

If he has sold a piece of land, then he cannot vow that property but will have to wait till the year of jubilee to repossess it. That is, if he had merely sold it and had not tried to vow it to the Lord. If such a thing had taken place, then he would never repossess it as will be seen in next paragraph.

Verse 21. This field that he wished to vow to God even though he had sold it, will finally become the Lord's in the jubilee, and will be turned over to the priest.

Verses 22-24. A man might have just bought a piece of ground from another. That seller would be thinking of the jubilee at which time he expected to receive it again and would have right to thus expect it. So if this buyer wishes to vow it to God he may do so. But that vow will give such land to the Lord only until the jubilee, then it will become the property again of the original owner.

Verse 25. The standard of value according to the sanctuary is here given as twenty gerahs. This was a small coin of varying value. Hence, whatever was the accepted value of it at any time for use of the sanctuary was to be required for vows.

Verse 26. The special possession of the first born of beasts could not be redeemed at all. All such must be turned over to the sanctuary use.

Verses 27, 28. This paragraph is merely a detail of what has been already offered in this chapter. A thing devoted to God must be considered as something holy.

Verse 29. This has reference to enemies that are devoted or promised for destruction. If the children of Israel make any such vow, then they cannot change their minds and try to substitute something in its place. A noted example of this kind of transaction is recorded in Num. 21: 2, 3. It will be interesting and helpful for the reader to turn to that place and read the account of the vow of the people of God and their faithful performance of the vow.

Verse 30. The tithe or tenth of all their products belongs to God. This was for the support of the tribe of Levi in general. They had no opportunity for producing anything since they were constantly "standing by" for the special service about the tabernacle. Thus they must be supported by the tithes of the other people.

Verse 31. If some particular beast

or crop is thought to be needed at home, then he could retain it by giving an extra fifth of its value in money.

Verse 32. "Passeth under the rod" means that the young were thus counted off to see how many had been produced that season. One out of every ten must be given to the Lord.

Verse 33. He must not try to show partiality and see if number nine is a specially good animal and number eleven not so good, etc. He must be fair and give the Lord each tenth beast. If he tries to redeem it with some other article then he would lose both the same as in verse 10.

Verse 34. A grand summing up of the law. The Lord commanded it. He commanded it to Moses. And he commanded it to Moses for the children of Israel. Again the great authority of Moses in connection with the so-called ceremonial law is plainly stated. And this law was given to Moses at Mount Sinai, the very same place and the very same occasion as were used in giving the tables of the ten commandments.

## NUMBERS 1

Verse 1. By comparing Ex. 40: 17 here, it will be seen that it has been just one month since the tabernacle was reared up. And by further comparison with Lev. 1:1 it will be learned that the time of this month was used in connection with occupation of the formal place of meeting between God and his people and must be recognized as the proper place for them to attend with their sacrifices.

Verse 2. A census is now commanded to be taken. It was not to include the entire population, but just those of military age; the males only to be taken into this numbering.

Verses 3, 4. In addition to being of the age of twenty they must also be able to go to war. They must be able-bodied. These restrictions brought the group to contain only those who would pass a physical examination and be of the necessary age. Thus it was not for the purpose of determining the amount of the population as is generally done by nations today. The future of the nation was to be beset with conflicts with the enemy, so their military strength was the important thing with them.

Verses 5-16. Aaron was commanded to work with Moses in this numbering. They were to select a man to

represent the tribes and each one was to be a head or chief person. The personal heads of the tribes were the sons of Jacob. They had all been dead for some time and thus it was necessary to appoint a man for each tribe now, in order to keep the tribal distinction intact. The paragraph now being considered is a list of these men.

Verses 17-19. Having assembled the congregation as commanded, these representative men declared the "pedigrees." This word means the record of births of the several families. It corresponds with the documents called "birth certificates." This enumeration was by their "polls." This is a word for "heads" and the statement means they did not merely give an aggregate sum of the people, but it was an individual list.

Verses 20, 21. All the specifications required for the ones to be numbered are mentioned in connection with each tribe. It will not be necessary to write them in this place at each listing of the tribes. The language is identical and corresponds with the stipulations of the verses in the beginning of the chapter. A paragraph will be assigned for each tribe, expressing in figures the number of each tribe. The present one is for Reuben and the number is 46,500.

Verses 22, 23. The number of the tribe of Simeon is 59,300.

Verses 24, 25. Gad has 45,650.

Verses 26, 27. The tribe of Judah has 74,600. It will be interesting to note that the tribe of Judah had the greatest number of military men. This is the tribe that brought the Saviour of the world to the earth. And this great person produced also a great host of soldiers; soldiers of the cross.

Verses 28, 29. The tribe of Issachar has 54,400.

Verses 30, 31. Zebulun has 57,400.

Verses 32, 33. The tribe of Ephraim numbered 40,500 military men.

Verses 34, 35. Manasseh has 32,200 attributed to his tribe. It will be interesting here also to make an observation. In Gen. 48: 19 Jacob made the prediction that Ephraim, though the younger of the two brothers, was to become stronger than the other. And at this enumeration we see that such was the case.

Verses 36, 37. Benjamin was the only brother of Joseph. The two sons of Joseph were taken to become each a head of a tribe. This was done by Jacob in the land of Egypt when the

two sons were brought to him for his blessing. (Gen. 48: 5.) At the present we see that the entire numerical strength of Joseph is more than that of Benjamin, which is 35,400, leaving us the conclusion that the brother of Joseph headed the smallest tribe of the nation if the original sons of Jacob are considered. This suggests the statement in Psa. 68: 27 about "little Benjamin." The word "little" is from *tsaowr* and defined by Strong "little (in number) few." This also harmonizes with the statement of Saul in 1 Sam. 9: 21 that he was of the smallest of the tribes of Israel. No great concern would be had as to the veracity of Saul when we have in mind his later life. At the time of the statement he was in good repute and we are pleased to find his remark true to the facts, which is the case when Joseph is compared as one tribe.

Verses 38, 39. The tribe of Dan numbered 62,700.

Verses 40, 41. Asher had 41,500.

Verses 42-44. The tribe of Naphtali numbered 53,400. The foregoing is a list of the various tribes given under the heads of the men selected to represent them. These men are here called "princes" which corresponds with the term "renowned" used before.

Verses 45, 46. This is the sum of all the twelve tribes as recognized in the list given above. It is 603,550.

Verses 47-49. The tribe of Levi was not numbered with the rest. They will have a separate enumeration. All this is logical when we remember that the list was to enroll the military men and the Levites were not to be called into that service for reasons soon to be indicated.

Verse 50. Here the general statement is made that the Levites were to have the work of the tabernacle. This would prevent them from entering the military service.

Verse 51. This makes a more specific statement of the duties of the tribe. The children of Israel were to be directed as to their journeys and the time thereof by the cloud that hovered over the tabernacle. No warning was given them as to when the cloud would move. At the instant of its moving the people must move. Thus it was necessary that one tribe be released from all duties except those of taking down and setting up of the tabernacle. In this verse the word "stranger" would apply to those not of the desig-

nated tribe. The word literally means "one from the outside." In the present connection therefore, the word would have to mean one outside the Levites.

Verse 52. The command for order in their encampment is given here in general. The particular form of that order will be given in the next chapter. At the present we understand the congregation would be encamped at some distance from the tabernacle as directed later on.

Verses 53, 54. This paragraph relates to the duties of the Levites as a tribe. They had the entire charge which included the special services of the tabernacle when at rest and in service, as well as the physical work of handling it when being moved. The more particular assignments for the work will be given in another place. (Ch. 3.)

### NUMBERS 2

Verses 1, 2. A more detailed set of instructions will now be given for their order of encampment. The point is obvious that God requires system and orderly conduct in the activities of his people. (Col. 2: 5.) The word "far" here is not one that refers to distance. It is from נֶגֶד and defined "a front, i. e. part opposite; specifically a counterpart, or mate; usually over against or before."—Strong. So it did not mean that the children of Israel were to be at a great distance from the tabernacle, but that they must be arranged in such a manner as to be in view of the building.

Verses 3-9. A division into four camps was made and these camps were to be located in the four directions from the tabernacle. That made each camp consist of three of the tribes. Each camp was named by the tribe considered as head of the same. Each had a man designated as captain over the group. The camp that was to be on the east of the tabernacle, consisted of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun and Judah was the tribe giving name to this camp. The several numbers of the tribes are given which are the same as those given in first chapter. Also the sum of the three tribes forming the camps is given. That will be the figures put down in this place for each camp. The number of the camp of Judah is given as 186,400. The statement is made that when the congregation is to start out on a journey the camp of Judah must take the lead.

Verses 10-16. The statement common

to the four camps need not be repeated each time. The camp consisted of Reuben, Simeon and Gad and Reuben gave it the name. The sum of the three tribes is 151,450. It is directed that when the march is indicated, this camp must go second. This will make one half of the congregation. Therefore it will be orderly for the tabernacle to be placed in the midst of the congregation. Hence, after the second camp starts on the march, the Levites, having charge of the tabernacle, must arise and follow the camp of Reuben.

Verses 17-24. The first verse of this paragraph is commented upon in preceding paragraph. After the Levites with the tabernacle have entered the procession, then the third camp must proceed. But at present their place of encampment is what is being described. The camp consisted of Manasseh, Benjamin and Ephraim and Ephraim gave it the name. The sum of the three tribes is 108,100. This camp was situated on the west.

Verses 25-31. The fourth camp as listed here was on the north. The three tribes comprised in this camp were Dan, Asher and Naphtali and Dan gave the name to the camp. In the march this camp was to go last. This whole arrangement was so directed that no confusion need result when the alarm of war or of march was sounded. All would know their places in the procession and proceed in an orderly way.

Verses 32-34. This paragraph is a repetition of preceding plan and summing up. In verse 33 mention is again made that the Levites were not numbered with the other tribes. Their enumeration will be given separately and also their special work for the Lord.

### NUMBERS 3

Verse 1. The word "generations" is from a word that means "family history." Hence it does not always refer to the particular descendants of a family, but to any account that may be considered of the family or of a man. It would be a proper form of expression to say that "this is the family history" etc., of Aaron and Moses.

Verses 2, 3. This paragraph goes back to the first of the history and names all the sons of Aaron because, as stated in preceding verse, it is a family history. And these sons were all eligible for the place of common

priests and had been consecrated for that particular part of the tabernacle service.

Verse 4. *They had no children.* This statement is made to explain why Eleazar and Ithamar took the place of their brothers in the administration of the priest's office. Had they left sons old enough to serve, then they would have succeeded to the office and work of their father.

Verses 5-10. Aaron was, himself, of the tribe of Levi. While his personal family had exclusive charge of the priest's office, the tribe as a whole was to be used in the service of the Lord for the congregation. Whatever was needed to carry on the congregational activities the tribe of Levi must supply it. For this reason the whole tribe was exempt from obligation to engage in productive occupations. In place of such occupation for a livelihood, the other tribes were to turn over a tenth of their entire income for this special tribe. When such support was given, it is referred to as having been given to the Lord. The "stranger" mentioned in 10th verse would here mean one on the outside of the camp of Levi.

Verses 11-13. The reader will refer to Ex. 13:2 where the Lord laid claim to all the first born of the children of Israel and from that time forward they were considered as special possession of his. The basis on which this claim was made was the fact that their release from bondage had been finally obtained through the death of the first born of the Egyptians. Now it is fair that in return for this great favor the first born of the nation be appropriated to God. The difference is that they were not to be slain. They were to be devoted to the Lord's service. Now it is desired to make a change in the whole setup. Instead of claiming the first born of all the tribes, God wishes the service and possession of one entire tribe. And for this he will exchange his possession of the first born for that of the tribe of Levi.

Verses 14-16. In taking the enumeration of the tribe of Levi we note another change of the basis. It is to be, of all the males from a month old. As soon as a boy baby was that old his prospect of living would have been well established and he was then recorded in the register of the tribe. When his age became such as would be accepted for the service of the tribe he would be used.

Verses 17-22. The entire tribe of Levi would be classified under the sub-heads of the three sons whose names were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. Also the sons of these several branches of Levi formed still further classification as to the family record and their particular work about the tabernacle would lie under the assignment that had been made to their father. The entire number of the males from Gershon that were a month old and upward was 7,500. This gives the sum of all the males in the tribe of Levi at this time who were eligible for the general work about the tabernacle. The particular portion of the service would be further restricted to whether they were from Levi through his son Kohath, or from one of the others as will be seen below.

Verses 23, 24. We see that orderliness is still observed. The members of the Gershonite families were to pitch "behind" the tabernacle. In the same connection it calls the place "westward" which indicates that the building was always pitched in the eastward direction. The word "behind" has also a more specific significance than that of direction. It means that it was near the tabernacle as compared with the entire camp of Ephraim which was also located on the west. (Chapter 2:13.) This unit was to be immediately near, to be ready for their particular part of the service when called.

Verses 25, 26. This paragraph states the special work of the families of the Gershonites. It pertained to the building and its parts. When it was time to march this group took down the building and when the place for setting up the tabernacle was pointed out, they were to do that work.

Verses 27, 28. The important branch of the Kohathites had 8,600 in number. Their charge is stated in general term here as that of the sanctuary. It will be given more detailed description in next paragraph.

Verses 29-32. Kohath was to pitch on the near south of the tabernacle. This group had charge of the furniture of the tabernacle; and also the curtains which included the fabrics used to cover the articles; and also the enclosures in the various parts.

Verses 33-35. The Merari unit pitched on the near north of the tabernacle. This group numbered 6,200.

Verses 36, 37. This group had charge of the heavy part of the tabernacle or



the framework. This is understood to mean the boards and foundation, also the pillars of the tabernacle proper and also the ones sustaining the curtains of the court. The word "charge" used in connection with these three groups pitched near the tabernacle means that they were to watch over and care for and handle the various parts of the whole structure as described. Each man, or group of men, was to know his place and do his particular work when needed. Thus we see that system was observed in God's plan.

Verses 38, 39. In this paragraph we see "before" and "east" used in the same connection, which is a further indication that the institution was always pitched in the easterly direction. Moses, Aaron and his sons had this position in the general encampment. It should be regarded as the superior position since it was at the entrance to the sacred building. The word "stranger" in this specific place means anyone not of Moses or the immediate family of Aaron. The number of this unit was included in that of the whole tribe and the number was 22,000. It will be well now to take a look at the whole encampment as set forth in this and preceding chapter. The congregation of the twelve tribes was divided into four camps situated some distance, (but in full view) from the tabernacle. Nearer to the building were the three groups of the three sons of Levi located on the south, west and north sides with their own work assigned as to the various parts of the whole building and service. Then on the east, which was the front, were Moses and Aaron with his sons, having the immediate services of the worship of the institution.

Verses 40-43. This paragraph is a repetition and summing up of information that has already been given. The reader may think a discrepancy occurs in the number given in verse 43 compared with that given in verse 39 above. But he should note that only in the odd numbers is there a difference. The number in verse 39 considers the even thousands only, which is a practice common to all kinds of literature, while the number in verse 43 is more definite as to the amount.

Verses 44, 45. Much of this paragraph is repetition, but it should be noted that mention is made here of taking the cattle of the Levites as well as the people. That is because they were to cease their secular activities and

thus would have no occasion for personal possession of these. They would be considered as consecrated to God.

Verse 46. When the exchange was made between the tribe of Levi on one hand and the first born of all the tribes on the other, there was an excess of the first born.

Verses 47, 48. From each man or other male that was over, or more than, the entire tribe of Levi the Lord exacted a poll tax of five shekels. Since they will not be required to engage in the special work of the sanctuary the Lord takes this method of equalizing the obligation to him.

Verses 49-51. This money was turned over to Aaron and his sons to be used in the work or service of the sanctuary. That is, this money was placed in the general treasury of the congregation. It would be used for such instances as purchasing lambs for the daily sacrifice (Ex. 29: 38-42), and other public necessities.

#### NUMBERS 4

Verses 1, 2. To keep our minds clear on the line of service it will be stated again that the priesthood must come, not only through Levi, but through his son, Kohath. Not only through Kohath, but from the particular family descending from Kohath, that came through Aaron. There was other service besides that of the priesthood that was restricted to the sons of Kohath. Hence, in the present paragraph the listing of them is required.

Verses 3, 4. The age limit as now set for the general service of the Kohathites is from thirty to fifty years. Certain exceptions were made at times as will be seen.

Verses 5, 6. The directions now about to be given pertain to the time of moving from one camp to another. The sons of Kohath must first come forward because the holy articles have to be prepared first. The work began with the ark. The "covering vail" refers to the one screening the ark from the other room of the tabernacle. When it is taken down it was to be used as a covering immediately on the ark. It must be further protected with a covering of skins of animals. *Shall put in the staves thereof.* This might confuse the reader since Ex. 25: 15 required that these staves were never to be taken from the ark. The meaning is that they were always to be kept in direct nearness to it for use when needed. As to whether they were

fully in the position of lifting the ark would be immaterial. Just as a detachable handle for some implement. It would always be kept together with the tool for ready use, although not necessarily inserted in the place for its operation.

