32:33-42		
			32:34-38	32:34-38
			32:39-42	32:39-42

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:1-5

[1]Now the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad had an exceedingly large number of livestock. So when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that it was indeed a place suitable for livestock, [2]the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben came and spoke to Moses and to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, [3]"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon, [4]the land which the LORD conquered before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." [5]They said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not take us across the Jordan."

32:1 There are two tribes listed here that had many livestock. It is not stated if this is related to

1. the capture of Midian livestock listed in Numbers 31
2. livestock from Egypt (cf. Exod. 112:38)

A third tribe (i.e., half tribe) is also mentioned as desiring to dwell on this eastern side of Jordan (i.e., Manasseh) in Num. 32:33.

These three tribes will be given the land of (Num. 32:33; Numbers 21)

1. Sihon, king of the Amorites
2. Og, king of Bashan

This is also found in Deut. 3:12-20 and Josh. 13:8-32; 22:1-9.

32:2 Notice the levels of leadership.

1. Moses, the main leader
2. Eleazar, the priest

3. the leaders of the tribes (cf. Num. 32:28)
4. Joshua, the soon to be successor of Moses (Num. 32:28)

32:5 "If we have found favor in your sight" This is a Hebrew idiom used over 40 times in the OT. It denotes a request from an inferior to a superior (usually YHWH, but here, Moses). This is a tactful request (two IMPERFECTS used in a JUSSIVE sense). However, the second one made Moses think they did not want to go into Canaan at all.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:6-15

[6]But Moses said to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben, "Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves sit here? [7]Now why are you discouraging the sons of Israel from crossing over into the land which the LORD has given them? [8]This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. [9]For when they went up to the valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the sons of Israel so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. [10]So the LORD's anger burned in that day, and He swore, saying, [11]'None of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob; for they did not follow Me fully, [12]except Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have followed the LORD fully.' [13]So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed. [14]Now behold, you have risen up in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to add still more to the burning anger of the LORD against Israel. [15]For if you turn away from following Him, He will once more abandon them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

32:6-15 At first Moses was not pleased. He assumed these tribes did not want to participate in the conquest of Canaan. He also assumed this reluctance was related to the unbelief of Numbers 13 (i.e., the report of the spies).

32:11 YHWH's anger at the unbelief of the Israelites in refusing to have faith in His promises to the Patriarchs (see Special Topic: Covenant Promises to the Patriarchs at Num. 11:12b) was the death of that entire generation (i.e., 20 years of age and up) in the wilderness (v. 13). None of them, except Joshua and Caleb, would enter Canaan (v. 12).

32:4-15 This is Moses' assumption of the motives of these tribes and his warning (also v. 23).

32:14

NASB, NKJV	**"a brood of sinful men"**
NRSV	**"a brood of sinners"**
TEV	**"a new generation of sinful people"**
NJB	**"an offshoot of sinful stock"**
JPSOA	**"a brood of sinful men" (same as NASB, NKJV??)**
REB	**"a fresh brood of sinful men"**
LXX	**"a band of sinful persons"**
Peshitta	**"a generation of sinful people"**

The MT has "a brood of sinful men." The word "brood" (BDB 916) appears only here in the OT. The same concept of a generation or groups of sinful people is used by Jesus of the religious leaders of His day (cf. Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33). Here, Moses initially accuses the tribes of Reuben and Gad of following the same path of unfaithfulness as the Israelites in Numbers 13.

▣

NASB, JB	**"to add still more"**
NKJV	**"to increase still more"**
NRSV, NJB	**"increase"**
JPSOA, LXX	**"add still further"**
REB	**"to fire"**
Peshitta	**"to augment still"**

The MT has the VERB (BDB 705, KB 763, *Qal* INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT), which means "sweep away," but the versions are assuming a different root (BDB 414), meaning "to increase." The NIDOTTE, vol. 3, p. 278, #3, suggests that the MT root could denote "fanning or heaping up" Israel's sin, so as to increase YHWH's fiery anger (BDB 354 CONSTRUCT BDB 60 I).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:16-19

[16]Then they came near to him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our livestock and cities for our little ones; [17]but we ourselves will be armed ready *to go* before the sons of Israel, until we have brought them to their place, while our little ones live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. [18]We will not return to our homes until every one of the sons of Israel has possessed his inheritance. [19]For we will not have an inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has fallen to us on this side of the Jordan toward the east."

32:16-19 The tribes of Reuben and Gad explain their intentions.

1. building temporary pens for their livestock
2. fortifying a few key cities for their families
3. their commitment to accompanying the rest of the tribes into the conquest of Canaan
4. every able bodied man would go and not return until the conquest was completed

32:17 This implies these two tribes will be the vanguard of the Israeli troops. They would not just accompany Israel but go before them (i.e., Josh. 4:12-13, the traditional marching order of Judah).

There is an emendation suggested by the LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate. The MT has the *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, "make hast" (BDB 301, KB 300) but the ancient versions have changed it to a similar *Qal* PASSIVE PARTICIPLE, "in battle array" (BDB 332, cf. Exod. 13:18; Josh. 1:14; 4:12; Jdgs. 1:11; NEB, NJB).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:20-24

[20]So Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, [21]and all of you armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven His enemies out from before Him, [22]and the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward you shall return and be free of obligation toward the LORD and toward Israel, and this land shall be yours for a possession before the LORD. [23]But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out. [24]Build yourselves cities for your little ones, and sheepfolds for your sheep, and do what you have promised."

32:20-27 Moses was pleased with their suggestion and promise.

32:21 "you armed men" The VERB (BDB 323, KB 321, *Niphal* IMPERFECT, cf. Num. 32:17,20,30; 31:3; Josh. 6:7,9,13), basically means "to strip," but in this military context, it means to equip oneself for battle (NIDOTTE, vol. 2, pp. 157-158).