Verses 7, 8. Preparation of the table was next. The question would be natural as to what use could be made of these vessels since nothing was kept on this table but bread. We should remember that after the week's occupation of the table by this bread, it then became the food of the priests. They ate it as food the same as anyone else would eat bread. At such a time they could eat it in connection with other articles of food as their taste suggested. In that matter they would have need of these implements. Therefore, this table would be a fitting place to keep them.

Verses 9, 10. The order to cover all these holy pieces of furniture would agree with the thought that they were so exclusive that the public gaze should be shut out.

Verses 11, 12. The same thought of protection is here observed as for the other pieces of the furniture for the tabernacle.

Verses 13, 14. The altar of burnt offering is meant here since the golden altar has already been cared for. Besides, the golden altar did not have occasion to be strewn with ashes. The brasen altar has been in daily use since encamping before and the residue of ashes from the service would still be on the grate of brass. This must be cleared away and then the covering be spread as here required. Also the instruments must be placed on the piece after being covered. From this it can be seen that when they were commanded never to let the fire on the altar go out (Lev. 6: 12, 13), it meant to apply when in service, not when in transit.

Verse 15. Aaron and his sons were "sons of Kohath," but the expression as used in this verse means the descendants of Kohath in general. Not all of the Kohathites were of the particular family of Aaron, who alone had the priesthood. A distinction must be made in the mention of the sons of Kohath in general and the particular ones coming through Aaron. These were the ones to prepare the holy articles for travel and the others were to come to carry them. They must not touch them, and that will be

unnecessary since the staves are there for bearing them.

Verse 16. *Office of Eleazar*. This is significant. It shows that this specific service was not to this particular man only, but to the men who will succeed him from time to time.

Verses 17-19. The word "tribe" is not used here in the same sense that is properly applied to the word when referring to the twelve tribes. It is from a word that means "branch" and is used of the particular branch of the Levites coming through Kohath. They were to be regarded with respect and guarded from danger. They had to do special service over other Levites and yet they must wait till the sons of Aaron have prepared the things for their service.

Verse 20. Idle curiosity is condemned and if these sons of Kohath give way to it they will be punished with death. They must wait until the covering has been done before going near the things to be carried.

Verses 21-26. This is the same instruction given in chapter 3: 25, 26, but the additional item is given here about the age limit. It is from thirty to fifty.

Verses 27, 28. Once more we see a distinction between the sons of Aaron and other descendants of Levi. This distinction must be kept in mind throughout the system.

Verses 29-33. The age limit is the same here as with the ones of the preceding paragraph. The service is the same as described in previous chapters.

Verses 34, 35. The numbering of this group was under the oversight of Moses and Aaron, assisted by the chief men of the Kohathites. These "chief" men were not officials but were men deputized by Moses for the work.

Verses 36, 37. The simple statement of the number of these special families is the subject of this paragraph.

Verses 38-41. The number of the various groups is repeated and the general statement of "entering into the service" is detailed at the original mention of the duty.

Verses 42-45. Same comments as on the preceding paragraphs.

Verses 46-49. The total number of these special Levites is the subject of this paragraph which has been described in the foregoing chapter.

### NUMBERS 5

Verses 1-4. Remembering that the nation of the Israelites was expected to be for future relationship with a final Dispensation, it can be realized that the citizens must be kept within a clear blood. Hence certain restrictions would have to be made that would not have been necessary if only personal salvation were considered.

Verses 5-7. This paragraph is concerning a case where a man has done some financial or other material trespass against another but was ignorant of it at the time. When made aware of the fact, he would be "guilty." When such knowledge came to him he was to make it right by restoring the thing trespassed against, and add a fifth.

Verse 8. The very wording of this verse indicates that the trespasser might not learn of his wrong until after the one suffering the wrong had died or otherwise got out of touch with the guilty one. In that case he could make it right by returning it to a kinsman. It might be that no kinsman would be known. In such a situation he would make it right by giving the return of the trespass to the Lord. It would be a suggestion for this time of ours. A Christian discovers that he had trespassed against some man in the past but whose existence might be unknown. It would be right for the guilty person to consider such property as being the Lord's and he could give it to the church and thus make it right.

Verses 9, 10. This does not mean that the wrong of trespass had been against the priest personally. The priest was to live by the things that were devoted to the service of the tabernacle. (1 Cor. 9: 13.)

Verses 11-13. The subject introduced in this paragraph is of a case where a man's wife is actually guilty of adultery. Since the act would not be witnessed in many cases, that would make an opportunity for denial. Hence some means must be used to decide doubtful cases for determining whether a woman be guilty when suspected. This provision will be described below.

Verse 14. Since the "spirit of jealousy" might come into a man's mind regardless of the guilt or innocence of the wife, it was necessary to use the plan here at hand.

Verses 15, 16. Let it be noted that the ceremony was performed by the priest who was the official representa-

tive of the Lord in the government of the people. Also since the ceremony is to be "before the Lord" it would be at the tabernacle since that institution was the place where the Lord had recorded his name.

Verse 17. Water in its natural state is all the same and possesses no moral characteristics. It is considered holy when no contact had been made with it, of some unclean object. It must be water therefore that is clean. Into such water the priest was to put some dust from the floor of the tabernacle. Since nothing unclean was ever allowed to be brought into the tabernacle the dust therein would also be clean. So, the entire formula would be from materials that were clean. Hence, if any unfavorable result appears it cannot be laid to the physical effect of the formula. Such result would have to be explained by the miraculous intervention of God. That must furthermore be understood in the light of Heb. 1: 1. Attempts have been made in modern times to compare this performance with the use of the "lie detector" that is used in some cases by officials trying to discover guilt. The comparison is made as an attempt to discredit the miraculous nature of the Biblical case and is therefore one of the ruses of the unbelievers of divine revelation. There is no comparison. In the case of the lie detector there is no physical result; it is purely confined to the mental or nervous system of the person being tested. In the case we are considering there would be an apparent physical result as we shall see.

Verses 18-23. The woman is expected to submit to the test. Her refusal would be an admission of guilt. The drinking of this water could not possibly injure her by any law of nature. Therefore, she should not hesitate to drink it if innocent. In order that her cooperation in the performance could not be doubted she was required to answer the statement of the priest by saying "amen, amen." After drinking the water if guilty, her body would react accordingly. Vital portions of her body would become diseased and repulsive but not necessarily fatal at once. Instead, she would continue to exist, but as a person to be abhorred among her people. Also, the case was to be recorded by the priest in a book so as to clear the good reputation of the nation at large.

Verses 24-27. This paragraph describes the carrying out of the cere-

mony already mentioned, which had been agreed to by the woman.

Verse 28. If not guilty the woman was to be freed. The statement is also added that she would be able to conceive. This indicates that the condition of her curse had she been guilty was to be deplored, especially because it would have prevented her from such privilege. In those days such disability was regretted very much.

Verses 29-31. Some criticism has been suggested that the man should make some amends for the false accusation against his wife. The guilt of adultery was such an abhorred one, that it should be exposed at every suspicion thereof. If a woman is not guilty it will not injure her in the least to be tested. The same principle holds good, generally. A guilty person is often unwilling to be examined and the very refusal to be tested is indication of guilt. An innocent person is glad to be tested if any doubt has been raised concerning his conduct.

### NUMBERS 6

Verses 1, 2. We are about to learn of a special vow that was performed among the Israelites. The Lord did not command the making of vows as a regular practice. But if a person wished to make one then God did regulate it. The one now under consideration was a very special one and had close restrictions. It was called a Nazarite vow. The word is derived from the Hebrew word *NAZAR* which means "separate." Since a person making this vow agreed to separate himself from the rest, in a special sense of conduct and observance, the vow received its name as stated.

Verse 3. Some things are specified from which the person must separate himself. They were to include all of the products of the grape in whatever condition they were.

Verse 4. This restriction against the product of the vine held good during the period of days he had stipulated as the period of his vow. This period might be long or short, according to the will of the one making the vow.

Verse 5. Since this vow required the man to let his hair grow uncut during the period of his vow we have the conclusion that men had their hair short as a rule. Having it long would be favored only when under this special vow. Paul used this vow on one occasion. (Acts 18: 18.)

Verse 6. The prevailing meaning of this vow is that of separation. Therefore the person must keep separate from dead bodies during the term of the vow.

Verses 7, 8. The foregoing restrictions would not even permit the exception of the body of near kin.

Verses 9-12. A man under the Nazarite vow might be conscientiously trying to observe the obligations belonging to it, but a sudden death might occur near him and bring him into contact with the dead body. In such a case the whole status of the vow would be changed. And the person must go through certain ceremonials in order to be in favor with the Lord. This is another instance to show us that many of the ceremonies of that system were typical and not literal or of a physical nature. After the accident had interfered with the progress of the vow the whole time already passed under the vow was lost and it had to be started over.

Verses 13-17. Almost all activities performed under the Mosaic system were connected with animal and other sacrifices. The literal and logical transactions were required always, of course, and no amount of gifts could be substituted for the personal obligations in force. Such obligations though observed to the letter did not suffice to the Lord. So in the case now at hand, after the person had continued faithful to the termination of his vow, he was still required to carry out these religious items. He must be brought to the door of the tabernacle and make the offerings named. Four of the five major sacrifices described in beginning chapters of Leviticus are listed here, and the reader may consult those chapters for the particulars of how they were to be performed. All this was required before the person was free or "purified."

Verses 18-20. This act of shaving the head at the end of the time for the vow is what Paul did as recorded in Acts 18: 18. No one knows just what was the occasion of his vow or how long it continued. Having made the vow he was bound to abide by the regulations placed under the law.

Verse 21. See comments in paragraph verses 13-17 above. This present passage is a restatement of those obligations. That is, he must faithfully carry out the personal acts of behaviour during the term of his vow, besides the things he provides for the



Lord's institution here referred to by the words "that his hand shall get."

Verses 22-27. This is the benediction to be used at various times for the consolation of the nation of the Israelites. We note that the Lord did not speak directly to Aaron in this case. He spake to Moses, and he, in turn, was to speak to Aaron. Another indication of the authority and position of Moses.

### NUMBERS 7

Verses 1, 2. The rearing up of the tabernacle is recorded in Ex. 40: 17, 18. At that time Moses completed the formalities directly pertaining to his duty and office as lawgiver. But in addition to those ceremonies there were others who volunteered certain sacrifices and offerings and this chapter will be the account of their performances. The men here called "princes" are the same as the ones called "ruler" in Lev. 4: 22. But in that case the directions were for a ruler when he had committed an offense and was called upon to atone for it with an offering. For that reason we will not see all of the items listed, that are shown in the present chapter. That is because in this, the whole performance is a voluntary one and intended for a more complete ceremony.

Verses 3-8. The sum of the things which these princes brought is given in this paragraph. Moses was directed to accept them and turn them over to the Levites. The stipulation is made that they were to be used by the men of the Levites "according to their services." In other words, the instruction to turn these things over to the Levites is a general one since all persons who had anything at all to do with the service were Levites. Certain ones of the tribe had special duties which will be given more description below.

Verse 9. These sons of Kohath were of the tribe of Levi but were the special ones referred to above. None of these articles listed were turned over to them since the kind of service they were to perform did not call for such. Their sole work was to carry the articles of furniture, "bear upon their shoulders," and otherwise handle these articles. That would not call for the use of the sacrifices.

Verses 10, 11. The importance of being orderly is again manifested. These princes were to take turns in

their several ceremonies and take a day for each.

Verses 12-17. A detailed list of what each prince offered on his day is here given. In connection with the naming of the article the particular one of the five major sacrifices to which each was to be applied is pointed out. It will be interesting to make note in each case that the law was carried out. Thus, in verse 15 after naming the articles offered it is stated that they were offered for a "burnt offering." And by reference to Lev. 1: 3, 10 the reader will see that the law of sacrifices was observed. In verse 16 the "sin offering" is named and reference to Lev. 4: 22, 23 will show that the directions for that ceremony were observed. And in verse 17 the "peace offerings" are cited which refers us to Lev. 3: 1, 6, 12.

Verses 18-83. The long list of verses in this paragraph will not require much space with comments. The offering of each of the princes was exactly the same and it will be sufficient to go through the passage and mark the number of the day and the name of the prince as follows: Verse 12, first day, Nahshon. Verse 18, second day, Nethaneel. Verse 24, third day, Eliab. Verse 30, fourth day, Elizur. Verse 36, fifth day, Shelumiel. Verse 42, sixth day, Eliasaph. Verse 48, seventh day, Elishama. Verse 54, eighth day, Gamaliel. Verse 60, ninth day, Abidan. Verse 66, tenth day, Ahiezer. Verse 72, eleventh day, Pagiel. Verse 78, twelfth day, Ahira.

Verses 84-88. This paragraph is another summing up of all the articles offered in this ceremony. The whole passage might be bracketed and labeled "altar dedication."

Verse 89. The first occurrence of the pronoun "him" means God. This was the place ordained by the Lord where he would meet and commune with the High Priest. (See Ex. 25: 22.) We realize that Moses was not a priest at all in the regular sense of that word. Here again is an indication of his great position. He was even over Aaron, since he was the lawgiver of the whole system under God. The exact spot at which the meeting was to take place is named. It is between the cherubims, which were on the mercy seat, over the ark.

### NUMBERS 8

Verses 1-2. The seven lamps mentioned here are the bowls on the top

of the seven branches of the candlestick. "Over against" is explained at Ex. 25: 31, 32, 37.

Verses 3, 4. "As the Lord commanded Moses" is another showing of the superior position he had over Aaron. The candlestick had been described to Moses while he was in the mount and now it has been made according to the directions. It was formed into the desired shape by hammering. And when it was ready for service, olive oil was poured into the bowls, and then, Aaron the priest lighted them.

Verses 5-13. The tribe of Levi as a whole was given over to the exclusive service of God. The particular classification of their several duties has been already described. They were to be consecrated in connection with use of the "water of purifying." This water is described in chapter 19: 9, 17. It will be understood of course that not each individual of the tribe was acted upon as described. Since the formality was one for the tribe as a whole, some particular representatives were pointed out for the occasion and the devotional program would be effected upon them. This form of the ceremony is evident in 13th verse. There the Levites were to be set before Aaron and his sons, yet we know that they were Levites also. Therefore, the other directions applied to the tribe as a whole and as such would have representatives.

Verses 14-18. The exchange of the first born of all the tribes for the entire tribe of Levi is the subject of this paragraph. The death of the first born of the Egyptians was the final and deciding act that procured the release of the Israelites from their bondage. Thus it was fair that God claim as his all the first born among the children of Israel. When a special tribe was needed for the divine service, the tribe of Levi was selected and the exchange made. The reason for making that selection of the particular tribe of Levi is that when Moses called for all who would, come over to the Lord's side, this tribe responded. A helpful view of the word "sanctified" is set forth in this paragraph. In verse 14 it is said that the Levites were "separated" from the other people. In verse 17 and in direct connection with that same subject, it is said that they were "sanctified." This shows that the word does not have some mysterious meaning as sometimes taught, but means the simple fact of being de-

voted to a particular position and service.

Verse 19. The word "gift" is not in the original and is added as a detail. It means simply "I have given the Levites to Aaron and his sons." The verse goes on to show that the transfer was not made for the personal service of this family. Instead, it was that they might do the service of the children of Israel. By setting one entire tribe apart for the special service of the tabernacle there would be left no reason for others to come near the sacred institution beyond their proper bounds. To do so would have meant their death.

Verses 20-22. The Levites were purified according to verse seven and then washed their clothes. It was after this ceremony that they began their service of the tabernacle. Previous to that, it would have been unlawful for them to act.

Verses \*23, 24. The beginning age limit of service for the Levites seems to have been changed from time to time. The first limit was from thirty years. (Chapt. 4: 3). It is now from twenty-five. Later (1 Chr. 23: 3, 24, 27) it was changed to twenty. The men in charge at these changes were men of authority, therefore we conclude the Lord authorized the changes for reasons which he did not make known to us.

Verse 25. The age of retirement was fifty years. It should be understood that the common priests are the ones meant here. The High Priests served until death, according to chapter 35: 25.

Verse 26. This verse teaches that even after these Levites had passed the age of official service they were still expected to do what they could about the work. And the same principle applies to the Lord's servants under the Christian Dispensation. If a man becomes too old or otherwise disabled for the usual or full activity in the work, there is no time when he is exempt from doing what he can.

## NUMBERS 9

Verses 1, 2. It has now been fourteen days since the tabernacle was reared up (Ex. 40: 17), and the first occasion to keep the passover in the proper time and manner. The command now is to observe the feast.