32:22 "be free of obligation toward the LORD" This ADJECTIVE (BDB 667) denotes freedom from a vow/oath (cf. Josh. 2:17,20). Although this context does not mention an oath, it is surely implied.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:25-27

[25]The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying, "Your servants will do just as my lord commands. [26]Our little ones, our wives, our livestock and all our cattle shall remain there in the cities of Gilead; [27]while your servants, everyone who is armed for war, will cross over in the presence of the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:28-32

[28]So Moses gave command concerning them to Eleazar the priest, and to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *households* of the tribes of the sons of Israel. [29]Moses said to them, "If the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben, everyone who is armed for battle, will cross with you over the Jordan in the presence of the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession; [30]but if they will not cross over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan." [31]The sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben answered, saying, "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. [32]We ourselves will cross over armed in the presence of the LORD into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance *shall remain* with us across the Jordan."

32:28-32 Moses states clearly the conditions and consequences of the two tribes' promises.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 32:33-42

[33]So Moses gave to them, to the sons of Gad and to the sons of Reuben and to the half-tribe of Joseph's son Manasseh, the kingdom of Sihon, king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan, the land with its cities with *their* territories, the cities of the surrounding land. [34]The sons of Gad built Dibon and Ataroth and Aroer, [35]and Atroth-shophan and Jazer and Jogbehah, [36]and Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran as fortified cities, and sheepfolds for sheep. [37]The sons of Reuben built Heshbon and Elealeh and Kiriathaim, [38]and Nebo and Baal-meon—*their* names being changed—and Sibmah, and they gave *other* names to the cities which they built. [39]The sons of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and dispossessed the Amorites who were in it. [40]So Moses gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he lived in it. [41]Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its towns, and called them Havvoth-jair. [42]Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and called it Nobah after his own name.

32:33 Without explanation half of the tribe of Manasseh chooses to be a part of this compact ??

32:38 The pagan cities of "Nebo" and "Baal-meon" had their names changed by the Israelites but the text does not mention the new names.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why did Reuben and Gad want to settle on the eastern side of the Jordan?
2. How did Reuben and Gad get so much more livestock than their brothers?
3. Why was Moses initially so angry with them?
4. What did Reuben and Gad
    a. ask of Moses?
    b. promise to do?

NUMBERS 33

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Review of the Journey from Egypt to Jordan	Israel's Journey from Egypt Reviewed	Israel's Itinerary from Egypt to the Border of Canaan	The Journey from Egypt to Moab	Stages of the Exodus
33:1-4	33:1-4	33:1-4	33:1-2	33:1-2
			33:3-4	33:3-4
33:5-16	33:5-37	33:5-37	33:5-9	33:5-49
			33:10-14	
			33:15-37	
33:17-37				
33:38-39	33:38-39	33:38-39	33:38-39	
33:40	33:40	33:40	33:40	
33:41-49	33:41-49	33:41-49	33:41-49	
Law of Possessing the Land	Instructions for the Conquest of Canaan	Warnings Against the Canaanite Cult	Instructions Before Crossing the Jordan	The Allocation of Canaan
33:50-56	33:50-56	33:50-56	33:50-56	33:50
				33:51-56

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

BRIEF OUTLINE OF NUMBERS 33-36

A. Numbers 33:1-49 deals with the different campsites between the land of Goshen, in the delta of Egypt, and the plains of Moab, across from Jericho.
   1. from Goshen to Mt. Sinai (cf. Exod. 12:37-19:2)
   2. from Mt. Sinai (Num. 1:1-10:10) to Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 10:11-20:1)
   3. from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab (Num. 20:22-22:1)

   It is interesting that there are 40 locations, matching the "40 years" of Num. 33:38.

B. Numbers 33:50-56 encourages the destruction of all of the Canaanite tribes and warns of the problems if they do not.

C. Numbers 34:1-15 describes the boundaries of the Promised Land.

D. Numbers 34:16-29 lists those who will divide the Promised Land among the individual tribal families (cf. Joshua 12-19).

E. Numbers 35:1-8 discusses the cities of refuge and the regulations that will guide them (cf. Joshua 21).

F. Numbers 35:9-34 discusses the cities of refuge and the regulations that will guide them (cf. Joshua 20).

G. Numbers 36:1-12 further defines the property laws related to Zelophehad's daughters (cf. Numbers 27).

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:1-4

[1]These are the journeys of the sons of Israel, by which they came out from the land of Egypt by their armies, under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. [2]Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the LORD, and these are their journeys according to their starting places. [3]They journeyed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the next day after the Passover the sons of Israel started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians, [4]while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn whom the LORD had struck down among them. The LORD had also executed judgments on their gods.

33:1 "These are the journeys of the sons of Israel" There is a combined listing of forty geographical locations in Num. 33:1-49. Many of them are uncertain (i.e., 22 places not mentioned elsewhere). Some sites which are recorded elsewhere in Numbers 21:10-20 are not included here. The exact purpose of this list is uncertain but these are the major theories.

1. a possible obituary for Moses
2. an attempt to look back at YHWH's gracious dealings with the Israelites in order to encourage them to take full possession of the Promised Land
3. to show that YHWH dwelt with them even amidst their rebellion.

The NASB translates the word "journeys" (BDB 65) in several ways.

1. "stages" – Gen. 13:3; Exod. 17:1
2. "set out" – Num. 10:2,28
3. "journey" – Deut. 10:11

Literally it means "to pull up tent stakes," so it is an idiom for breaking camp. The VERB (BDB 652, 704) is used in Gen. 35:5; Exod. 16:1; 19:2; Num. 12:16; 20:22; 32:7,9; Deut. 1:7,19; 2:24; etc.

33:2 "recorded their starting places" Three times in the Pentateuch, the Bible specifically states that "Moses wrote" (cf. Exod. 34:27; Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:9). This is biblical evidence of Moses' ability to write and also the historical fact that he did personally record some things. It is my presupposition that the vast majority of the material in the Pentateuch is Mosaic. This does not mean that it has not been edited, possibly by Ezra, or that there are not additions, possibly by Joshua or Eleazar. This does assert that I personally reject the J.E.D.P. theory of source criticism (cf. Josh McDowell's *More Evidence That Demands A Verdict*). See Special Topic: Pentateuch Source Criticism at Intro. to Numbers VII. C. 1.

▣ **"by the command of the LORD"** This shows the theological nature of this list. The campsites of the Hebrews were not arbitrary but were guided by the *Shekinah* cloud of glory which rested over the Tabernacle. When it moved the people moved. The very geographical difficulty of this list speaks of its genuineness.