Verses 3-5. The warning is here to keep the feast according to all the rites pertaining thereto. The reader

may see Ex. 14, for details of this feast.

Verse 6. In chapter 5: 2 and 19: 11, 16 the instruction is found to the effect that contact with a dead person renders one unclean. An unclean man would not be permitted to participate in the feast of the passover. No provision had been as yet made for this kind of situation, thus they bring the case to Moses and Aaron.

Verse 7. This verse indicates they did know that such a person was prevented from partaking of the passover in the "appointed season," but did not know what to do about it.

Verse 8. Let it be remembered that the system of the Mosaic Dispensation is now in the making and that all of the law pertaining to it has not yet been given. It will be necessary therefore to extend its provisions as the call for them appears. This is why Moses told them to "stand still" or wait until he had consulted the Lord. Now if Moses had been acting on his own authority, as the sabbatarians so disrespectfully allege, then he would have proceeded here to tell them what to do. Especially would he have done so since it pertained to one of the "ceremonial" ordinances and not to anything even mentioned in the decalogue. But he did not. He held up the case until he had opportunity for consulting God.

Verses 9-12. In this emergency the Lord directed that another date should be taken for the feast which was one month later than the regular one. This circumstance has been misused by certain ones who wish to take the privilege of substituting some of their own plans for that of the Lord. The fundamental principle involved is that it was the Lord who made the change and not man. Unless there is a provision in the law of God for our alternating something for the thing we are supposed to do, then we have no right to make any change. If circumstances over which we have no control prevent us from doing what the Lord commands, in any given case, then we must not do anything. We will be exempt from the activity.

Verses 13, 14. When the second date has been taken for the observance of the feast, all the other restrictions must be observed that would have been required at the regular time.

Verses 15-23. The original word for "cloud" here is the same as for the

ordinary rain cloud. Yet the connection shows that it was not that kind of a cloud. It would mean whatever kind of covering and appearance the Lord saw fit to use. It was to make known to the children of Israel the will of God concerning their journeying. Another instance to remind us of Heb. 1: 1. This cloud was the signal for their moving or locating. The length of time they would remain at any given place was not made known except as this cloud moved or remained over the tabernacle. Hence, it was necessary for them to be always attentive to this cloud and not wander off to some distance too far to see the cloud. Should some man be forgetful and fail to be observant of this cloud the congregation might move off and leave him behind. There was no excuse for any man to be left behind for this cloud was always over the tabernacle. This would make it visible to all the congregation. No regular time of encampment was settled upon. It might be as short as two days or as long as a year. (Verse 22). Hence the need for their always being on the alert. They must be always watchful lest they be surprised and left. The same kind of warning is given to Christians. (Matt. 24: 42; 1 Thess. 5: 1-6).

### NUMBERS 10

Verses 1, 2. Some three million people would not hear the voice of a man if called upon to make any movement. Yet it would be necessary for the order to be heard by all at the same time. Otherwise, their movements would be disorderly. We have already noted that order was one of the things the Lord required. So these silver trumpets were made for the purpose of the general call.

Verse 3. This is a general call and the people must respond to it by assembling at the door of the tabernacle. That would give opportunity for any special instructions, to be observed at the time.

Verse 4. There were two trumpets made but not always used. The "code" must be understood and that is referred to in this verse. If but one blast, or the blast of but one trumpet sounded, it was a signal for the heads of the people to assemble before Moses. There might be some special instructions for that class of men.

Verses 5, 6. Some manner of using these trumpets indicated whether the sound meant an alarm or merely a

call to attention. And if it were an alarm to march, then the order of march is stated. Logically, if the east side starts and the south follows, then the same order would require the west and north to follow, respectively.

Verse 7. This is considered in preceding paragraph. This distinction in the meaning of the various codes is an illustration of Paul's statements in 1 Cor. 14: 7, 8.

Verse 8. The official persons to use the trumpets were the priests. Otherwise, if just any person had right to blow them they might be carelessly used at different times and the congregation be thrown into confusion.

Verse 9. The significant word in this passage is "oppresseth." It shows that the war they were going to make was one of defense. And indeed that is the only motive for war that God ever endorsed. The general wars of the Israelites in taking the land of Canaan were wars of defense. That land had already been given to the seed of Abraham, and these heathen nations then occupying it were intruders. So that it was necessary for the rightful owners thereof to fight for their defense and that they could take possession of what was already their own.

Verse 10. Times of war were not the only occasions for using these trumpets. The males were all required to appear at the tabernacle at stated seasons. All the rest of the congregation should join in rejoicing for the goodness of God, and at hearing these trumpets sounding with the proper code, they would be thus reminded.

Verse 11. The subject of this verse is "removal from Sinai." A very significant occasion. It has been less than a month since the tabernacle was covered with the cloud, at which time their official life as a systematic nation began. Now their first order to move is given. It is made known by the removal of the cloud as shown in preceding chapter.

Verses 12, 13. Now the children of Israel start on their famous wandering through the wilderness, to be strewn with so many and varied experiences. The first stop as shown in this paragraph is called Paran. This is the same location as Kadesh-barnea which was the place they reached on the border of the land of promise. (13: 3; 32: 8.) What places they may have halted in the meantime are not mentioned here. It is asserted that they here took their journeys by the

commandment of the Lord. Further, that this commandment of the Lord was by the hand of Moses.

Verses 14-16. This order of march was according to the arrangement set forth in chapter 2: 3-7.

Verse 17. By consulting chapter 3: 25 the reader will see that the Gershonites were to have the handling of the tabernacle, assisted by Merari. (Verse 36). So the activities here described are according to the law.

Verses 18-20. Chapter 2: 10 shows this camp also to be following the schedule set by the original directions. All things in proper order.

Verse 21. Of course there should be the proper place to set the articles of the tabernacle service. Hence, it was in order for the ones bearing the institution to precede the ones carrying these articles. As soon as the ones in charge of the tabernacle had been indicated to stop, by the resting of the cloud, they would set up the tabernacle. Then the Kohathites bearing the holy articles would come up and place them in the proper order as directed by the original commandment.

Verses 22-24. See chapter 2: 18-24 for the original description of this action.

Verses 25-28. The original outline of this paragraph is in chapter 2: 25-31.

The word "rereward" means "rear guard" and applied to this camp because it came last in the order of march.

Verse 29. One form of the name for Moses' father-in-law was Raguel. His son was Hobab, and in gratitude for the services of his father, also in view of the family relation between them, Moses invites him to share their prospective advantages.

Verses 30-32. Hobab declined at first to accept the invitation of Moses. Then he was entreated to accompany them as a guide in the wilderness. No statement is here made as to whether he changed his mind. The language in Judg. 1: 16 and 4: 11 indicates that he did. The family relations are mentioned as being with the Israelites and they would hardly be expected to journey with the congregation had Hobab persisted in his determination to return to his own people.

Verses 33, 34. *Mount of the Lord.* By reference to Ex. 3: 1 it will be seen that Horeb is meant by this term. The ark was the most important article of the tabernacle system. It contained the tables of the covenant, also a pot



of the manna. It was fitting that it should be in the lead when the congregation was on the move. This will be the case when they cross the Jordan. (Josh. 3: 3). In addition to the lead provided for them by the ark, the cloud hovered over them to indicate God's presence.

Verses 35, 36. This is the form of benediction Moses pronounced at the movements of the congregation when being lead by the ark. *Return*. This does not mean that the Lord had left them. The beginning two letters do not signify anything special. The remark means that as the Lord had been with them all the while they were encamped before, and then in the march, now also let his presence be assured as they encamped.

### NUMBERS 11

Verse 1. This is another one of the murmurings already referred to, which will form one of the links in the chain announced to be outlined at Ch. 21: 5. The punishment was not total, but sufficient to indicate the mind of the Lord.

Verse 2. The people had previously learned of the authority of Moses as their mediator and hence they now cry to him. Since he was the recognized intercessor between God and his people he is granted his plea here. The fire was quenched.

Verse 3. Proper nouns usually had special meaning in Biblical times. The word "Taberah" is defined in the lexicon as "burning." It was therefore applied to the place at hand because the Lord used the instrument of fire to punish the complainers.

Verses 4, 5. Another of the murmurings and one of the outstanding ones. The subject of their complaint this time was that of food. Often when people become dissatisfied with their present condition they can look with much favor on conditions which they even loathed before. Here their memory goes back to the knickknacks of the land of their bondage. Sometimes today when Christians become weary with the obligations of their new life they begin to think with longing of the "happy" times they had while in the world. They even may forsake the church and go back into the world. The children of Israel would have done the like had they been able. Not being situated so they could, they did so in their desires, figuratively. (Acts, 7: 39). It is significant in this passage

that the trouble was caused by the influence of the "mixed multitude." This term is defined by Strong "a promiscuous assemblage." The same people are defined by him at Ex. 12: 38, as "mongrel race." It frequently happens today that people get into the membership of the church who are not really converted in heart. Then when some occasion of trial presents itself this group will start trouble. Which gives us a strong motive for carefully watching the conduct of all professors of religion.

Verse 6. Before the manna was given they acted as if their main need was bread. That if they only had that article of food they would be satisfied. Now that nothing in that line is needed they see a deficiency in it. All of which proves that when men clamor for a thing that is not really indispensable they are apt to tire of it soon and want something else.

Verse 7. Description of the manna as to its taste and outward appearance is here given. In Ex. 16: 31 we are told it tasted as honey. The coriander seed was a seasoning, and the bdellium pertained to the color. It was either a pearl or gum of the color of amber.

Verse 8. This manna was of such firm texture that it could be handled in about the same manner as one would handle wheat. This would account for the fact that it could be upon the ground and be gathered up and stored as it was. In this verse the taste, as of fresh oil, is added to other descriptions of it. Olive oil was the only kind of oil they had in those days. It is probable that after grinding it there would be the added taste as result of its being bruised in grinding, thereby exuding this taste, as of oil.

Verse 9. There is no special significance in the mention of dew in connection with the manna except to identify the time of the night when the manna fell. Also it may be observed that, since the dew fell at the same time as the manna, and the manna was there after the dew left, it shows that it was of a firmer texture than actual bread would be, or else the moisture would have affected it.

Verse 10. This verse harks back to the complaint mentioned a few verses earlier in the chapter and commented upon, especially verses 4, 5.

Verses 11-15. Once more our explanation of the passage before us lies

in the fact that Moses was the mediator between God and the people. As such he was a type of the great Mediator for the Christian Dispensation. Because of this he was permitted to express himself at times in a manner that might have been condemned, if only his personal interests were considered. Jesus made pitiful pleas to his Father also, regarding the bitterness of his lot. (Luke 22: 42, 43. Matt. 27: 46.) But in both cases the unpleasantness of the situation did not cause any rebellion against God.

Verse 16. The elders here were not officials but were so called in view of their age and experience. And even they were to have officers over them. These were to be rather as go-betweens to relay the instructions of Moses to the elders.

Verse 17. These men were to work under Moses much the same as the apostles were to work under Christ.

Verse 18. This command meant for them to prepare themselves to receive the blessing of God about to be brought to them. And they are reminded of their recent murmuring against the Lord.

Verses 19, 20. In years gone by there was a practice in certain states to offer a reward of many hundreds of dollars for any person who could eat a whole quail each day for a month and retain it in the body, until digested. No one ever won the reward. Instead, those attempting it had the very experience described in this chapter, also described in this passage. It appears that man is so dull of learning his lessons that he must be made to have some physical punishment to get him to learn.

Verses 21, 22. It is difficult to understand this statement of Moses. After having seen all the wonders the Lord did in Egypt and the Sea, he now asks how the feat of feeding this people can be done. The most plausible explanation is in the fact that Moses was a natural man and subject to slips of the memory.

Verse 23. The question the Lord asked of Moses is significant. The Bible in some places shows us that there are some things God cannot do. In no case is it because the thing considered is too hard. It is because it is not right. So, were it wrong to feed these thousands of people by miracle then God could not have done it. It was not wrong. Since the Lord's hand was not short, not weak, there

was no reason to doubt the fulfillment of the promise to the congregation.

Verses 24, 25. No doubt this group of seventy elders was practically the ones we read about in Ex. 18. The difference between the conditions of the two instances is that in the latter the Lord took direct part in the arrangement and inspired these men to act. In the former there is nothing said about that. The only fact indicated then was that God endorsed the arrangement and blessed it in that way.

Verses 26, 27. The word "prophesied" is from NABA and defined "to prophesy, i.e. speak (or sing) by inspiration (in prediction or simple discourse):"—Strong. These men were to help in the teaching of the people about their daily conduct and thus in the spirit they could do so. That caused them to become distinct from the other men, and was the occasion of the demonstration of surprise manifested by these around them. And it caused one man to run to Moses with the report.

Verse 28. There was nothing wrong with the motive prompting Joshua to make this suggestion. He was the servant of Moses and was concerned for the authority of his master. He was not speaking on his own behalf but was not approving of any rival against the man whom he regarded as the sole human authority.

Verses 29, 30. The unselfishness of Moses is exhibited here and verifies the statement in verse 3 of next chapter. This is one of the finest characteristics a man can have and in this case, especially, it is appreciated since Moses is a type of Christ.

Verse 31. God's power to accomplish any result he wishes and by no visible means will not be questioned. Yet he often used such means in connection with his works. They usually were the kind that would furnish no logical explanation of the result obtained. That would have tendency to strengthen the faith of the observer in the power of the Lord. The nature of the sea was not that of great swarms of quail as most of them knew. Yet here came those great numbers at the instigation of God. The conclusion then would be plain that the divine power was the explanation. The convenience of securing the birds is seen in that they were brought right down to the camp, and the plentifulness of them, is indicated in the fact that they reached in each direction from the camp as far

as a day's journey. Also by the further fact that they came down to within two cubits (three feet) of the ground.

Verse 32. The convenience of the situation is further indicated by the fact that all the people had to do to obtain the quail was to stand up and pick them right out of the air and then spread them on the ground round the camp.

Verses 33-35. God sometimes suffers the people to have their wishes granted, but under protest. This he did later when they clamored for a king. God directed that a king should be granted them but under protest. (1 Sam. 8: 8, 9). And so in the present instance God is wroth at the complaining mood of the people. The desire for flesh would not be in itself a wrong. But under the present circumstances, with all the items of plenty that had been showered on the people, their clamor for the food was prompted by a spirit of unrest and lack of appreciation for the Lord's goodness.

## NUMBERS 12

Verse 1. There is nothing more said about this circumstance in the scripture, but it is reported in secular history. While he was under the Egyptian connection and thus before he had fled Egyptian threat from Pharaoh, the country got into a war with the Ethiopians nearby. Moses was given an important military commission and made the attack. A certain city was an objective. In the meantime the daughter of the king fell so deeply in love with Moses that she made the offer of marriage. He agreed to it, on condition that she obtain the surrender of the mentioned city, which she did. The marriage was then carried out. As to what became of the relationship I do not have information. But the fact must have been well-known and authenticated since Miriam and Aaron accused him of it, and it is not denied. In fact, the statement is here made in the divine narrative that he had married an Ethiopian woman. The reader is given some citations which he may read and then form his own conclusions as to how much of the details to accept. Josephus, *Antiquities* 2:10-1. Moses, *His Life and Times* by George Rawlinson, pages 48, 49. This complaint was not the real motive for their opposition to Moses as will be seen in next verse.

Verse 2. Had Moses been guilty of usurping authority as they charged,

it would have been just as wrong, regardless of his marriage entanglements. If they knew about the circumstances now, they knew them before. Yet there is no account of their accusation against him before. That shows that their real motive was jealousy of Moses and they were using the marriage subject as a pretext.

Verse 3. Moses, as the inspired writer of this history, is saying that Moses as the leader and law giver of the people was a very meek man. This idea must be kept in mind in order not to think of him as being guilty of self-praise. As we read that Moses the mediator of the Old Testament religion was meek, we think of the one who is mediator of the New as being also meek. (Matt. 11: 29.)

Verses 4, 5. The tabernacle was the place for the official transactions pertaining to the congregation. So now these three persons are summoned to meet at that place. When they did so, the Lord came down at the place in the form of a cloud. After that was done the Lord called out of the cloud for Aaron and Miriam to come apart and near the cloud, where God was represented.

Verse 6. The ordinary prophets among them would always have evidence of their call to authority by having some special vision or dream. Yet these two had to know that no such experience had been given to them.

Verses 7-9. The great difference as to the superiority of Moses was indicated in that God did not leave him to depend on visions and dreams. Instead, the Lord spoke to him directly and in such close range that the similitude of his form could be seen in the personage sent to represent him. This whole situation was well known to the brother and sister and hence their false accusation was malicious. After making this statement to them the Lord departed from the place in anger.