33:3-8 This basically describes the journey from the land of Goshen to the Red Sea. Numbers 33:3 gives a very specific time reference, which is a textual marker for historical narrative.

33:3 "they journeyed from Rameses" This is a detailed geographical description of the movement from the land of Goshen to the plains of Moab, which covers Exodus 12 through Numbers. 12. See Special Topics: The Route of the Exodus at Num. 1:1e and The Date of the Exodus at Intro. to Numbers V. B.

▣ **"started out boldly in the sight of all the Egyptians"** This ADVERB "boldly" (BDB 926, KB 1202, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) has several connotations. See the note below from my exegetical commentary of Exodus 14:8:

> The ADVERB (BDB 926, KB 1202, *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) basically means "to be high." Here, of "an uplifted hand." It can refer to a geographical position, voice, or an attitude. Here it refers to the sense of victory the Israelis had (cf. Num. 33:3). The same form is found in Num. 15:30, translated "who sins defiantly."

▣ **"in the first month"** See Special Topic: ANE Calendars at Intro. to Numbers V. A. 1.

33:4 "while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn" This relates to the last devastating plague which befell Egypt (cf. Exodus 12-13). I am unsure about how old the "firstborn" are. Once they are married and have children, this plague may not have affected them.

▣ **"The LORD also executed judgments on their gods"** This shows that the ten plagues had theological significance. YHWH exposed the falsehood of each of the major Egyptian gods. It is significant that the death of the firstborn was a tremendous blow to the deity structure of ancient Egypt.

The term "gods" here is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. See Special Topic: Names for Deity C. at Num. 1:1

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:5-16

[5]Then the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses and camped in Succoth. [6]They journeyed from Succoth and camped in Etham, which is on the edge of the wilderness. [7]They journeyed from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol. [8]They journeyed from before Hahiroth and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness; and they went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah. [9]They journeyed from Marah and came to Elim; and in Elim there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there. [10]They journeyed from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. [11]They journeyed from the Red Sea and camped in the wilderness of Sin. [12]They journeyed from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. [13]They journeyed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. [14]They journeyed from Alush and camped at Rephidim; now it was there that the people had no water to drink. [15]They journeyed from Rephidim and camped in the wilderness of Sinai. [16]They journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah.

33:5 "Rameses" The Hebrew slaves built "stone cities" in the delta. The first Pharaoh to move the capital to this region was Seti I, Rameses II's father (cf. Exod. 1:11). See Special Topic: The Date of the Exodus at Intro to Numbers, V. B.

I think Rameses is the Pharaoh of the exodus.

33:7 "Pe-hahiroth" This location is mentioned in Exod. 14:1-2. It is where YHWH showed His great power in delivering Israel through the water and destroying Pharaoh's elite honor guard by the same water.

33:8

NASB, NKJV	**"from before Hahiroth"**
NRSV, REB,	
some medieval Hebrew MSS,	
Samaritan Pentateuch,	
Targum of Jonathan,	
Vulgate	**"from Pi-hahiroth"**
TEV, NJB	**"left Pi Hahiroth"**
JPSOA	**"from Pene-hahiroth"**
LXX	**"from before Heiroth"**
Peshitta	**"from the entrance of Heritha"**

The MT has יִנְפֵּ֥ מ תריחה, "before Hahiroth" (BDB 815 CONSTRUCT BDB 809). But because "Pi-hahiroth" (יפ תריחה) is mentioned in Num. 33:7 (cf. Exod. 14:1), the USB Text Project, p. 261, gives "from Pi-Hahiroth" (יפמ תריחה) a "B" rating (some doubt).

▣ **"and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness"** The exact route of the exodus and the body of water is uncertain. There are three basic theories.

1. a northern marshy area near the Mediterranean Sea
2. some bitter lakes in the middle of the land mass that separates the Sinai peninsula from Egypt
3. the topmost tip of the body of water known as the Red Sea (see Num. 33:10)

See Special Topic: Red Sea at Num. 21:4.

▣ **"the wilderness of Etham"** From Exod. 15:22 we know that this is also called the wilderness of Shur. Be sure to locate on a map these different geographical sites when possible, but remember that the modern maps are very tentative and could be inaccurate. Not only are we not sure of the route of the exodus, we are also not sure of the exact locality of such major places as Mt. Sinai, Kadesh, Mt. Hor, etc. See Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b and Route of the Exodus at Num. 1:1e.

33:9-15 This shows the journey from the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai.

33:9 "Elim" See Exodus 15:27.

33:12 "Dophkah. . .Alush" There is no mention of these campsites at all in the book of Exodus.

33:15 "the wilderness of Sinai" The traditional site of Mt. Sinai in the wilderness of Sin seems to be an attempt to relate the two terms etymologically. Many believe that because Moses mentions that Sinai is a three-day journey from Egypt (cf. Exod. 5:3; 8:27), that the traditional site cannot be the exact biblical locality and tend to locate it around Kadesh-Barnea, while others place it close to Mt. Seir. It seems to me that a three-day journey is a metaphor for a long extended period of time. It is obvious that this was the same mountain where Moses met God in the burning bush experience. Moses was prepared for forty years in this wilderness. See Special Topic: Location of Mt. Sinai at Num. 1:1-3, #2.

33:16-36 This shows the geographical movement from Mt. Sinai to what we believe is Kadesh-Barnea, a very significant water hole just southwest of Beer-Sheba. In Num. 10:33-13:25, which describes this same journey, only three stops are mentioned and of those three stops, one of them is omitted in this summary. The exact relationship and origin of this chapter is simply uncertain when compared to other geographical movements recorded in the Pentateuch.