Verse 10. The foregoing verse states that God departed from the place. Of course that would mean also that the cloud would depart. When it was cleared away, the plague imposed as visible protest was that of leprosy. That was a very distressing and humiliating affliction, but not necessarily fatal. Hence it was here used as one form of punishment for those acquiring the wrath of God. We are not told why only Miriam was afflicted,

and not Aaron although he was equally guilty. But God evidently had a specific reason which he has not seen fit to reveal to us.

Verses 11, 12. Aaron makes his plea to Moses, on behalf of the sister, not directly to God. In his plea he admits sin and places himself in the guilt. There is no evidence that Miriam made any acknowledgment of sin. It is reasonable to think of this fact as the explanation of the question mentioned in verse ten.

Verse 13. Moses as mediator would properly pray for his sister. The thing that was objectionable in the prayer was the word "now." In his eagerness for the comfort of the afflicted one he becomes impetuous and asks for a favor that would have made confusion concerning the awful character of the disease of leprosy and tended to minimize the gravity of the plague when the law had already shown it to be a most terrible affliction. (See Lev. 13.) While Moses was a type of Christ as mediator, yet he was a man and was subject to the mistakes of man. Jesus was man also but never submitted to the influences of the flesh. Yet he did imply the possibility of his prayers being at variance with the will of his Father. (Matt. 26: 39.)

Verse 14. To spit in the face would actually be only an affront or violation of courtesy. Its physical effect would be nothing. Yet it would have been considered of such importance under the strict formalities of that law as to render the victim unclean. So much the more in a case of the loathsome disease of leprosy. Therefore, the command was given that Miriam be quarantined seven days.

Verses 15, 16. Here is a case where the whole congregation was held up in its march to wait on Miriam's recovery. While no direct mention is made of the recovery, yet that is necessary inference since she was allowed to be brought into the camp.

### NUMBERS 13

Verses 1, 2. Not all of the facts of transactions are given in each case. In the present one we consult Deut. 1: 21-23, and learn that this movement of spies was suggested by the people. It would not have been put into effect had not the Lord approved of it. Therefore the present passage ignores the request of the people and speaks as if the Lord initiated it. That was

fitting since it is really the act of the Lord which required his endorsement.

Verse 3. Paran is another name for Kadesh-barnea. See chapter 32: 8 and 10: 12. This place was at the border line between the land of the wandering and that of Canaan. Before entering upon the conquest of that country it was decided first to send out this reconnaissance group.

Verses 4-16. This paragraph gives the names of the men sent out on this tour of survey, which were the heads of the children of Israel spoken of in previous verse. The two who deserve special mention are Caleb in verse 6, and Oshea in verse 8. Verse 16 says Moses called him Jehoshua which is still another form of Joshua. Each tribe was represented in this commission.

Verses 17, 18. A general order for inspection of the land and country folk is given in this paragraph. More detailed inspection will be indicated in next paragraph.

Verses 19, 20. The fortifications of the cities must be noted. "Fat or lean" means whether the land is rich and strong or thin and poor. Also the wood would be a very important asset in a country intended for residence, but which must be possessed from its intruders by war. As concrete evidence of the productiveness of the country they were to bring of the fruit back with them.

Verses 21: 22. This paragraph is a geographical statement of the areas which they examined. It included some of the most noted parts of the country. Special mention might be made of Hebron which was the home of Abraham after his return from Egypt.

Verses 23, 24. We should be careful not to enlarge too much on the size of this bunch of grapes just because two of them carried it. Yet we know it was of great dimensions from the fact that it gave the name of Eschol (meaning cluster) to a valley. This indicates unusual proportions and importance. They brought also some of the figs and pomegranates in obedience to the order to bring of the fruit.

Verse 25. Originally there was no apparent significance in the exact term of their search. But it became afterward a token of a fact that was significant as will be seen in next chapter.

Verse 26. In this verse are mentioned Paran and Kadesh in connection which is further information on



the related meanings of the words. Upon the return the spies showed to the people the fruit they had taken from the country.

Verse 27. There is no dissenting voice heard in the report of the twelve men as to the productiveness of the land: That it flowed, abounded, with milk and honey.

Verses 28, 29. There still is no disagreement expressed as to the facts of the conditions they found. All are agreed that the country had fortified cities, that strong people lived here, people of whom they had heard much. That the people took up the land in general, for some of them dwelled by the sea and others in the mountains. While the outward statement of the facts was not varied, yet the attitude of these men in most cases must have been unfavorable from the statements in next paragraph.

Verses 30, 31. Here is where the difference came in. All agreed that the land was strong. That it had fortified cities. That many heathen peoples occupied the land. Most of them formed a conclusion on the situation that differed from that of Caleb. The former said they would not be able to take the land while the latter said they could. This is the difference that must always be considered when discussing this great crisis in the experiences of the children of Israel.

Verse 32. The words "evil report" are from one word and mean "slander." The word "eateth" is from *AKAL* and Strong defines it "A primitive root; to eat (literally or figuratively)." We get the thought these spies wished to make the impression that in some way the land they had just visited would devour its weaker inhabitants. It would be evident that no land would literally eat up the people, so the figurative meaning of the word must be the one attributed to it here. Yet that was a slander.

Verse 33. Anak was one of the men of the heathen variety and one of the giants. This word is understood to refer not alone to their stature but also to the coarse nature of their bodies and temperament. (Gen. 6: 4). Their comparison between themselves and the grasshoppers ignored the factor of God in the case. A grasshopper and God would make a majority in real strength, but they overlooked that fact.

## NUMBERS 14

Verses 1-4. This passage states another of the murmurings of the people and one which embraced such rash statements that it had far-reaching results. Another thing we should note here is the power of example. The people allowed themselves to be influenced by the conclusions of the unfaithful spies instead of listening only to their report as to the facts and then forming their conclusions from what they had seen already of the power of God. They had seen abundance of proof that God is powerful and able to overcome all opposition. Instead of using their better mind they gave way to unbelief and made two very rash wishes. Those were that they had died in Egypt; and, that they might die in the wilderness. The statement in the end of verse 4 agrees with the one made by Stephen in Acts 7: 39.

Verse 5. This prone attitude of Moses and Aaron was their expression of grief at the rebellion of the people.

Verses 6-8. Joshua is associated with Caleb in the good attitude toward the situation. They will later be seen to be blessed highly of God for their service. They reasoned that if the Lord takes delight in them, he will lead them into the good land in spite of all the apparent obstacles. That statement implies that if they do not find themselves successful in the attempt it will be because God is not delighted in them. This would mean, further, that such lack of delight would be on account of their misconduct. In the very start of the whole project of the children of Israel, the promises of God had been on condition that they be obedient to the Lord's voice.

Verse 9. The language here implies that their rebellion against the Lord was prompted by their fear of the nations of the land. Today, it often occurs that professed Christians shun to acknowledge their relation to God because of the people of the world. They are ashamed to own their Lord. Joshua advises the nation that the people of the land will be bread for them. That is, their property and accumulations will be taken by them and thereby furnish them with sustenance. One cause of this change was that they had become panic stricken themselves and not able for defense.

Verse 10. The trait of persecutors in all ages has been to use violence against teachers whose teaching is op-

posed to the evil doing of those to whom they speak. The foolish notion appears to be that by destroying the teaching they can also destroy the truth of their teaching. In this case it is thus. The people had made up their minds that they did not want to go against the heathen in the land of promise and now they are angered at the voice of the commander who would encourage them in the work.

Verses 11, 12. We should never forget that God is one of justice and vengeance as well as one of love and mercy. When sin rears its head, the justice of God is called forth and threatens the severe treatment for the sinner. So it is here. On the basis of merit this nation ought to be destroyed and the new start made for a nation. Now such action is suggested by the Lord. The reader will not forget that Moses is the mediator of the Old Testament and as such is a type of Christ. By making the speech here set down it opens the way for the performance of his duty and privilege as the one to plead in behalf of the people.

Verses 13-19. The general title of this passage which I have grouped into one paragraph is, "Intercession of Moses on behalf of the children of Israel." It should be understood that an intercession logically requires argument, and no argument is of any account that does not cite facts. Hence Moses reminds the Lord of the Egyptians from whom the nation had been released by the mighty hand of God not very long ago. They will have something to glory about if, at last, the plan of God fails. They will naturally be prompt to tell other nations of the circumstances and all will rejoice together. They will account for the tragedy by saying the Lord had started something he was not able to finish. That would lead to the further conclusion that the God of the Israelites was not superior to any of the other gods of the age. As contradiction to such conclusion Moses pleads that the power of God be here made manifest. He also reminds God that he had declared himself to be a God of longsuffering and mercy. Not that he would clear or justify the guilty who would not reform. Nay, he would punish such very severely as would be right. On the other hand, he would forgive when the guilty one repented. Thus the mediator here, although acknowledging the iniquity of the people, begs the Lord to pardon the people.

A truly effective speech and one that is proper in a person placed between two other parties as intercessor.

Verse 20. What a gracious, direct, significant reply! The Lord grants the plea of Moses and the wonderful basis is given, "according to thy word." That means that pardon will be granted, but not on the basis of the personal worth of the ones for whom the pardon was asked. It is on the strength of the plea of the mediator. So it is now. God has promised to forgive "for Christ's sake." Now, as then, the office of mediator will avail nothing to those who ignore the wishes and demands of the mediator.

Verse 21. The dignity of the Lord must be maintained. So while he will pardon his children when proper appeal is made, yet he will demonstrate his power in some way that will leave his greatness still undiminished before the world.

Verses 22, 23. The people as a whole will receive the benefit of the intercession of Moses. But the particular men who have caused the present condition of rebellion must pay the penalty for their great sin. They must be removed from the scene of action before the entrance into the promised land. And in doing so they will be receiving what they rashly asked for in their rebellion.

Verse 24. God makes an exception to the threat of general destruction of the men who had brought on the uprising. He excepts Caleb (and later Joshua) because he had "followed me fully." This is a very significant expression. Many people will follow the Lord in part but only those who follow him fully may have the divine reward.

Verse 25. The children of Israel are still in the region of Kadesh-barnea, the place from which the twelve spies had been sent. They will not be permitted to pass on into the promised land because of the great sin here. They will not be allowed even to go in that direction. Instead they are directed to go into the wilderness by way of the Red Sea. The reader might be confused here. The Red Sea is always thought of as being restricted to the immediate locality of the famous crossing after leaving Egypt. A look at the map of the country will show that the body of the Red Sea is actually far south of the territory of the movements of these people. That body of water divides into two arms, one going northeast and the other

northwest. The last named one is where they crossed miraculously, while the other is the one meant in the present verse. While these two arms have separate names in our modern geographies, the Bible considers the whole water unit as one named Red Sea.

Verses 26-29. God repeats the threat already made. Notice that it is against the men who had been numbered from twenty years and upward. We do not know how many others will have died in the ordinary course of life when they get to the end of the wandering. We do know that many innocent persons now living will also be living and be permitted to enter the land of Canaan.

Verse 30. In this place the Lord names together the two men who are to escape the general overthrow of the men of war. They had wholly followed the Lord.

Verse 31. This is considered in verses 26-29 above.

Verses 32, 33. In order that these guilty men may have their rash wish fulfilled, and yet not all die of direct miracle, they must wander in the wilderness 40 years.

Verse 34. The arbitrary basis is here given on which the length of the wandering is to be determined. They had used forty days for the time of search, now they must wander a year for each day. Of course we should remember the forty years will include the two years they have already been out of Egypt. *Breach of Promise.* We do not like to think of God as being one who will break a promise. In the first place, we should not forget that all of the promises of God are on condition of obedience; and when the obedience is not present, then the promise is lawfully left omitted. In the present instance the word "promise" is not in the original. The whole term is from a word that means "alienation." The thought is that by seeing all these men of war being left strewn along the way of the wilderness, they will have a demonstration of the alienation that comes between God and man when disobedience occurs.

Verse 35. Explained at verses 32, 33 above.

Verses 36, 37. The group of men from twenty years and upward fell to complaining at the slander of the ten spies. They are the ones who must

wander in the wilderness until they die. The ten spies who caused this uprising will not get to pass out in that way. Instead, they were punished at once by some plague before the Lord.

Verses 38, 39. The word "mourned" here is not the same as the murmuring noted in other places. It has the ordinary meaning; that they bewailed and lamented the death of these ten spies when Moses told them about the tragedy.

Verse 40. They see the mistake they had made in doubting their success under the hand of God against the heathen. Now they think they can undo their mistake by making the attack. It is too late.

Verses 41, 42. Moses told them not to go now because God will not be with them. To make an attempt that the Lord does not wish to be made, would be just as fruitless as they had claimed it was going to be, when God really wished them to go. They are warned that it will result in a fall before their enemies.

Verse 43. The significant accounting for their failure is on the fact that, as they had turned away from the Lord, he will turn away from them.

Verses 44, 45. *Presumed.* This is from *APHAL* and defined by Strong "to swell; figuratively, be elated." How foolish to be so self-important now. They did not feel big enough to go against their enemies while God was with them. Now when he has cast them off they feel big enough to do what they are told not to do and what they are told they cannot do. It is often so today. God has given us a perfect plan of salvation. Men sometimes say that the plan of God will not work. That it will not succeed in saving the world. Therefore they presume to be able to form institutions and plans of their own which they arrogantly claim will do the work more successfully than will the divine plan. All such will fail just as did the attempts fail here.

## NUMBERS 15

Verses 1, 2. God never lets the people lose sight of the promise to bring them into the land which is to be their permanent national home. The significant idea is often expressed that the land has already been given to them and it will be left to them to take possession of it by doing their part of the occupation.

Verses 3-12. This paragraph repeats the same instructions that had been written in the law as to offerings. See the first five chapters of Leviticus for detailed description of this service. The same will be repeated frequently because it is the common tendency with man to forget.

Verse 13. The privileges and provisions of the law were for those who belonged to the country possessed by the nation. They would not have any special significance to any others as long as they did not compose a part of the nation.

Verses 14-16. The word "stranger" means one from the outside. If such should come into the country and wish to sojourn there, he must do as the people of the land. The difficulty that might occur to the mind of the reader is that such provision seems to justify sinners in participating in the activities of the Lord's people. It must be borne in mind that the system given through Moses was a combination of civil and religious government. As a civil government it was the privilege and duty of all who dwelled in the land to be subject to its laws. The same is true in our day. If a person from another country comes among us, we require him to comply with the same law that citizens obey. Since that system combined both religion and civil government in one system, it made it unavoidable that aliens would participate in both, if at all.

Verses 17-21. The principal thought in this passage is the same as previously noted, that the "first" of anything is to be the Lord's. The priority of God in all the relations of activity must never be overlooked. Such is proper from many considerations. God is, and was, and always will be. He had no beginning, was thus in existence before all other beings and things. All things that exist are the result of the mighty hand of the self-existing One and therefore he has right to the first.

Verses 22, 23. The reader is again asked to note the authority of Moses as set forth here. The Lord commanded the activities referred to but he gave this command by the hand of Moses. Again we see the arrogance of those who depreciate the authority of the law-giver of that Dispensation.

Verse 24. The mistakes that were made through ignorance were not imputed against the actor until knowledge of it came to the front. God is

so particular that the nation as a whole be kept clear, that if knowledge comes to the leaders of the nation that some individual in it has done wrong, then the congregational treasury must be drawn on for a sacrifice in atonement. The word "manner" means the ordinance about the particular sacrifice. That ordinance will be found in some one or more of the chapters in beginning of the book of Leviticus which has been frequently referred to.

Verses 25, 26. The thought here in addition to the ones already stated above is that the procedure of the sacrifices is under the jurisdiction of the priest. He was the authorized official to have such charge.

Verses 27-29. *Shall have one law.* That is, the law as to atoning for the sin of ignorance is the same whether in the case of a stranger or one born in the country.

Verse 30. Likewise, one and the same fate is to come to the stranger as to the one born in the country, when the sin is one of presumption. This means a sin committed in defiance of law, and with the attitude of doing a thing regardless of law. In that case the same law also applies to both the stranger and the one born in the land. He is to be cut off. See Lev. 20:3 for explanation of such punishment.

Verse 31. The word "despised" means to hold in contempt. In some ways this attitude is more objectionable than one in which the law is admitted to be dignified. To disregard the law of God with the spirit of belittling it is very grievous in the sight of God and the offender is worthy of death.

Verses 32-34. The fourth commandment (Ex. 20: 8-11) plainly forbade any manual labor on the sabbath day. The act of gathering sticks is certainly a manual act. Now, notwithstanding the positive commandment the man had violated, yet they did not know what should be done with the man. If the decalogue, written on the tables of stone was intended to contain the complete law of God, why was it they did not know what to do with this man? The answer is clear. There is no complete law where no penalty is given. So that proves that the writing on the tables did not constitute the whole law of God. Neither was it claimed to be. Therefore, we again have evidence of the arrogance of the sabbatarians who reject the law of God as written by the hand of Moses,



but pretend to accept the law of God as written by his own fingers on the tables of stone. So this man was put in ward or temporary imprisonment to await the order from the Lord.