33:16 "Kibroth-kattaavah" See Num. 11:34-35.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:17-37

[17]They journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. [18]They journeyed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah. [19]They journeyed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez. [20]They journeyed from Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah. [21]They journeyed from Libnah and camped at Rissah. [22]They journeyed from Rissah and camped in Kehelathah. [23]They journeyed from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. [24]They journeyed from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. [25]They journeyed from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. [26]They journeyed from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. [27]They journeyed from Tahath and camped at Terah. [28]They journeyed from Terah and camped at Mithkah. [29]They journeyed from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. [30]They journeyed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth. [31]They journeyed from Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan. [32]They journeyed from Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad. [33]They journeyed from Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah. [34]They journeyed from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. [35]They journeyed from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber. [36]They journeyed from Ezion-geber and camped in the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh. [37]They journeyed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom.

33:20-28 These localities are absolutely unknown.

33:20 "Libnah" This word means "whiteness" (BDB 526) and some think it is related to limestone, which would give an idea as to its locality. Unfortunately, limestone is quite common in the desert and, again, this does not help much.

33:31 "Moseroth" When one compares Deut. 10:6,7 with Num. 33:31-33, there seems to be a discrepancy concerning the location of Aaron's death. Numbers 33:37-38 mentions that Mt. Hor, on the edge of the land of Edom, is where Aaron died. However, Deut. 10:10 asserts that it was Moserah, which is a SINGULAR form of the PLURAL found here. Some have assumed that it is simply the district that is being referred to and not a particular campsite.

▣ **"Bene-jaakan"** This is related to the father of the Horites and is mentioned in Gen. 36:27; 1 Chr. 1:42. It also relates this area to Mt. Seir. This would affirm that Mt. Hor was in the area of Edom.

33:33 "Jotbathah" This means "excellent" (BDB 406) and, if so, may be a reference to Deut. 10:7.

33:36 "the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh" Be sure to look at a map because there is a wilderness of Sin located in the southern Sinai peninsula to which the name "Mt. Sinai" seems to relate to and a wilderness of Zin, which is on the southern border of Judah. Although they are pronounced similarly, they are two distinct geographical areas. See Special Topic: Wildernesses of the Exodus at Num. 1:1b.

▣ **"Ezion-geber"** This city is on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba. Today it is inland but in the ANE it was a sea port.

33:37 "Mt. Hor" This word means "summit" (BDB 249) and there were several mountains by this name, as can be seen from Num. 34:7, which is obviously another mountain far to the north.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:38-39

[38]Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the sons of Israel had come from the land of Egypt, on the first *day* in the fifth month. [39]Aaron was one hundred twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

33:38 "at the command of the LORD, and died there" There is an interesting comment from Rashi (a Jewish commentator during the Middle Ages) that since the text says literally "at the mouth of the LORD," it refers to the way Aaron (and Moses, cf. Deut. 34:5) died (i.e., YHWH kissed him on the mouth and took his breath away).

▣ **"in the fortieth year after the sons of Israel had come from the land of Egypt"** The number 40 is a round number used of time. See Special Topic: Symbolic Numbers in Scripture, #7 at Num. 11:16-18.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:40

[40]Now the Canaanite, the king of Arad who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the sons of Israel.

33:40 See Numbers 21:1.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:41-49

[41]Then they journeyed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. [42]They journeyed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. [43]They journeyed from Punon and camped at Oboth. [44]They journeyed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim, at the border of Moab. [45]They journeyed from Iyim and camped at Dibon-gad. [46]They journeyed from Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim. [47]They journeyed from Almon-diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. [48]They journeyed from the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho. [49]They camped by the Jordan, from Beth-jeshimoth as far as Abel-shittim in the plains of Moab.

33:46 NIDOTTE, vol. 4, p. 687, mentions that Almon-diblathaim was very close to the site of Israel's apostasy at the Baal-Peor site on the plains of Moab.

33:49 "Abel-shittim" This is where Israel crossed the Jordan River (cf. Josh. 3:1), close to Jericho, to begin the conquest of Canaan (cf. Gen. 15:12-22).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 33:50-56

[50]Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho, saying, [51]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, [52]then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places; [53]and you shall take possession of the land and live in it, for I have given the land to you to possess it. [54]You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families; to the larger you shall give more inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance. Wherever the lot falls to anyone, that shall be his. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. [55]But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come about that those whom you let remain of them *will become* as pricks in

your eyes and as thorns in your sides, and they will trouble you in the land in which you live. [56]And as I plan to do to them, so I will do to you.'"

33:52 "the inhabitants of the land" There are several listings of the Canaanite tribes. Sometimes they are summarized either under the name "Amorite" (cf. Gen. 15:16) or "Canaanite." However, at other times, they are listed in groups of five, seven, and even ten (cf. Exod. 23:23-33; 34:10-17; Deut. 7:1-5). See Special Topic: Pre-Israelite Inhabitants of Palestine at Num. 13:28-29.

▣ "and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places" These are different items which relate to the Canaanite fertility cults (cf. Deut. 7:5; 12:3; 16:21-22). Israel was to totally exterminate and destroy idolatry from the land or the warning from Num. 33:55 would come upon them. See Special Topic: Consequences of Idolatry.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CONSEQUENCES OF IDOLATRY (cf. Deut. 11:16-17)

A. "Beware, lest your hearts are not deceived" – BDB 834, KB 984, *Qal* IMPERFECT, cf. Job 31:27
   1. "turn away" – BDB 693, KB 747, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 32:8; 9:12; 17:11,17; Jer. 5:23
   2. "serve other gods" – BDB 712, KB 773, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Deut. 7:4,26; 8:19; 11:16; 13:6,13; 17:3; 28:14,36,64; 29:26; 30:17; 31:20; Jos. 23:16; 24:2,16; Jer. 11:10; 13:10; 16:11,13; 22:9; 25:6; 35:15
   3. "to worship" – BDB 1005, KB 295, *Hithpael* (Owens, p. 805) and *Hishtaphel* (Parsing Guide, p. 146)

   Obviously this was a recurrent tendency on Israel's part! The consequences for idolatry were severe.

B. "the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you" – BDB 354, KB 351, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Exod. 4:14; 22:24; 32:10; Num. 11:1,10; 12:9; 32:10; Deut. 6:15; 7:4; 11:17; 29:27; Jos. 23:11
   1. "He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain." This is part of the curse for disobeying the covenant, cf. Deut. 28:24; 2 Chr. 6:26-28; 7:13
   2. "the ground will not yield its fruit" – results of no rain

C. "you will perish quickly from the good land" – BDB 1, KB 2, *Qal* PERFECT, cf. Deut. 4:26; 7:4; 8:19,20; 28:20,22; 30:18; Jos. 23:13,16

There is no middle option! God presents His covenant as fully compliant or in default. Fallen humanity cannot obtain this level of consistent or complete obedience (cf. Jos. 24:19). Therefore, there was/is a need for a new covenant based on God's mercy and His performance (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38; Rom. 3:9-18,23; Galatians 3)!

33:53 There is a paradox stated here.
1. the conquest was by YHWH's power (Joshua)
2. but each tribe had to possess their own land allotment (Num. 33:54) and destroy the local pagan population (Judges)

33:54 "You shall inherit the land by lot according to your families" Apparently the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest was involved in the division of the land among the tribes. Possibly some means of casting lots was used to divide the land among the tribal units. See Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Num. 26:53-56.

33:55 "as pricks in your eyes and as thorns in your sides" This same metaphor is used by Joshua in his farewell address to the people of Israel (cf. Josh. 23:13). The failure of the Hebrews to drive out the Canaanites is reflected in Israel's history of idolatry that caused them to also be removed from the Promised Land (i.e., the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why do the locations mentioned in Num. 21:10-20 differ from this list?
2. How does the mentioning of the city of Rameses affect the dating of the exodus
3. How did YHWH show His power over the Egyptian gods (Num. 33:4)?
4. Where is the Red Sea?
5. Why can we not be sure of the route of the exodus?
6. Why was Israel instructed to kill all the Canaanites?

NUMBERS 34

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Instructions for Apportioning Canaan	The Appointed Boundaries of Canaan	Ideal Boundaries of the Promised Land	The Boundaries of the Land	The Boundaries of Canaan
34:1-5	34:1-5	34:1-5	34:1-5	34:1-2
				34:3-5
34:6-9	34:6-9	34:6	34:6	34:6
		34:7-9	34:7-9	34:7-9
34:10-12	34:10-12	34:10-12	34:10-12	34:10-12
34:13-15	34:13-15	34:13-15	34:13-15	34:13-15
	The Leaders Appointed to Divide the Land		The Leaders Responsible for Dividing the Land	The Leaders in Charge of the Allocation
34:16-29	34:16-29	34:16-29	34:16-28	34:16
				34:17-19a
				34:19b
				34:20
				34:21
				34:22
				34:23
				34:24
				34:25
				34:26
				34:27
				34:28
			34:29	34:29

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:1-5

[1]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2]"Command the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you enter the land of Canaan, this is the land that shall fall to you as an inheritance, *even the* land of Canaan according to its borders. [3]Your southern sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom, and your southern border shall extend from the end of the Salt Sea eastward. [4]Then your border shall turn *direction* from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim and continue to Zin, and its termination shall be to the south of Kadesh-barnea; and it shall reach Hazaraddar and continue to Azmon. [5]The border shall turn *direction* from Azmon to the brook of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the sea.'"

34:2 "the land of Canaan according to its borders" It is interesting that we have found a description of Canaan very similar to this in the Egyptian records of the second half of the 13th century. The land of Canaan was a geographical unit under Egyptian control. These dimensions were only approximated during David and Solomon's time.

34:3 "your southern border" Numbers 34:3-5 describes the southern border of Israel. It was not a straight boundary but a semi-circle, beginning at the bottom of the Dead Sea and running to the wadi El-Arish, which is called in most biblical texts, "the brook of Egypt." This does not refer to the Nile River but to a winter torrent just below the Gaza Strip, as we call it today.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:6-9

6"'As for the western border, you shall have the Great Sea, that is, *its* coastline; this shall be your west border. 7And this shall be your north border: you shall draw your *border* line from the Great Sea to Mount Hor. 8You shall draw a line from Mount Hor to the Lebo-hamath, and the termination of the border shall be at Zedad; 9and the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and its termination shall be at Hazar-enan. This shall be your north border.'"

34:6 "As for the western border" The western border was the Mediterranean Sea.

34:7 "your northern border" This also is a difficult boundary to describe. From the places mentioned in this account it seems to be some sixty miles to the north of Damascus. This was approximately the northern boundary during Solomon's reign. However, it included all of Phoenicia and Syria, which is somewhat out of touch with other biblical accounts.

▣ **"Mount Hor"** This is obviously a mountain in the far north and cannot refer to the same mountain where Aaron died, close to the land of Edom (i.e., Num. 20:22-29; Deut. 32:15).

34:8 "the Lebo-hamath" This is a very ambiguous location. Some believe it is the entrance to the valley in which this city is located, while others think it might include the city itself.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:10-12

10"'For your eastern border you shall also draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham, 11and the border shall go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the border shall go down and reach to the slope on the east side of the Sea of Chinnereth. 12And the border shall go down to the Jordan and its termination shall be at the Salt Sea. This shall be your land according to its borders all around.'"

34:10 "For your eastern boundary" The eastern boundary would primarily be a large semi-circle with Damascus as the center of the circle which runs from Lebo-hamath all the way around to the Sea of Galilee.

In this text the Sea of Galilee is called the "Sea of Chinnereth" (cf. Deut. 3:17; Josh. 11:2; 12:3; 13:27; 19:35; 1 Kgs. 15:20). It is also known as "Lake Genesseret" (cf. Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53; Luke 5:1) and "Lake Tiberias" (cf. John 6:1,23; 21:1).

34:11 "Riblah" The UBS Text Project, p. 262, lists three options.

1. "to Riblah" (NASB, JPSOA)
2. "to Harbel" (TEV)

3. "Harb-lah" (LXX)

The Peshitta has "Diblath," which involves the common Hebrew "r" - "d" confusion. It gives #3 a "C" rating (considerable doubt).

The BDB 916 says "Num. 34:11, on NE border of the land of Israel, certainly not so far n. as "Hamath" (cf. 2 Kgs. 23:33; 25:21), but site unknown."