Verses 35, 36. God gave his penal decree in the case. He made it known through the same Moses who had done the writing in the book of the law. The penalty for violating the commandment which God had written on the stones was made known through the man who had written the laws that were in the book of the law. The guilty man was stoned.

Verses 37-41. If a certain arrangement is brought about in connection with prescribed significance, then the very appearance of that arrangement should serve to call to mind that thing signified. Even more so, if there is no logical connection between the thing observed and the idea to be commemorated. These fringes or tassels were on the edge of the garments. As additional ornamentations there was a twining or woven piece of the blue material, put on top of the row of tassels. These articles by themselves had no literary significance. The embellishment was commanded at the same time that importance of the law was emphasized in their hearing. Sometimes a person will exhibit some peculiar article which does not show any meaning to the observer. The owner will then state that he obtained the article at a time of great interest and that the very sight of it reminds him of the circumstance. Thus it is in this case. When the children of Israel would see these ornamental attachments to their clothing they would recall that they were instituted at the time that God warned them of disregarding his divine laws. Later, in the time of the New Testament, the Pharisees had been making a literal application of these things and were putting material strips of a surface admitting being written upon. Jesus taught that when it was done in that way, it should be considered as mere profession.

### NUMBERS 16

Verse 1. This verse is to identify the tribes from which the men came who were chiefly concerned in this famous rebellion against the government of God. The word "men" is not in the original. The word "took" is there. Of course since it is a transitive verb it requires that they took something. The context which is in the

next verse shows that the children of Israel were what they took. So that the wording as we have it in the A.V. is correct. The fact of conspiracy is what made their sin the more grievous.

Verse 2. The men with whom the conspiracy was formed are here mentioned as being chief ones. They were princes or men of some prominence in the congregation. Often it occurs that when men are given a little latitude of importance they want more and will even trample upon established law in their quest for more recognition.

Verse 3. It is the age-old situation. Men in private position will envy those in public and official position and accuse them of usurpation. The claim was made here that the people of the congregation were holy as well as these rulers. Even if all of their claim were true, that would not be a logical basis for their complaint. It was never assumed that Moses and Aaron were chosen as the leaders of the congregation only on the ground of their holiness. It is always necessary for the order and unity of any great system that some authority must be vested in a definite place. So it was in the system of the Lord at that time. It was not a presumption of these men that they are in charge of the work. They had not taken this upon themselves on their own choice. (Heb. 3: 5; 5: 4.)

Verse 4. This attack upon Moses was humiliating to him and caused him to fall prone as he did at Kadesh-barnea. (Chapter 14: 5.)

Verse 5. This Moses who was said to be the meekest man on the earth is still seen to be such. Notwithstanding the wickedness of these rebels he is willing to submit the controversy to a test. Referring to chapter 26: 9, 10 we will learn that the "company" mentioned here comprise the three men named in verse one and also the two hundred and fifty princes. Moses makes the challenge for this whole group to be put to the test as to whom he has chosen to be near him in the position of authority.

Verses 6, 7. Since Korah and his company are Levites it would be fitting in the test for them to provide themselves with the censers since the use of incense was that which especially belonged to the religious department of the service. In connection with the challenge to the test Moses returns the accusation they made by

saying they had taken too much for granted as to their authority.

Verses 8, 9. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests. Only the particular ones descending through Aaron had the right to the priesthood. While only such could be priests, yet the entire tribe of Levi had been sanctified to be near the Lord in the system and had special dignity over the other tribes. Moses here asks them if they are not satisfied with the honor already put upon them. He implies that they are not, but are now wanting still further honor by having the priesthood.

Verses 10, 11. They are told that the Lord had brought them near him as it is, and yet, now they want to usurp the special work that belongs properly to the sons of Aaron. He further accuses them of being against the Lord in that they are opposing Aaron who was chosen of the Lord for the special work.

Verse 12. These men were from a different tribe and did not have any separate place at all as the Levites had. Yet they were in the conspiracy and thus Moses invites them to be present to witness the test. They refuse to come up to it.

Verses 13, 14. Here they tauntingly describe their former land of residence as one that flowed with milk and honey. Just their way of saying it would have been better to have remained in Egypt instead of being brought out into the wilderness to famish and die. They further accuse Moses of having done so in order to get the advantage over them, to rule over them. Moreover, they complain that the promise made to them of being given a land that also abounded in milk and honey had not been carried out. That the scheme was one for the purpose of demoting these men opposing Aaron.

Verse 15. Moses was mediator. The office of such was for the purpose of pleading on behalf of the people to secure the favor of God. Also, we see here that the same office might intercede to cut off the favor and blessing. When the persons for whom a mediator is to plead favorably, make themselves unworthy then that same mediator will be their judge and ask for their rejection. This will be the case with Christ in the cases where his professed servants are unfaithful. (Mark 8: 38.)

Verse 16. The company of Korah

here refers to the 250 princes who were to take the censers for the test. They were to be "before the Lord" which means they were to come near the tabernacle since that was the place where the Lord acknowledged his presence.

Verses 17, 18. Korah did as he was commanded and they all came to the door of the tabernacle, the proper place for them to be for the present purpose.

Verse 19. The spirit of rebellion persists in Korah and he incites the whole congregation to an action that is unfavorable by assembling here also.

Verses 20, 21. God then directs Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the multitude that now is in a state of mob protest and let them be destroyed.

Verse 22. Here again is the work of a mediator. Since Aaron is the lawful High Priest for the congregation, he is joined with Moses in this instance also as mediator and pleads for the life of the men of the congregation.

Verses 23, 24. This command had the general meaning that they were to disassemble themselves from these conspirators and thus not be classed with them in their rebellion.

Verses 25, 26. This passage more definitely carries the idea mentioned in the preceding one. The residences of these wicked men were to be considered as improper places for righteous persons to be gathering so they are commanded to depart. If they remain they will be classed with them and will partake of their destruction also.

Verse 27. The multitude obeyed the command to depart. When they did so, it attracted the attention of the leaders in the rebellion who then came out and stood at the door of their tents together with the immediate members of their families.

Verse 28. The fundamental difference between official action and mere personal one is here made. Moses expresses it in the words "not done them of mine own mind."

Verses 29, 30. An impostor might offer to be put to some indefinite test. He might mention some general thing that could be construed in various ways because of having no certain meaning. Moses shows his sincerity, also his confidence in the righteousness of his position, by naming some definite demonstration. Not only so,

but one that would be so unusual and seemingly impossible, that only the Lord could cause it to happen. If he did cause it to happen it could be construed only as a divine demonstration in favor of the one calling for the test.

Verses 31-33. At the conclusion of the speech of Moses the demonstration came. The earth opened up and swallowed the company. It must be understood that it was the men directly in the conspiracy who were destroyed, for they were guilty. Reference to chapter 26: 11 shows that the children of Korah were not included in this destruction.

Verse 34. The sight must have been terrible, also the cries of the people were piercing, for the children of Israel, although they had removed some distance from the tents of the families, (verse 27), were so impressed that they fled in alarm.

Verse 35. The foregoing tragedy slew the group immediately connected with the families of the conspirators. It remained then for the special group of princes with the censers to be removed. This was done by a fire from the Lord. The possession of the censers did not protect them since they had been given to have them here as a test.

Verses 36-38. While the men are slain, yet the censers are still intact in the midst of the fire. Eleazar is then commanded to gather them from the fire for they are "hallowed." The instruments had been in the hands of wicked men as a test against them. Therefore, they would be considered as a matter of demonstration of God's holiness. As such they must be preserved; and thus they will be a sign for the future generations of the children of Israel.

Verses 39, 40. These censers were formed into plates and fastened to the altar where they could be seen. That would be a visible and constant warning to others not to usurp the place of God's chosen servants.

Verse 41. One of the commonest things is for righteous men to be charged with the supposed evil effects of their righteous deeds. The people who had professed themselves to be of the Lord had just been killed. And the killing was done through the offices of Moses and Aaron. Yet the whole procedure was so miraculous that common honesty should have told them that no mere human power could have brought about such effect. They

were so blinded with prejudice for the conspirators that they gave way to another of their wonted murmurings.

Verses 42, 43. God is always ready to vindicate his righteous servants, in his own way, of course. So while the people were in the act of opposition against Moses and Aaron the Lord is preparing a demonstration. Their attention is directed to the tabernacle and behold, the cloud showing the divine glory and favor is seen. At this, Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle.

Verses 44, 45. This is another threat of the Lord, springing out of his attribute of justice, to destroy the people. This caused the lawful officers to fall prostrate.

Verse 46. The threat of the Lord made another occasion for the mediator to act and the man who is High Priest is directed to make atonement against the plague which has already started.

Verse 47. In this verse is another instance of the authority of Moses. He was even superior to Aaron who was High Priest. It is certainly arrogance to belittle Moses as being of so little authority that his law is to be ignored while at the same time professing to keep the law of the Old Testament.

Verse 48. This is the origin of the expression "between the living and the dead," that has been a poetical one with public speakers for generations. In this case it meant the ones actually dead, and those not yet affected by the plague. Right while the plague was having its devastating effect on the complainers, the priest was offering his services to counteract its further progress. Likewise, Jesus the High Priest of the Christian profession came into the world of sin and offered his services to counteract the deadly effects of sin.

Verses 49, 50. The number slain by the plague must not be confused with the ones who died at the opening of the earth and the fire from the Lord. These last died of the plague that was brought as a punishment for their murmuring and their slanderous accusations against Moses and Aaron. It was one of the circumstances Paul warns about in 1 Cor. 10: 10. When people are discontented with their lot they sometimes allow themselves to give way to extravagant speech and say things they would recall afterward if they could. It is always dangerous to object to the arrangement of God for the performance of his systems among men.

## NUMBERS 17

Verses 1-3. The demonstrations recorded in the preceding chapter were a negative proof of the righteous work of Aaron. Now a further and positive proof is to be effected. In ancient times a rod, taken from a tree or other natural growth, was used for many purposes. One of them was as a token of power and authority; such as a scepter in the hands of a king, or a gavel in the hands of a judge. Thus in the present test the men to represent the nation were to provide themselves each with a rod. There were twelve tribes in the general assembly and then an extra tribe, Levi, for the special office of the service. There was to be a man chosen from among the princes of the twelve tribes, and the thirteenth rod was to have the name of Aaron written on it, to represent the tribe of Levi.

Verse 4. These rods were to be laid up in the Most Holy place, the place where the ark was kept and where God met with the High Priest.

Verse 5. Here again is a specific test proposed. A rod cut from a bush or tree would not have any power to grow over night, especially while detached from all other objects. So the Lord proposed this test.

Verses 6, 7. The test was agreed to. Each of the princes came with a rod and gave it to Moses, who placed them in the position directed by the Lord.

Verse 8. A slight swelling of a bud that might have been the starting for a limb or twig could have been taken as a natural thing, even though the rod was cut off. The demonstration did not stop there. The rod for Aaron produced buds, bloom and fruit. This was accomplished over night.

Verse 9. The test is to be shown to be fair. Bringing out just the rod of Aaron could still leave the question whether all of the rods had the same condition. Thus Moses brought out all of the rods, which they saw and took to themselves again. No chance to claim anything for their own rods. It had turned out just as Moses had proposed before the test was made. The decision is now complete and final.

Verses 10, 11. The Lord told Moses to replace the rod of Aaron in the Most Holy place to be kept as a testimony against the rebellious ones. There are now in the ark the three articles mentioned by Paul in Heb. 9: 4.

Verses 12, 13. This language should be considered more as a bewailing than as one of murmuring. The people are so overawed by the events just closing that they give out such expressions of despair. The question of authority is completely settled.

## NUMBERS 18

Verse 1. *Bear the iniquity.* This means they shall be held responsible for what is done about the sanctuary. Not that the people would be exempt from all personal guilt but that these persons, being in authority, would be held first.

Verse 2. Here is another instance of noting the distinction between the tribe of Levi as a whole, and the ones pertaining to Aaron and his sons in particular. All were to work together in the ministry but the priests were to do that which was directly connected with the tabernacle exercises.

Verse 3. The service of the tribe as a whole was referred to as the service of the tabernacle. The actual distinction was indicated by mentioning the vessels. So strict was the Lord on that subject that death would be the penalty for offense.

Verse 4. When the congregation was to march, the Levites were to take down the tabernacle. When the march was ended at any certain place then they were to set it up. Thus the tribe furnished the labor necessary to care for the building. A stranger meant one outside of this tribe.

Verse 5. The charge of the sanctuary always meant the service of the holy rooms of the tabernacle including the offering of sacrifices, burning of incense, lighting the lamps, application of the blood of the sacrifices, etc.

Verses 6, 7. We should not be impatient at the frequent repetition of these various instructions. The importance of them cannot be overestimated. It is interesting to note the basis on which the exhortation is made here to the family of Aaron. The relation of the tribe to them in the general service of the Lord is represented as a gift. It is the same with the work of God today. While we know we are commanded to serve the Lord, yet we should consider it a great privilege or favor to serve him.

Verses 8, 9. The tribe of Levi as a whole was supported out of the tithes of the other twelve tribes. This included all their increase whether of the land or the beasts. The family of



Aaron was engaged exclusively about the service of the vessels of the place. Their part of the several sacrifices was determined not on a per cent, but on a specification of certain parts. For instance, when a beast was to be burned on the altar, the breast and shoulder were taken away first to be food for the priests. And this ordinance was to hold good "for ever" which means to the end of that age.

Verse 10. The "most holy" place here must not be construed to mean the second room of the tabernacle. It is used only as an adjective and pertains to the character of the parts of the tabernacle as distinguished from other buildings.

Verses 11-13. This is a summing up of the statements preceding. The outstanding idea is that the family of Aaron was to have the first and best of all products.

Verse 14. *Devoted*. This is from *CHEREM* and defined: "physically (as shutting in) a net (either literally or figuratively); usually a doomed object; abstractly, extermination." — Strong. In the A.V. the word has been rendered accursed, accursed thing, curse, dedicated thing, devoted, devoted thing, things which should have been utterly destroyed, etc. Thus the particular application of the definition in any given place must be determined by the connection. If it is used with reference to the favorable relation to God the word would have the idea of being devoted to him. If with reference to some object or person not in favor with God, then the word would mean destruction. In the verse of this paragraph, therefore, the word means the things intended by the Lord to be consumed in the services of the tabernacle and its related items.

Verse 15. *Openeth the matrix*. This refers to the first born, the one that first opened the womb of either man or beast. God claimed all such. Since it was not permitted for the first born of man to be either slain or kept apart from the rest of their families, they must be compensated for with some money. Likewise, the unclean beasts would produce their young. They were also the Lord's as to ownership. Since there was no use for them in the divine service, the owner was to redeem or "pay" for them and then they could be used in his secular occupation.

Verse 16. The "shekel of the sanctuary" means the standard of amount,

and quality of money, accepted as legal tender in the service of the sanctuary.

Verse 17. The beasts named here were all clean and the kind accepted at the altar. If they produced their young the owner could not redeem them with money. Instead, they must be given to the service of the sacrifices. That is, the first born of such.

Verse 18. Certain parts of these clean animals were to be the personal food for the priests, such as the breast and shoulder.

Verse 19. *Covenant of salt*. Salt has the quality of preserving things. When used figuratively as it is here, it means that the covenant was to be perpetual. It has the same idea as the words "for ever" in that the thing spoken of was to be perpetuated throughout that age or Dispensation.

Verse 20. Since Aaron and family were to be constantly occupied with the service at the tabernacle and the vessels thereof, they would have no business with general land possessions as an estate. Their business would be to care for the Lord's part.

Verse 21. The oft mentioned "tithes" must not be confused with the particular parts of the altar services, such as the breast and shoulder, or the bulk of the grain of the meat (meal) offerings. The latter was a special provision for the priests and to be used by them as food for the body. The tribe of Levi as a whole was to get support from the congregation by receiving a tenth of everything produced by all the other twelve tribes. This gave the one tribe some advantage financially. For if each tribe was to surrender one tenth of all its income that would leave it only nine tenths for its own support. Since twelve tribes contributed this proportion that would make twelve tenths for the benefit of the Levites. However, this advantage might not be as great as at first thought, for the actual number of each tribe would affect it.

Verses 22-24. There is nothing additional in this paragraph. The warning cannot be repeated too often about the tribes "outside" that of Levi venturing near the tabernacle. It would mean severe punishment from the Lord.

Verses 25, 26. The Levites, although engaged constantly and exclusively in the work of the tabernacle, were not exempted from the duty of tithing. Out of the tithe which they received from the other tribes they were to give

also a tenth to the Lord. Paul in 1 Cor. 9: 14 says those who preach the Gospel shall live of it and prefaced his statement by reference to the service under the tabernacle system. No one thinks this exempts the preachers from the duty of making contributions to the work of the Lord.