34:12 "This shall be your land according to its borders all around" It is significant that the trans-Jordan area, which became the tribal allocation of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, is not included in this geographical description of the Promised Land. Therefore, it is discussed in Num. 34:13-15.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:13-15

[13]So Moses commanded the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the land that you are to apportion by lot among you as a possession, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine and a half tribes. [14]For the tribe of the sons of Reuben have received *theirs* according to their fathers' households, and the tribe of the sons of Gad according to their fathers' households, and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their possession. [15]The two and a half tribes have received their possession across the Jordan opposite Jericho, eastward toward the sunrising."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 34:16-29

[16]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [17]"These are the names of the men who shall apportion the land to you for inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. [18]You shall take one leader of every tribe to apportion the land for inheritance. [19]These are the names of the men: of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh. [20]Of the tribe of the sons of Simeon, Samuel the son of Ammihud. [21]Of the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon. [22]Of the tribe of the sons of Dan a leader, Bukki the son of Jogli. [23]Of the sons of Joseph: of the tribe of the sons of Manasseh a leader, Hanniel the son of Ephod. [24]Of the tribe of the sons of Ephraim a leader, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan. [25]Of the tribe of the sons of Zebulun a leader, Elizaphan the son of Parnach. [26]Of the tribe of the sons of Issachar a leader, Paltiel the son of Azzan. [27]Of the tribe of the sons of Asher a leader, Ahihud the son of Shelomi. [28]Of the tribe of the sons of Naphtali a leader, Pedahel the son of Ammihud." [29]These are those whom the LORD commanded to apportion the inheritance to the sons of Israel in the land of Canaan.

34:17 "Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun" This is a list of the leaders who will divide the tribes by family. The only name that is known in other parts of the Bible is Caleb (cf. Num. 34:19), the representative of the tribe of Judah. Joshua, Moses' successor, and Eleazar, Aaron's successor, will officiate the division of the land into the tribal units and then each of these leaders will officiate the division of the large block of land into family units.

34:19-28 This is the new generation of tribal leaders. All of those who listened to the ten spies (Numbers 13-14) are dead.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Did Israel ever control these boundaries? If so when?
2. Where did these geographical limits come from?
3. Why is the trans-Jordan (i.e., eastside) not ???
4. Who are the men listed in Num. 34:16-28? What was their assigned task?

NUMBERS 35

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Cities for the Levites	Cities for the Levites	Plans for Levitical Cities and Cities of Refuge	The Cities Assigned to the Levites	The Portion of the Levites
35:1-3	35:1-8	35:1-5	35:1-8	35:1
				35:2-4
35:4-5				
Cities of Refuge				35:5-8
35:6-8	Cities of Refuge	35:6-8	The Cities of Refuge	Cities of Refuge
35:9-15	35:9-15	35:9-12	35:9-15	35:9
				35:10-15
		35:13-15		
35:16-21	35:16-21	35:16-21	35:16-19	35:16-19
			35:20-21	35:20-29
35:22-28	35:22-28	35:22-28	35:22-29	
35:29	25:29-34	35:29		
35:30-34		35:30-34	35:30-34	35:30-34

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:1-3

[1]Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, [2]"Command the sons of Israel that they give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall give to the Levites pasture lands around the cities. [3]The cities shall be theirs to live in; and their pasture lands shall be for their cattle and for their herds and for all their beasts.

35:2 "give to the Levites from the inheritance of their possession cities to live in" Numbers 35 is basically a description of the Levitical cities which are also found in Lev. 25:32-35 and Joshua 21. There are forty-eight Leivitical cities divided among all the tribes. Six of these are special cities of refuge: three in the trans-Jordan area and three in the Promised Land. The Levites took the place of the firstborn child (cf. Exodus 13), and, therefore, did not inherit land, for YHWH was their possession and they served Him in a unique way. However, God provided some plot of land for them for farming, as is seen in verse 2, in that they could have a thousand cubits each around these Levitical cities. Because one of these cities, Hebron, was uniquely given to Caleb, it is my personal opinion that each of these cities was not completely owned and operated by Levites, but probably was shared by members of the tribe in whose division the Levitical city was located. See Special Topic: Cities of Refuge.

SPECIAL TOPIC: CITIES OF REFUGE

Originally in the OT, those who were fleeing from hasty justice (i.e., the kinsman avenger) could grab the horns of the sacrificial altar for safety (cf. Exod. 21:14; 1 Kgs. 1:50-53; 2:28-31). However, this system was replaced by having strategically located cities within the Promised Land (i.e., 6 Levitical cities, see Joshua 20). Moses had already designated three cities in the trans-Jordan area (cf. Deut. 4:41ff). There are several discussions in the Pentateuch related to the cities of refuge (cf. Exod. 21: 12-14; Num. 35:10-28; Deut. 19:1-13). If a person killed a fellow Israelite by accident, he could flee to one of these six cities. There, a trial would be held (cf. Jos. 20:4). If innocent of premeditated murder, he still had to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest. If guilty of murder, he was turned over to the blood avenger of the family he violated for the immediate punishment of death (cf. Jos. 20:9).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:4-5

[4]"The pasture lands of the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits around. [5]You shall also measure outside 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, with the city in the center. This shall become theirs as pasture lands for the cities.

35:4 "one thousand cubits" A cubit was the distance between a man's longest finger and his elbow, usually about eighteen inches. This was enough land for the priests to have a small flock or garden to supplement what they received from the tithes of the people every year. See Special Topic: Cubit at Num. 11:30b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:6-8

[6]The cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* the six cities of refuge, which you shall give for the manslayer to flee to; and in addition to them you shall give forty-two cities. [7]All the cities which you shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty-eight cities, together with their pasture lands. [8]As for the cities which you shall give from the possession of the sons of Israel, you shall take more from the larger and you shall take less from the smaller; each shall give some of his cities to the Levites in proportion to his possession which he inherits."

35:6 "six cities of refuge" These are discussed in detail in Num. 35:9-24 and Joshua 20. It is interesting that as God continued to expand the borders of the Jews, there was a division for more allotments to be given to the Levites (cf. Num. 35:17; Deut. 19:8-10). The cities of refuge in the trans-Jordan area are: Bezer, Ramoth-Gilead, and Golan; in the Promised Land they are: Hebron, Shechem, and Kadesh, not Kadesh-Barnea in southern Judea, but a city located north of the Sea of Galilee.

▣ **"manslayer"** This is a *Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE, BDB 253, KB 1283. It is used 18 times in this chapter.

Numbers 35:19-21 deals with specific cases where there is intent to kill, while vv. 22-28 deal with cases of manslaughter (cf. Exod. 21:12-14). See Special Topic: Law in the ANE, "Casuistic Laws."

SPECIAL TOPIC: LAWS IN THE ANE

A. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, vol. 1, pp. 143-144, lists the OT law codes:
   1. the Decalogue – Exod. 20:2-17; Deut. 5:6-21
   2. the Code of the Covenant – Exod. 20:22-23:33

3. Deuteronomy – Deuteronomy 12-26
4. the Law of Holiness – Leviticus 17-26
5. the Priestly code – Leviticus 1-7, 11-16

All of these are considered *Torah.* They are specific divine prescriptions on actions and attitudes.

B. Types of Israeli laws
   1. Casuistic – laws characterized by the "if. . .then" format. There are consequences to actions. These are usually guidelines for societies.
   2. Apodictic – laws stated as general prohibitions (usually SECOND PERSON PLURAL statements - "you shall not. . ."). These are usually guidelines for the spiritual life.

C. Cultural influences
   1. in content - earlier law codes
      a. Lipit-Ishtar
      b. Code of Hammurabi
   2. in form – Hittite treaties (Suzerain; see Special Topic: Hittite Treaties), which occur in several set patterns, but Deuteronomy and Joshua 24 follow the pattern of the 2000 B.C. period, which shows its historicity (cf. John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context*, pp. 95-107; K.A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World*, pp. 80-95; see introduction to the book, VII.

D. In many ways Israel's laws were similar in form but radically different in content. Israel had God's revelation, not only about the community's powerful, wealthy, and influential, but about the poor, powerless, and socially ostracized! God loves all people!

35:7 "forty-eight cities" The Levites were meant to be the teachers of the Law, as well as the helpers in the Temple. Spreading them throughout the Promised Land showed that God symbolically dwelt among all of His people (cf. Num. 35:34).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:9-15

[9]Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [10]"Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, [11]then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there. [12]The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial. [13]The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge. [14]You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are to be cities of refuge. [15]These six cities shall be for refuge for the sons of Israel, and for the alien and for the sojourner among them; that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.'"

35:11 "cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there" This is a discussion about intentional murder versus unintentional murder. There seems to be two court cases involved (cf. Num. 35:24). Apparently one court met at the city of refuge to which the man fled and if he was found to be innocent, he was retried at the site of the murder. If found to be innocent there of premeditation, then he was returned to the city of refuge where he must live until the death of the High Priest (cf. vv. 25,28). The High Priest's death apparently acted as a kind of atonement for the accidental death of another covenant partner.

It is interesting that in this chapter we are introduced to the term "*Go'el"* (BDB 145 I), which is often translated as "the kinsman redeemer" (cf. Boaz in the book of Ruth). Here, the same term means "the blood avenger" (cf. Num. 35:19,21,24,25,27). The closest relative was responsible for maintaining family unity,

economically and here, in the case of revenge for a death (see *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, pp. 63-65,501). Basically this is an attempt to limit the "eye-for-an-eye" revenge (cf. Exod. 21:23-25), which was common during the time of Israel's living in the desert and to set up the legal procedures of a settled community (see *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, pp. 150-151). Premeditation seems to be the key in determining whether a death was accidental (cf. Num. 35:22-28) or not (cf. vv. 16-21). See Special Topic: Unintentional Sins at Num. 15:21-31 and NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 42-43.

35:14 It is interesting to note that the phrase "across Jordan" depends on

1. the location of the later writer
2. the location of the person speaking

In this verse Moses is on the plains of Moab but the later writer/editor/compiler writes as if in Canaan.

35:15 YHWH's compassion for the alien sojourner is clear from this verse (also note Num. 9:14; 15:15; 19:10; Lev. 16:29; 17:8,15; 18:26; 20:2; 24:16). There is one law for all!

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:16-21

[16]"'But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. [17]If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. [18]Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. [19]The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him. [20]If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and *as a result* he died, [21]or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and *as a result* he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.'"

35:16 "the murderer shall surely be put to death" The VERB is an intensified grammatical feature (i.e., INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root, BDB 559, KB 562), used six times in this chapter (Num. 35:16,17,18,21,26,31).

Israel must be purged of intentional sin (cf. v. 24). See Special Topic: Death Penalty in Israel at Num. 15:35.

35:20 The issue of this verse (and v. 22) is the intent of the murderer.

1. internal motivation – "hate (BDB 971)
2. the manner of premeditation – "lying in wait" (BDB 841)

35:25

NASB, NKJV,
JPSOA **"the priest"**
NRSV, TEV,
NJB, REB,
Peshitta, Samaritan
Pentateuch **"the High Priest"**
LXX **"the great priest"**

The MT has "the priest" but obviously it is the High Priest. The normal title for him in the Pentateuch is "the Priest" (cf. Lev. 21:10).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:29

[29]"'These things shall be for a statutory ordinance to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings.'"

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 35:30-34

[30]"'If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. [31]Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. [32]You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest. [33]So you shall not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. [34]You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.'"

35:30 "at the evidence of witnesses" We learn from Deut. 17:6 and 19:15 that two eyewitnesses were required in order to convict a person. However, it was very unusual to have two eyewitnesses of some crimes. The Hebrew word "witnesses" here does not imply "eyewitness" but allows for some degree of circumstantial testimony.

35:31-32 "you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death" "Ransom" (BDB 497 I) denotes a price paid for the loss of a life (cf. Exod. 21:28-32; Job 33:24; 36:18; Pro. 13:8; 21:18). There was not ransom for premeditated murder (cf. Num. 35:33). The only ransom was the life of the murderer.

35:33 "So you shall not pollute the land in which you are" The discussion of the pollution involved in unsolved murders and how to solve them is found in Deut. 21:3-8 (cf. Ps. 106:38). YHWH was holy (see Special Topic: The Holy One) and He could not live among unholy or unclean people. The Day of Atonement provided some reckoning, but these elaborate procedures show the need for God's people to be uniquely holy and like Him (i.e., Lev. 11:45; 19:2; Matt. 5:48).