Verse 27. This verse means that when the Levites contributed their tenth to the Lord, it was considered the same as if they had produced the materials from their own property even though it had actually been given to them.

Verse 28. In this verse we see that giving to the Lord was the same as giving to the priest. That was because the priest was engaged exclusively in the service of God.

Verse 29. They must give the "best" of the things. This would include the fat or choicest part of the beasts, whether from the standpoint of its use in sacrifice or as an article of food for the priest.

Verse 30. The thought here is the same as in verse 27 above.

Verse 31. This means that in every place or occasion they had of eating this, it was on the basis of its being their reward for their service of the tabernacle.

Verse 32. Although the priest had the right to this part of the sacrifices as his food, yet he must not use it if in a state of uncleanness. In other words, the particular privilege of partaking of this certain portion of the sacrifices did not excuse him from the obligation of being clean under the requirements of the law.

### NUMBERS 19

Verses 1, 2. This chapter gives the formula for the water of purification used under the Mosaic system, and referred to in the other parts of the Bible. The carcass of a red heifer without blemish was to be selected for this ordinance. It must be one that had never been used in physical service.

Verse 3. This animal was turned over to the priest and it was taken out and slain "without the camp." Jesus was slain outside the gate. (Heb. 13: 11).

Verse 4. Some of the blood of this animal was sprinkled "directly before the tabernacle." Jesus offered his blood as a cleanser before God. (Heb. 9: 12).

Verses 5-8. The entire animal was burned together with certain articles such as cedar wood and material of a scarlet color (corresponding with blood) and the entire lot was to be burned into ashes. The person performing this service was placed under strict orders as to his state of cleanliness. That is, he must observe all the rules previously set down in the law pertaining to such formalities.

Verse 9. When the materials above mentioned had been reduced to ashes, a man who was clean was to gather them and put them in a clean place, but on the outside of the camp; to be used in connection with the water of purification. The formula and uses thereof will appear in other verses of this chapter.

Verse 10. To "be unclean" is to be understood as a formality under that system that was made up so much of formalities. The whole restriction was for the purpose of impressing the people with the importance of the ordinance.

Verses 11, 12. Touching a dead body was considered as causing uncleanness. The period of this formal uncleanness was seven days. Such periods would not terminate the seventh day, unless certain ceremonies were observed. Those required that he begin the third day after contamination by using this water of purification. If he does so, then on the seventh day after contact he would be considered clean. If he had not begun his ceremony of cleansing by using the water the third day, he would not be clean on the seventh day. He would have to start all over again.

Verse 13. There is nothing necessarily sinful in touching a dead body. Therefore, if a man does so he may make it right by using the water of purification. Should he neglect to attend to the formality and yet presume to act in the tabernacle service he would be condemned to die.

Verse 14. This plainly indicates that the various regulations under the law as to uncleanness in connection with dead bodies were ceremonial and not actual. We know that merely coming into a tent where a man had died would not defile one. This was a law of education for the world as well as one for the immediate activities of that nation. The human family must learn the lesson of divine authority. When God declares a thing

to be such and such, we are to respect it and act accordingly.

Verses 15, 16. This paragraph is only repetition of the various arbitrary formalities under the law, that have already been considered.

Verse 17. This verse completes the formula of the water of purification referred to above and in other places in the scriptures. Running water means "living" water. Not necessarily running as to motion, but water that was clean and fresh, as against being stagnant and stale. Such kind of water was selected and the ashes of the foregoing burning were to be mixed with this fresh water. This solution was the formula for the water of purification. It was in view of this mixture that Paul uses the term "pure water," in Heb. 10: 22. He does not have any reference to the sanitary state of the water at time of baptism. It was water simply, not water mixed with certain materials such as the ashes in the water of purification under the Mosaic system.

Verse 18. Hyssop was a variety of cedar and noted for its aromatic scent. It could be used as a brush to dash the fluids used on any occasion. In the case now being considered it was dipped in this water of purification and dashed on the objects.

Verse 19. The attention to the third and seventh day is explained in 12 above.

Verse 20. Provision for the use of this water was made clearly known to them and the man who disobeyed would be subject to death.

Verses 21, 22. "Until even" is another indication that the uncleanness being spoken of under this law was formal or ceremonial, and not literal.

## NUMBERS 20

Verse 1. The location of Kadesh or Kadesh-barnea is somewhat indefinitely pointed out in the geography and history of those times. In general we are sure that the people are in the last stages of their wandering for the deaths of Miriam and Aaron are soon to be recorded.

Verses 2-5. This is another of the famous murmurings of the children of Israel. It is again for water. Once before, they made the same complaint recorded in Ex. 17. On that occasion they were in the beginning of their wandering while this time they are nearing its end. The means used by

the Lord at the former time was different from those used this time, as we will see below.

Verse 6. It is significant that both Moses and Aaron went to the tabernacle to prostrate themselves before the Lord. That would mean that both of them realized the need for relying on divine help, which thus contradicted their conduct later.

Verses 7, 8. This is the passage made famous by public speakers, but which is so generally misused. It is true that the Lord commanded that Moses "speak" unto the rock. A rock is an inanimate object and thus not subject to language intelligently. The word is used in the sense of subduing or taking charge of the rock, but to do so by the form of language that would be heard by the people. In other words, he was not to use any physical action on this occasion, but was to make it known to the people that here was to be another occasion where the Lord would supply their needs by means of this rock.

Verses 9, 10. Even to the end of this noted passage Moses has not yet performed the act that many speakers so often enlarge upon in their eagerness to have some instance to furnish them with an item of theorizing. Moses was commanded to take up the rod which he did. But the mere fact of holding the rod was a symbol of authority regardless of the particular use he should make of it. Let it be observed here that both Moses and Aaron acted in gathering the congregation to this place. In keeping with orderly manner, only Moses did the speaking while Aaron listened and sponsored. The offending circumstance in this whole transaction was the use of the word "we." The plural pronoun is what brings Aaron into the event on equal terms of guilt. The use of the first person pronoun deprived God of the credit that was due him for the miracle about to be done. That such was the basis of all the charges made against him in connection herewith is evident from Psa. 106: 33. It was what he said that was the cause of the condemnation and not the act of smiting the rock. This is further evident from the fact that Aaron was included in the guilt and had to die outside of Canaan for the same sin as Moses, yet only Moses smote the rock.

Verse 11. It was after all the performances of the previous paragraph, which was the cause of God's dis-

pleasure, that the physical act of smiting the rock took place. This shows that the act here was not the basis of the great downfall of Moses as to his privilege of entering the land of Canaan. He smote the rock twice, and the supply of water was abundant for the needs of the people and their beasts. This is a specific instance where the desired result was obtained, yet in direct opposition to the pleasure of the Lord. One of the most popular theories in the world is that "the end justifies the means." That if the result of any experiment is good then the means used to get that result must be considered lawful. The circumstance now under our consideration disproves that theory. The result was good. It saved a congregation and the beasts from death. Yet the guilty actors were condemned sorely. Men today may form their own plans for benefitting mankind. They may bring to them some real good by their human institutions. While the people may obtain some benefit from the transactions, God will reject the ones responsible for the unscriptural means.

Verse 12. The language of this verse is wholly conclusive that both Moses and Aaron are guilty alike. Their guilt is described as unbelief. The sin of unbelief can be manifested by failure to affirm faith in God just as surely as it would be by specifically denying his power. Since Moses and Aaron said "we" were the ones to bring this water from the rock, that ruled God out of the credit. To sanctify God in the sense used here meant to set him apart before the people as the one who was to bring about the result about to be seen. For this sin both brothers will be denied the privilege of entering the land of Canaan.

Verse 13. Many proper nouns in the scripture were given descriptive meanings. The name "Meribah" means "quarrel," used in this instance because the people strove or quarreled with Moses and Aaron. The passage says they strove with the Lord. That is the truth of course, but it is interpreted as being against the Lord when people oppose the Lord's constituted servants having charge of the Lord's work. The last sentence of the verse is explained by the fact that in spite of the self-praise of Moses and Aaron, the Lord actually caused water to come from the rock in the sight of the people. They would then realize God as being the one who gave them their

great relief. In this way he was "sanctified in them." (The people.)

Verse 14. We have seen at the beginning of this chapter that the congregation has arrived in the region of Kadesh, which is variously described as to exact location. Its general site indicated that the land of the Edomites is near them and they are about to journey that way. We know that the Edomites occupied the country south of the Moabites. So that the Edomites were north and east of the Dead Sea just east of the wilderness of Zin. The address of "brother" which Moses uses with the king of Edom is in reference to the origin of the Edomites. They were of Esau who was physical brother to Jacob, the ancestor of the Israelites. On the supposed friendship that existed through this relationship Moses makes his plea to follow.

Verses 15, 16. He further prefaces his plea with a brief account of their many trials and other experiences, expecting that it would enlist sympathy and favor.

Verse 17. A group of people including many armed men would ordinarily be looked upon as invaders by any nation into which they entered. Recognizing this, Moses gives assurance that the sovereignty of the country of Edom will be solemnly observed and respected. A few of the areas were to be exempted from the general possession of the children of Israel. The land of Edom was one of such, based on the fact of the near relationship. Thus it was necessary to obtain permission from the king of Edom before passing through his country.

Verses 18-21. The king of Edom turned down the plea of Moses. He made further promises of peaceful march through the land but still the king of Edom refused and threatened to resist him with the sword. In thus opposing the descendants of Jacob, the descendants of Esau fulfilled the prediction of Isaac in Gen. 27: 40.

Verse 22. Mount Hor is north of Seir, the principal mountain of the people of the Edomites, and outside their country. This is enroute to the expected end of their wandering but will avoid going through the Edomite country.

Verses 23, 24. Addressing the two brothers God reminds them that "ye" had rebelled against him at Meribah. At present only Aaron is to receive his punishment. The Lord still has need for the services of Moses and



thus he will be continued in the work for a while.

Verse 25. Both Aaron and his son are to be taken to the top of the mount. This is because the one is to take the place of the other.

Verse 26. The law had directed that the garments of the priest were to descend to his son. (Ex. 29: 30.) That was why the present command.

Verse 27. Exchange of clothing for the priest was made; they went to the top of Mount Hor. The people beheld the action.

Verse 28. In the top of the mount selected by the Lord for the sad occasion, the priesthood passed from father to son according to the law. Then Aaron was caused to die for his sin of unbelief at the rock.

Verse 29. The arbitrary period of thirty days for the mourning shows that it was a formality and not a condition of sorrow in their minds. It is sometimes asked if the various exercises done at funerals are right. Of course all things can be abused. We have various indications that in olden times the people went through some form of ceremony at the occasion of death of a friend. Aaron had been with them for forty years and his services had been leaned upon. Now he is taken from them. It is true that genuine sorrow was present, which prompted the period of mourning, but it was carried out in accordance with some kind of formality.

## NUMBERS 21

Verse 1. The spies had been through the territory of this king 38 years before. Now he hears that they are there in vast numbers and prepares to oppose them. This he does and succeeds in taking some of them prisoners.

Verses 2, 3. In this instance we have a concrete example of the ordinance recorded in Lev. 27: 29. The Israelites vowed these Canaanites to destruction upon condition of their success. The Lord granted the condition and then the complete defeat of the foe was carried out according to their vow.

Verse 4. Mention of the Red Sea here, takes the explanation already made at chapter 14: 25, which the reader should see. The congregation left Mount Hor and traveled on by this arm of the water and then went round (compassed) the land of Edom. This longer route was necessary in order to avoid conflict with that hostile peo-

ple. (20: 14-21.) The people were discouraged because of having to take this way and gave vent to their feelings in murmuring.

Verse 5. This was the last recorded murmuring of the people referred to in the scriptures. The statement was made previously that when this place was reached in the work we are now doing, a chain of the various murmurings would be given the reader, whereby he might trace out all the instances by use of the chain. The first instance will be cited, then from that to the next and then the next and so on to the last one (the present verse), and then back to the first. This sort of endless chain of references will enable the reader to locate any of the occasions of the murmurings he is specifically interested in. Here they are: Ex. 5: 20, 21; 14: 11, 12; 15: 24; 16: 2, 3; 17: 3; Num. 11: 1; 11: 4, 5; 14: 1-4; 16: 41; 20: 2-5; 21: 5; Ex. 5: 20, 21.

Verse 6. As punishment for this murmuring the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people. This is referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. 10: 9.

Verse 7. The people now are repentant. Note the significant statement that they had sinned against both the Lord and Moses. They understood that when they opposed God's chosen person of authority it is the same as having opposed him. They then ask Moses to pray for them which he did. Again we see the office of mediator.

Verses 8, 9. In this place we have another instance where the Lord sees fit to use some visible means in connection with his miracle while bringing about the desired result. It should be observed that the means used had no logical or physical bearing on the thing to be accomplished. The conclusion would be that, after all, the whole transaction was the work of God and thus should strengthen the faith. Any person would know that looking at a thing of brass could have no effect on one who had been bitten with a poisonous snake. The Lord did the work of cure. He would not have done so had the people not had faith enough in him to obey and look at the object raised upon the pole. The lifting up of this serpent on the pole was a type of Christ, who was to be lifted up on the cross. (John 3: 14, 15.)

Verses 10-13. This paragraph puts down some of the stops the children of Israel made in their further journey toward the final goal. It brings them

to the border of the land of Moab where such noted experiences are destined to be had.

Verse 14. This verse is a general citation of the records that were being made of the actions of the people of the Lord. It is mentioned here to indicate the fact that such events were well established. There are numerous places in the Bible where a statement will be made and then reference cited to some corroborative record.

Verses 15, 16. A simple association of their movements now, with a former instance in their experiences with the Lord at a time of need.

Verses 17, 18. On different occasions of prosperity the children of Israel would express their sentiments by singing a song. This they did soon after crossing the Red Sea. (Ex. 15: 1.) The sad thing about it is that they so often forgot the goodness of the Lord and went lusting for other experiences.

Verses 19, 20. The congregation is getting nearer and nearer their goal. They are now in the region of Pisgah which will figure prominently with them before long.

Verses 21, 22. Before proceeding further into outside territory they make application for permission to pass. Assurances of peaceable conduct are made to Sihon, the king of the territory.

Verse 23. Not only did Sihon refuse the permission asked for, but mobilized his people and made an attack upon the children of Israel. He thus became the aggressor.

Verse 24. The general conduct of the nation of the Israelites was that of defence since the land had been given to them at the time of Abraham their ancestor. Now in the specific case at hand, the battle is even locally one of defence.

Verse 25. The success of the Israelites is indicated by the fact that they not only defeated the enemy on the battlefield, but also occupied his cities.

Verses 26-28. These heathen peoples had previously been at war with each other. Now the former victors have become captives.

Verses 29, 30. Israel rejoices in victory over these people who had conquered over others before this. To be able to defeat a champion is better than victory over ordinary foes.

Verses 31, 32. "Amorites" was the name of a specific people, but they

were so outstanding in their iniquity that the term came to be used to indicate wicked people in general. See Gen. 15: 16 and comments at that place. Thus we have the Amorites mentioned twice in this paragraph.

Verses 33-35. A noted heathen king is here encountered, Og of Bashan. But the Lord gives Moses assurance of victory which came accordingly. The victory was so complete that no one was left for the opposing king.

## NUMBERS 22

Verse 1. The Israelites have now arrived at a very noted place in their journeys. A glance at the map will show the exact location since it is opposite Jericho. This area in general is occupied now by the Moabites and the Jordan river flows between it and the land of Canaan. The children of Israel will be in this same locality practically all the time until they cross over.

Verse 2. Balak was the king of the Moabites at this time. He had learned all about the success of the children of Israel against the Amorites as the report of their operations had preceded them. (Josh. 2: 10.)

Verse 3. The great numbers of the people caused the Moabites to dread their presence and determined them to attempt some kind of defence.

Verse 4. The Midianites occupied the territory just south of the Moabites and were on friendly terms with them. The ancestry of the two peoples made them akin in blood as well as in mutual hostility to the pure stock of Abraham's descendants. The Midianites sprang from one of the sons of Abraham by his second wife and the Moabites came from a son of Lot, nephew of Abraham. While each of these groups had the blood of Abraham, yet as a people they were considered aliens from the direct line. In the situation of distress surrounding Moab they confer with Midianites.

Verse 5. This verse is worded as if it was only the king of Moab who sent to Balaam. But verse 7 shows that after conferring with the Midianites they both agreed to oppose the operations of the Israelites. According to Josephus (4-6-2) Balaam was a prophet of the true God, who had become corrupt and mixed his prophecies with the arts of sorcery and other means of deception. The same idea is held by the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia. I shall quote a few words from

this work: "Balak \* \* \* called upon Balaam, who had a great reputation in the East as a sorcerer and prophet, and who withal was a worshiper of the God of the Israelites, to curse them, thinking that the curse of a fellow-worshipper would be more efficacious than that of a heathen \* \* \* Balaam was a bad man, though a true prophet. He had no sincere convictions of the superiority of Jehovah. He followed him because it suited his interests."—Article, Balaam. Both these citations to the secular history agree with what we can learn from the Bible. We know that Balaam knew something about the true God although he could not have learned it from the Israelites. He lived in Mesopotamia while the Israelites have just now come into the region of Moab and have hitherto been farther away than that. But we will remember that the Patriarchal Dispensation is and has been in force and there have been some individuals all along who paid some attention to God through that system. In fact, this very region where Balaam lived is the same from where the father of the great nation of Israel came. So it is altogether clear why Balaam could be classed among the prophets of God. And yet also, that he would have become so corrupted through his personal ambitions as to take on the superstitions of sorcery and divination that we know God's people were so often corrupted with.

Verse 6. Balaam had acquired the reputation of being able to pronounce either a curse or blessing and that such would come to pass. A soothsayer or sorcerer often deceived the people in some way and caused them to attribute the unusual circumstance to the prophet. With this opinion of Balaam the king of Moab sends for him and offers an inducement in the form of a compliment for his ability to accomplish his schemes.

Verse 7. Some elders of both the Midianites and Moabites were selected to form the commission to Balaam. *Rewards of divination.* This refers to the payment they would offer to Balaam for his services. They arrive at the home of Balaam and relate to him their mission and the words of Balak.

Verse 8. Balaam would not give them an immediate answer but told them to prepare to lodge with him over night and he would see what the Lord had to say about it. The men agreed to this and lodged with him.

Verses 9-11. Sometime in the night God spoke to Balaam. He asked him as to the men lodged with him, and their mission. Balaam gave the Lord a true report.

Verse 12. The Lord then forbade him to go with the people. He must not curse the Israelites because they were a blessed nation.

Verse 13. Balaam was true to God at this time and refused the elders their request.

Verse 14. The princes, or elders, of Moab then departed for their home land. They reported their failure to their king.

Verse 15. Balak persists in his design. He thinks to overcome the refusal of the prophet by increasing the gifts; also by the presentation through men of higher rank than the ones sent on the first mission.

Verses 16, 17. The commission arrived at Balaam's home and delivered their new proposition. They assured the prophet that their king would promote him to great honor if he would come and curse the people. This was supposed to be a strong inducement and perhaps it would have been, had the Lord not interfered in the matter.

Verse 18. All the offers made to Balaam could not alter his determination to be obedient to God as he professes. He states that he cannot go beyond the word of the Lord. That was a true statement but not exactly in the way he pretended.

Verse 19. He does not close the conversations abruptly. He bids them remain with him over night again, and see if the Lord will change his decree in the case. They agree to this and now we find them lodged with Balaam for another night.

Verse 20. God did say something "more" to Balaam that night. It is important to note carefully the proviso which the Lord placed under the order to go with the men. That was, "if the men come to call thee." That would mean that the men might become so eager to see the wish of their king succeed that they would not wait till morning but would come to him in his slumber and insist on his going with them. If that takes place, then he might go. Even if that were to happen, he must still not say anything different from what the Lord directs him to say.

Verse 21. The princes did not come to him before morning. Instead, it was

Balaam who was not willing to wait until morning. He omitted the condition which the Lord had connected with his going, and prepared for the journey. He thus took it upon himself to go with the princes of Midian and Moab.

Verse 22. God's anger was kindled against Balaam. He had not waited for the men to come to him as was told him. He seemed so eager to comply with the request of the king of Moab that he jumped over the proviso in the case and went on his own authority. One meaning of "adversary" is "opponent." It means one who opposes the action of another. God sometimes uses angels for this purpose as well as for a favorable one. The whole setup was miraculous. God is able to complicate a miracle in the manner that suits his aims.

Verses 23-27. The angels of God would ordinarily be invisible to either man or beast. Divine power does not halt at the greatness of a miracle. Thus, not only is the ass enabled to see the angel, but God manages it so that Balaam does not. The angel is here with a sword, and has it "drawn," which means that it presented a threatening appearance so that the beast was frightened. It endeavored to avoid the angel by turning from one way to another. Balaam tried to force his beast into the desired way by striking her with his staff. There was a path leading to a vineyard and hedged on each side with a wall. The angel stood in this place. The space was too narrow for the ass to avoid the sword by turning to one side. Neither did she dare go onward. In the panic of fear that overcame the beast, she thrust herself and rider against the wall in such a manner that it crushed Balaam's foot. Going still further the angel selected a narrower place that made it impossible to even try to turn to one side. Rather than face the angel the beast fell down under the rider. By this time the anger of Balaam arose and he smote the ass with a staff. One of the strange things about this circumstance is that Balaam went through all these details of his experience and did not seem to suspect that anything special was causing the actions of the beast. No animal naturally performs as this one has been doing, and he should have at least thought of some cause unusual as being the explanation. But when a human being is bent on doing his own will he is often so blinded by perversity that all evidences of rebuke

escape him. It was so with Balaam in this case.

Verse 28. This is not the first time that a dumb brute was made to talk with man's speech. The serpent in the garden was one other instance. It will not be confusing to us when we recall the powers of the Lord in controlling the things he has made. Here the beast is made to ask an accusing question. And it is another illustration of Heb. 1: 1. In that formative period of the world's history God uses various means in carrying out his purposes, that he will abandon later.

Verse 29. Still blinded with perversity and anger, Balaam wishes for a sword by which to slay his faithful beast. Had she not done as recorded, it would have meant the death of her master. Yet he is minded to slay her. This, too, after she has spoken to him with man's speech and thus demonstrated that something entirely out of the ordinary is happening.

Verse 30. The question the ass put to Balaam was to the same effect as expressed in the verses above. After reminding Balaam that she had been serving him ever since he owned her she then asked if she had ever been accustomed to refuse serving him. He had to admit that she had not. But still he is so blinded that the unusual situation has not brought him to his senses.

Verse 31. Now another miracle is performed, this time on Balaam. He is made able to see the angel with the drawn sword. At this he falls down flat in a prone attitude of reverence and submission as was the custom in the East.

Verse 32. In this verse the statement is made that the way of Balaam was perverse unto the angel of the Lord. The word perverse means contrary. That certainly is a proper description of the actions of this man. While the Lord is going to suffer him to proceed in the journey, he deems it necessary to give him this chastisement.

Verse 33. The angel now informed Balaam that his life was saved by the actions of his beast; the animal at which he was just now so enraged.

Verse 34. Another strange demonstration of how a man's perversity can blind him. After all that has been going on Balaam now says, "if it displease thee," etc. He should have concluded before this as to whether his



way was pleasing to the Lord. Now he proposes turning back if so directed.

Verse 35. Balaam is now informed that he was not dealt this experience in order to turn him back. Instead, he is directed to go on in his journey toward the chosen goal. A restriction was placed over him and that was that he was to speak only what the Lord told him to speak. Such statement indicates to us that Balaam is to be inspired in the forthcoming speeches. This also will not be the only time such a thing takes place. God used the woman of Endor, to chastise Saul, even though she was an evil person. He uses characters that are adapted to the service he wishes to have.

Verses 36, 37. Upon hearing that Balaam had come, Balak went out to meet him. This was according to the rule of courtesy. Besides, Balak was very much interested and seemed to think that the conduct of Balaam would be according to his own decision, regardless of what the Lord would have to do in the matter. Meeting Balaam he gives him a mild rebuke for hesitating to come to him. He then reminded him of his ability to promote him to honor. This evidently was a bribe in advance.

Verses 38-40. The king of the Moabites was then informed that the prophet could not go beyond the word of the Lord in his speeches. Proceeding on, they came to a city. Now if it is the Lord who must be pleased in this transaction it might be well to get him in a pleased mood. So Balak made an animal sacrifice of large beasts and informed Balaam of his action and invited Balak and his princes.

Verse 41. Since the prophet is expected to pronounce a curse upon the people of whom Balak is afraid, it would be in order for him to see them in their entirety. Perhaps when he sees how strong they are, and thus, how great a menace they are, he will be impressed to pronounce a fitting curse upon them.

### NUMBERS 23

Verse 1. It should never be forgotten that the Patriarchal Dispensation was still in force at the time of which we are reading. All men, more or less, know what the major item was, of that practice, and that altars and sacrifices would be required. In figurative language seven is a signal of completeness. Balaam wishes to offer a complete service to God in preliminary operations for the speech

he wants to make. In the work of making this preparation he directs Balak to do the work.

Verse 2. Balak gladly did as Balaam had requested and each of them offered sacrifices on the altars.

Verse 3. Balak was told to stand by, holding watch over the offering, while the prophet went to have private consultation with the Lord. He is again given to understand that whatever God commands him to speak that is what will be said.

Verse 4. God met Balaam and was informed by him that seven altars had been prepared and sacrifices offered on each of them. This again in the way of placating the Lord.

Verse 5. It must not be overlooked, that the inspired writer is telling us that the Lord put the words in Balaam's mouth. That proves that he was inspired here.

Verse 6. Upon his return to the altar he found Balak and the princes in waiting, expecting to hear a discourse of cursing against the enemy.

Verse 7. "Parable" as used here is from a word meaning some kind of illustration, not necessarily an item by item comparison, as we would ordinarily think of a parable. It is to be a figurative speech, but mixed with some literal truth. Since it will be inspired we may expect it to be important.

Verses 8-10. This is Balaam's first speech. He cannot curse those whom God does not curse. Not that it would be literally impossible for him to go against the Lord's will, but as a prophet, he cannot do so. He then turned his speech into prophecy and declared that the people should "dwell alone." This referred to the residence of the children of Israel in Canaan and that was to come very soon. Such prediction would necessarily mean that the desired curse would not be forthcoming now. The speech closes with one of the most beautiful expressions of faith in God, and of the solemnity of preparing for the next life, that we have anywhere. No one but an inspired man would have uttered such wonderful words.

Verse 11. Of course Balak was displeased with this speech. It was displeasing to him from two standpoints. It not only did not curse Israel but instead it blessed.

Verse 12. The previous notice was again made to Balak that Balaam

would have to speak just what the Lord bade him speak.

Verse 13. Balaam imagines that Balaam has been overawed by the immensity of the multitude and that perhaps if he should see only a part of them he might despise them and thus be influenced to pronounce a curse upon them. He was still forgetting that Balaam was not saying what he personally would have liked, but was bound under the word of the Lord. Now he thinks to try the opposite of what he had in mind the first time. Then he thought to obtain his desired curse from Balaam under the influence of his being overawed by the size of the crowd. But that failed, and now he thinks to try the experiment of arousing his contempt for the group, and thus be disposed to curse.

Verses 14, 15. The seven altars and sacrifices were prepared again and in course of the offering, Balaam steps aside to consult with God.

Verse 16. As before, let it be noted that the Lord put the word in the mouth of Balaam, so that what he says will be inspiration.

Verse 17. Balak is faithful to his personal duty assigned to him in this program attempted by Balaam. Upon the return of the prophet he is asked to report.

Verses 18-24. This is the second speech and in abbreviated form, was a summons, first, for Balak to rise up and give ear. God does not lie, neither does he repent as man repents. God repents all right, but not as man does. When man repents he changes his will. When God repents he wills a change. God will make good what he speaks. Balaam had been commanded to bless and therefore cannot curse. Israel as a people has been beheld by the Lord for good and he is with them. Their great deliverance from Egypt was referred to, which is a very significant circumstance. The unicorn of the Bible was a fabulous animal supposed to possess great strength and referred to as a symbol of strength. The word "enchantment" in verse 23 means magic, or any other supposed superhuman spell. The word "against" is not in the original. The marginal gives the word "in" instead of this other word and the context both in word and thought will support that wording. The wisdom that is manifested in Israel is not from the source of enchantment; instead, it is from God. Hence the expression, "what hath God wrought!" It was God who

did it and not Israel through some power of magic. Final victory over the foe, is the close of the speech.

Verses 25, 26. In a flourish of despair Balak makes as if he would drop the matter now. But Balaam again assures him of his inability to go contrary to the word of God.

Verses 27-30. This paragraph shows that Balak was giving way to rashness in his last remarks to Balaam for he now made one more attempt to get things in shape that perhaps the Lord would favor the scheme now being attempted by him and Balaam. The same preparation of the seven altars and sacrifices was made as before.

## NUMBERS 24

Verse 1. Balaam is now convinced that God will continue to have Israel blessed. On this conclusion the verse says that he did not seek enchantments as before. That statement is evidence that no enchantments can prevail against the wishes of the Lord. Neither did he go again with the hope of obtaining any encouragement from God. Instead, he went toward the wilderness.

Verse 2. In this position Balaam was given a view of Israel in camp formation in their tents. Again the "spirit of God came upon him." We cannot be too insistent on the idea that these speeches of Balaam were inspired.

Verses 3-9. This paragraph was the third speech. The words "into a trance," in verse 4 are not in the original. The text should read simply "falling," and "having his eyes open." In other words, God wants Balaam to be inspired and at the same time have his eyes open to see for himself the greatness of the people of Israel. When he does he finds them in goodly tents. He sees further scenes of the beauty and prosperity of the nation of Jacob. *Higher than Agag*. This has no special reference to any literal height but means the supposed exaltation of the king of the Amalekites. He did exalt himself very much, but even had his greatest ambitions been realized he would not have become as truly high as was Israel. Reference is again made to the unicorn. See remarks on that at chapter 23: 22. The speech closes with the words of one of the promises of God to Abraham. (Gen. 12: 3.)

Verses 10, 11. At this speech Balak became disgusted and dismissed Balaam. As a parting shot he reminds

him of what he missed by not cursing Israel. Had he done so he would have been promoted to honor. However, he acknowledges that the whole thing was caused by the Lord who had kept him back from honor.

Verses 12, 13. The same explanation is repeated, that even a house full of silver and gold would not suffice to secure the services of Balaam in cursing Israel. He had told the servants the same when they first were sent for him.

Verse 14. Balaam is about to return to his people. Before leaving he said he would "advertise" (advise) him what this people would finally do.

Verses 15-19. This is the fourth speech of Balaam. It was not asked for by Balak and no preparations were made for it, as was the case in the other three speeches. This speech is inspired as well as the others for while Balak has dismissed Balaam, the Lord has not. Thus he makes another speech which contains many important predictions. Falling with his eyes open, is the same as in the second speech. The pronoun "him" in 17th verse means Christ in his kingdom. That kingdom will be seen, is now in the prophet's vision but its fulfillment is not now. The present Israel is destined to become a mighty nation and have existence for many centuries. Finally there shall come a star out of Jacob. This is the same as the seed promised to Abraham in Gen. 12: 3. Mention of the outside peoples in this connection is his way of expressing the triumph of Christ over all others. The same is meant in the last verse of this speech, and must be considered as an inspired prediction made through this prophet.

Verses 20-24. In the prophesying strain, Balaam makes some statements about other inferior nations, whose detailed history is not here available. The gist of it is, that God knows and does something about the various nations, putting down some and exalting others according to their conduct or as the Lord sees fit otherwise.

Verse 25. This verse would leave us with the impression that after the four speeches which Balaam uttered by inspiration, he went immediately to his home without any further conversation with Balak. Other statements in the scriptures and in secular history will indicate to us that such was not the case. See next chapter.

## NUMBERS 25

Verses 1-5. This will bring up the thought expressed at the close of the preceding chapter. It pertains to the conversation between Balak and Balaam after the Lord had dismissed Balaam. He is now released and free to act on his own initiative and in doing so he shows his true attitude toward God's people. After having arrived near the Euphrates he sent for Balak and advised him what to do that would result in some degree of curse on Israel although he was not permitted to bring such upon them himself. The history of this is given by Josephus, which I shall now quote in part. "O Balak, and you Midianites that are here present (for I am obliged even without the will of God to gratify you), it is true no entire destruction can seize upon the nation of the Hebrews, neither by war, nor by plague, nor by scarcity of the fruits of the earth, nor can any other unexpected accident be their entire ruin; for the providence of God is concerned to preserve them from such a misfortune; nor will it permit any such calamity to come upon them whereby they may all perish; but some small misfortunes, and those for a short time, whereby they may appear to be brought low, may still befall them; but after that they will flourish again, to the terror of those that brought those mischiefs upon them. So that if you have a mind to gain a victory over them for a short space of time you will obtain it by following my directions: Do you therefore set out the handsomest of such of your daughters as are most eminent for beauty, and proper to force and conquer the modesty of those that behold them, and these decked and trimmed to the highest degree you are able. Then do you send them to be near the Israelites' camp and give them in charge, that when the young men of the Hebrews desire their company, they allow it them; and when they see that they are enamoured of them, let them take their leaves; and if they entreat them to stay, let them not give their consent till they have persuaded them to leave off their obedience to their own laws and the worship of that God who established them, and to worship the gods of the Midianites and Moabites; for by this means God will be angry at them." Josephus, *Antiquities* 4-6-6. In following sections of the same place in Josephus the account is carried out and shows that it turned out just as Balak had predicted. They procured

these girls to go to the vicinity where the Hebrews camp was located. The natural thing happened. These girls were attractive to the masculine eye and lusts, and allured them to their intimacy. Before granting the young men the liberty they sought they were first demanded to comply with their idolatrous practices. This was agreed to and thus the men committed idolatry and fornication with these girls. In agreement with these facts I quote from Rev. 2: 14: "Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication." Idolatry has always been very displeasing to God. It provokes his jealousy and he will not tolerate it. Balaam knew this and therefore used the above plan to bring about the plague upon Israel. After the people committed the sins here described the divine wrath was poured out and many thousands were slain. This fact is referred to in 1 Cor. 10: 8.