SPECIAL TOPIC: THE HOLY ONE

I. OT

"The Holy One of Israel" is a favorite title for Deity in Isaiah (cf. Isa. 1:4; 5:19; 10:17,20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19,23; 30:11,12,15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14,16,20; 43:3,14,15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9,14). Because He is "holy," His people should be holy (cf. Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16).

This title, in a sense, expresses the impossible tension of a sinful, fallen people conforming to a holy standard. The Mosaic Covenant was impossible to keep (cf. Jos. 24:19; Acts 15; Galatians 3; Hebrews). The old covenant was a way to show the impossibility of humans to conform to God's standard (Galatians 3), yet He was with them, for them, preparing them for His answer to their fallen condition (i.e., "the New Covenant in Jesus"). He does not lower His standard, but provides it through His Messiah. The new covenant (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38) is a covenant of faith and repentance, not human performance, though it issues in Christlikeness (cf. James 2:14-26). God wants a people who reflect His character to the nations (cf. Matt. 5:48).

II. "The Holy One" can refer to

1. God the Father (cf. numerous OT passages on "the Holy One of Israel")

2. God the Son (cf. Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69; Acts 3:14; 1 John 2:20)
3. God the Spirit (His title, "Holy Spirit" cf. John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22).

Acts 10:38 is a verse where all three persons of the Godhead are involved in anointing. Jesus was anointed (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38). The concept is widened to include all believers (cf. 1 John 2:27). The Anointed One has become the anointed ones! This may be parallel to Antichrist and antichrists (cf. 1 John 2:18). The OT symbolic act of physical anointing with oil (cf. Exod. 29:7; 30:25; 37:29) relates to those who were called and equipped by God for a special task (i.e., prophets, priests, and kings). The word "Christ" is a translation of the Hebrew term "the anointed one" or Messiah.

▣ **"no expiation"** This is the VERB form of the NOUN "ransom" in Num. 35:31,32, it is a *Pual* IMPERFECT (BDB 497, KB 493).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Why is the list of geographical sites listed in chapter 33 different from the list in other parts of the Pentateuch?
2. Why is it so difficult to locate these ancient sites?
3. Did the Jews ever possess the full Promised Land? (look at a map and see the dimensions of the Promised Land)
4. Why did God give forty-eight cities that were spread out among the tribes to the Levites?
5. Who is a *Go'el* and what are his two basic functions in the biblical record?
6. What is the difference between murder and manslaughter and what is the difference between the penalties involved for each?
7. Why was the holiness of the Hebrew people so important in the OT period?

NUMBERS 36

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB
Inheritance by Marriage	Marriage of Female Heirs	Tribal Property Must Be Maintained Intact	The Inheritance of Married Women	A Wife's Inheritance
36:1-4	36:1-4	36:1-4	36:1-4	36:1
				36:2-4
36:5-9	36:5-9	36:5-9	36:5-9	36:5a
				36:5b-9
36:10-12	36:10-12	36:10-12	36:10-12	36:10-12
				Conclusion
36:13	36:13	36:13	36:13	36:13

READING CYCLE THREE (from "A Guide to Good Bible Reading")

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:1-4

[1]And the heads of the fathers' *households* of the family of the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the heads of the fathers' *households* of the sons of Israel, [2]and they said, "The LORD commanded my lord to give the land by lot to the sons of Israel as an inheritance, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. [3]But if they marry one of the sons of the *other* tribes of the sons of Israel, their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of our fathers and will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; thus it will be withdrawn from our allotted inheritance. [4]When the jubilee of the sons of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe to which they belong; so their inheritance will be withdrawn from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

36:1-12 This is an appendix which refers to Num. 27:1-11.

36:2 "by lot" The major land division is done in Joshua 12-19 by the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest (see Special Topic: Urim and Thummim at Num. 26:53-56). Exactly what "lot" was used to divide each tribal allocation into clans, families is unstated (cf. Num. 26:55-56).

36:3 "But if they marry one of the sons of the *other* tribes" Basically Numbers 35 is a follow-up discussion about the daughters of Zelophehad, whose father had died in the wilderness without having had any sons. Their plight was discussed earlier in the book of Numbers (i.e., Num. 26:53; 27:1-11) and the Lord had allowed them to inherit. Now, the problem of marrying outside their own tribe is discussed. The simple solution was that they must marry someone within their own tribe (Num. 36:6,8,12), the tribe of Reuben. This is what they must have done and it solved the problem.

36:4 "the jubilee" This refers to the fifth year, called the year of Jubilee (cf. Lev. 25:8-17; 27:16-24; see Special Topic: Feasts of Israel at Num. 28:7; Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 175-177).

Allocated land must be returned to the tribe and family. It was a gift from God. It could not be permanently sold (cf. Num. 36:7,9).

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:5-9

[5]Then Moses commanded the sons of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying, "The tribe of the sons of Joseph are right in *their* statements. [6]This is what the LORD has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them marry whom they wish; only they must marry within the family of the tribe of their father.' [7]Thus no inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. [8]Every daughter who comes into possession of an inheritance of any tribe of the sons of Israel shall be wife to one of the family of the tribe of her father, so that the sons of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. [9]Thus no inheritance shall be transferred from one tribe to another tribe, for the tribes of the sons of Israel shall each hold to his own inheritance."

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:10-12

[10]Just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so the daughters of Zelophehad did: [11]Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad married their uncles' sons. [12]They married *those* from the families of the sons of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained with the tribe of the family of their father.

36:10 This is a repeated theme which reflects covenant obedience. It is repeated often because of Israel's repeated disobedience. See Special Topic: Covenant at Num. 10:33b.

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: 36:13

[13]These are the commandments and the ordinances which the LORD commanded to the sons of Israel through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *opposite* Jericho.

36:13 This concluding statement (postscript) may refer to all of Numbers or at least chapters 22-36.

▣ **"the commandments. . .the ordinances"** See Special Topic: Terms for God's Revelation at Num. 10:8.