Verse 6. It was bad enough to go after these heathenish women in their lust, but even that did not satisfy some. One man was so arrogant as to bring his Midianitish partner in lust into the camp of the Israelites in the sight of Moses. This was adding insult to injury. The bad conduct of the young men had already resulted in the death of thousands. Now this man insults the congregation by bringing the vile woman into the presence of the law-giver of the nation.

Verses 7, 8. The grandson of the first priest was filled with indignation about the insult and went after the guilty pair. He pursued them into the tent and pierced them both through the body with a javelin. This brought a stay of the active plague that was killing the people.

Verse 9. The difference between the number here said to have been slain and the account in 1 Cor. 10: 8 has sometimes caused uneasiness among Bible students. There is more than one possible explanation. One is that Paul says there fell "in one day" three and twenty thousand. An additional thousand fell later but as a final result of the plague. Another explanation is in the fact that numerical values were indicated by letters and not figures in those ancient times. In transcribing the text from the manuscript, a blotted or blurred letter could be mistaken for another. This raises the question whether all of the scriptures might not have gone through the same mis-

takes. The silence of Jesus on the accuracy of the scribes while severely condemning them for other evils is significant. Had they been guilty of unfaithfulness as scribes, he certainly would not have let that subject go by, since that would have been a fundamental error. His silence on the subject leaves us with the conclusion that errors of the kind mentioned here were not important, as no principle was at stake.

Verses 10, 11. This was a case where a man of the priestly family interceded to quiet the wrath of God against the offenders. Note the last word in the paragraph. Then consult Ex. 20: 5 where God mentions his jealousy in connection with the commandment against idolatry.

Verse 12, 13. As a reward of consolation for his good offices in the case, God directs that Phinehas be assured again of the perpetual life of the priesthood in his family. This ordinance had already been passed, but upon such signal service on behalf of the people it was fitting to repeat the assurance. In doing so, in connection with his service in preserving the people, it justified the choice of the family for the important post of the priesthood.

Verse 14, 15. The names of the guilty man and woman referred to earlier in the chapter are given here. The point of interest in giving us these names is in the prominence of the two. They were not mere insignificant beings with no responsibility. Sin is sin, whether with the high or low, but mention of it with these important persons is an outstanding declaration of the principle that "God is no respecter of persons," as the New Testament tells us.

Verses 16-18. Because of the persistent wickedness and enmity of the Midianites, God ordains that they are to be opposed constantly by his people. They had provoked the divine jealousy and must suffer the fate due all such.

## NUMBERS 26

Verse 1. By consulting Chapter 20: 28 as well as Ex. 29: 29, 30 the reader will see that Eleazar is now High Priest. The priesthood was to descend from father to son.

Verse 2. This is the second occasion of taking the number of the men of war in the congregation of Israel. The first time is recorded in first chapter of the book. The age limit at



induction was the same as at the first time which was twenty and up. Also, they must be of military qualifications. The nation is under military rule and will be until they have entered and taken possession of Canaan, the capital portion of the promised land. Hence the necessity of military preparation.

Verse 3. The ones supervising this were Moses and Eleazar. The congregation is located in the plains of Moab, near the Jordan river, just opposite Jericho.

Verse 4. Reference is made to the first numbering of the people soon after they left Egypt which was forty years ago.

Verses 5-7. This chapter will be treated in much the same manner as was the first one of the numbering. The principal persons will be mentioned with the number of the various tribes. Also, if any person of special interest is named he will be noted here. It will be noted that certain ones of the heads of the various tribes and families are named in this chapter. That was doubtless for purposes of identification in case of inquiry or dispute over their family register. Such a dispute did arise in after years. (Neh. 7: 64.) The present paragraph gives the register and numbering of the tribe of Reuben. The number was 43,730.

Verses 8, 9. This paragraph gives names of special interest. They are from the tribe considered in the foregoing paragraph, but are given this personal mention because of the prominent part they had in the notorious conspiracy against Moses and Aaron. The information is also given here that these sons of Reuben were a part of the company of Korah, the leader of the uprising. Also, let it be observed here that the writer considers their actions as being against the Lord.

Verse 10. This is a brief history of the events referred to above. The gravity of that occasion is so deep that the Lord does not want it forgotten. They became a sign of wrath of God against rebels.

Verse 11. The children of Korah were exempted from the general destruction of his family unit as they evidently did not engage in the conspiracy. The statement in Ex. 20: 5 sets out that the children of wicked parents will be also punished like the parents, provided they also hate the Lord.

Verses 12-14. This is the account of

the second son of Jacob, Simeon. After giving names of members of the family the number is stated as 22,200.

Verses 15-18. The sons of Jacob are not named in the order of birth in this chapter. The present paragraph is on the number of Gad which is 40,500.

Verses 19-22. In giving the names of Judah the writer considers it necessary to explain the absence of certain ones from the roll of descendants. This he does by saying they died in the land of Canaan. That took place before the family of Jacob ever went to Egypt. The record of their deaths, 38th chapter of Genesis, explains why no descendants are attributed to them here. There were others and the tribe became the most numerous of all. At the present numbering it is 76,500.

Verses 23-25. The number of military men in this tribe was 64,300 at this time.

Verses 26, 27. The number here is 60,500.

Verses 28-34. The reader may consult Gen. 48: 5, 6 and he will be refreshed on the event when Jacob provided that two whole tribes were to be made from the two sons of Joseph. Hence, sometimes only Joseph is mentioned when the children of Israel are in mind of the writer. Again, just one or both of his sons will be named. At other times (such as we will have here) mention will be made of Joseph and his two sons, with explanation. Thus after the introduction to the family as stated the eldest of Joseph's sons is named and the number of his tribe given which is Manasseh, 52,700.

Verse 35-37. The second son of Joseph, Ephraim, is numbered 32,500.

Verses 38-41. Benjamin is next recorded and he was one of the small tribes. His number at this census was 45,600.

Verses 42, 43. Dan was the son of Jacob by (his wife) Rachel's maid, Bilhah. His tribe numbered 64,400 and was one of the larger tribes.

Verses 44-47. Asher was the son of Jacob by Leah's maid, Zilpah. He numbered 53,400.

Verses 48-50. The twelfth one of the congregational group of tribes given here is Naphtali and his number was 45,400. It is noticeable that all of these numbers of the tribes end in 0. This is obviously not the exact number and would not be considered as such since it would be highly improbable

that each of twelve tribes would actually have such an even number of military men. It is the custom of the writers of statistics to give round numbers, frequently, and not exact numbers.

Verse 51. The sum of the twelve tribes is 601,730. This is slightly less than the number they had at the first which was 603,550. Yet, it was practically the same, which indicates that the congregation has held its own thus far.

Verses 52-56. This paragraph gives the general principles on which the land is to be divided when they get settled in Canaan. The specific directions will be seen in the book of Joshua and will be studied in more detail when we reach it.

Verse 57. This verse gives the names of the heads of the special tribe, Levi. The service about the tabernacle and the priesthood was divided between them. For more detailed information on this subject see chapter 3.

Verse 58. A few of the heads of the family of Levi are named and connected up with one of the most outstanding one, named Kohath, who was the father of Amram.

Verse 59. Amram was actually a grandson of Levi and he married a woman of the tribe of Levi, here spoken of as a daughter of Levi. The term is used of any near relation and not an immediate offspring. Mention is made of the relation to show that the tribal distinction has been preserved. The pair, Amram and Jochebed had the children, Aaron, Moses and Miriam.

Verse 60. A number of famous persons are given space in the record here. Thus the four sons of Aaron are named while recording the family.

Verse 61. As in the case of the sons of Judah, the fate of two of the four sons of Aaron is given here, which accounts for their being eliminated from the accounts of activities afterward.

Verses 62, 63. This paragraph shows a gain of one thousand of the Levites over the numbering the first time as recorded in chapter 3: 39. This enumeration was taken under guidance of Moses and Eleazar in the plains of Moab.

Verses 64, 65. The sad fact is recorded that all of the men-of-war who had been numbered the first time, were now dead, except Caleb and Joshua. This was because they sinned

and made rash statements which God carried out among them. The two exceptions were preserved because they "wholly followed the Lord."

## NUMBERS 27

Verse 1. In chapter 26: 33 we were told that Zelophehad had no sons, but did have daughters. Now those daughters are before the face of Moses with a difficulty.

Verses 2, 3. Their predicament is that their father having no sons, the property might be alienated from them and the family. This was because the custom was to transmit all inheritances through the male line. Now these women are not condoning any sin of their father. He died on account of sin, but it was not the sin of conspiracy. He died in his own sin. The daughters expect some consideration from that fact and plead for their share in the possessions of their father.

Verses 4, 5. Not only are these daughters concerned about their property rights but are afraid the name of their father will pass from the congregation. This presented a problem to Moses because it was a special circumstance, and he did not know what to do about it. He thus brought the case before the Lord.

Verses 6, 7. The plea of these daughters was approved by the Lord and he commanded that the property of their father should remain among them.

Verses 8-11. This specific instance opened the way for more extended directions as to the distribution of property. In the main, it was to pass from one owner to his immediate descendant or relative. If he had no near relative in the way of daughter or son, then it should fall to the next nearest kin, and so on and on. This was to become a statute unto the children of Israel.

Verse 12. Abarim was a community, or region, in general and some certain mount in that region was designated for the one on which Moses was to view the land across the river. Later we will learn the name of the particular mount was Pisgah, or Nebo.

Verses 13, 14. Moses is notified here that he must die without entering the land of Canaan and that it will be his punishment for the sin at the rock. In connection with Aaron, the sin was that of taking honor to themselves, that belonged to God.

Verses 15-17. Meekness and unself-

ishness were among the prominent traits of this great man of God. He was told that he could never enter the land toward which they had been journeying. Yet there is no indication of bitterness or resentment. Instead, the welfare of the congregation is uppermost in his mind. He pleads that the Lord will appoint some man to care for the people so that they be not like scattered sheep.

Verse 18. The request of Moses is to be granted and the selection is Joshua. He is said here to have the spirit now, and Moses' hand is to be laid on him.

Verse 19. There will be no reason to doubt the authority of Joshua, but all must know that his position as leader was not usurped. The ceremony will be before the priest and the whole congregation. This precaution will be for their mutual protection.

Verse 20. Note that Moses was to put *some* of his honor on Joshua. This agrees with the idea that Joshua was to take the place of Moses as leader, and not lawgiver.

Verse 21. While Joshua will be an inspired man in all that he speaks authoritatively to the congregation, yet specific information will be obtained through the service of the priest. It was expected of the priests to procure knowledge for the people of God in that age. (Mal. 2: 7.) The priest must attend to his office in the orderly manner, and that in connection with the Urim which was without any virtue except when in the hands of the designated officer.

Verses 22, 23. Moses obeyed the voice of God and appointed Joshua as leader in his place. He will not "take over" while Moses is living.

## NUMBERS 28

Verses 1, 2. It is not only necessary to attend to certain offerings and ceremonies about the altar service, but it must be done "in their due season." One indication of disobedience is the disposition to use one's own convenience about when or where or how to do what is commanded. Children sometimes want to "wait a minute," when told to do something. The spirit of obedience requires that commands must be obeyed in the manner and at the time commanded.

Verses 3-6. This paragraph describes the "daily sacrifice" that came to be so well known in the history of the Israelites. The same ordinance was

outlined in Ex. 29: 38-42. It was sometimes called the "continual" offering because it was to be attended to faithfully and daily, without intermittence. A lamb was to be offered in the morning and another in the evening. The margin reads "between the two evenings." This is explained on the basis that the hours of the time from noon till sundown were considered two evenings. And the middle of this period of six hours would be our three o'clock in the afternoon.

Verses 7, 8. The drink offering was so called, not because any one was to drink it in the ceremony, but because it was an offering of material that ordinarily was used for drink. In other words, it was a substance of value and thus was a sacrifice.

Verse 9. The reader is advised to make special note of this verse because it is an item of the Jewish practice that is often unknown or forgotten. On the sabbath day the daily sacrifice was always doubled.

Verse 10. One duty can never take the place of another. Just because a pious Jew had doubled his service on one certain day did not excuse him from the performance of duties on the other days. Thus, the doubling of the sacrifice on the sabbath day did not atone for any neglect on some other day.

Verse 11. The first of each month was a holy day and must be celebrated by the offering of sacrifices. The month was ushered in by the appearance of the new moon as can be seen by studying 1 Sam. 20: 24, 27. Also, the principle must not be lost sight of, that one act of service to God did not take the place of another. If some special duty of a personal nature happened to come on the first day of the month, the usual festivities of that day must not be taken to suffice for the personal duties.

Verse 12. The word "deal" is an indefinite amount, except that it is understood as a small amount. It was a portion of flour used in connection with the animal sacrifice, and called in the A. V., the meat offering. It was of vegetable material.

Verse 13. The "several" deal, etc., means that each animal was to be offered with this meat offering connected. The meat or meal offering was not to be used just once for all of the animals.

Verse 14. The directions for this celebration of the coming in of a new

month were to be observed for each of the twelve months of the year. One celebration could not be counted on behalf of the other months.

Verse 15. In this and other verses certain animals and other products are named to be offered and simply called sin offerings or burnt offerings, etc. The details of how they were to be offered have already been described at the introduction of the "ordinance" and recorded in the first five chapters of Leviticus.

Verse 16. All that is found here is the date and name of the feast. The reader should see Ex. 12 for details of this memorable feast. It came immediately before another feast and was observed in connection therewith.

Verse 17. This means that the feast of unleavened bread began the fifteenth. It lasted seven days. As the passover day also was without leaven that made a group of eight days in which no leaven was to be found in their houses. The ordinance for this feast was given on the occasion of their deliverance from Egypt. The motive for and observance of the seven days will be seen afterward. Since they had to get out of Egypt that night before the bread had time to ferment or become leavened, the deliberate observance of a feast of seven days without leaven was done to celebrate the eventful night. See Ex. 13: 7-9.

Verse 18. The first of the seven days was to be holy convocation, which means that it was a sabbath day for them. That meant that no servile or manual labor must be done on that day. A close study of Leviticus 23 will show that when a day was called a convocation it was the same as a sabbath day, and was under all the restrictions that held good for other sabbath days.

Verses 19-22. This paragraph outlines the service required at the altar on the first day of the seven day feast. The particulars of how such offerings were to be handled have been already referred to.

Verses 23, 24. Again they are cautioned not to consider these special services as taking the place of the daily sacrifice.

Verse 25. The seventh day here, means the last of the seven day feast of unleavened bread. It, like the first one, must be a convocation or sabbath day. Let it be understood that each of the seven days must be without leaven and each must have the sacri-

fices as described. Only the first and seventh were sabbath days. The mere service of offering a sacrifice did not make a day, a sabbath, or holy day. If it did, every day of the year would have been a sabbath day since a sacrifice was offered daily.

Verse 26. This is the day that is called "Pentecost" in the New Testament. It is not called that in the O. T., because it is a Greek word (meaning fiftieth) and the Old Testament was not written in Greek. Here it is designated to come "when your weeks be out." That is why it is elsewhere called the "feast of weeks." More details of this are given in Lev. 23. After the day following the sabbath that followed the passover they counted seven weeks, and then on the day following the seven weeks, they had this feast now called Pentecost. On that day the Israelites offered a token out of their crops. This was offered to God before they appropriated any of the crop for themselves. That is why it was called the feast of "first-fruits." It was a fitting type of the Pentecost in the New Testament, for on that day the first fruits of the Gospel were offered to God, in the obedience of three thousand Jewish converts.

Verses 27-31. These verses give the same directions already described, that pertain to the altar services in connection with the second of the three annual feasts.

## NUMBERS 29

Verse 1. Here is a feast coming on the first day of a month and called feast of trumpets. It is a holy day already, because every month began with a holy day. But this time is another special day.

Verses 2-5. The offering of the various animals is here set forth. The details can be seen in the beginning of Leviticus.

Verse 6. Again the reader is cautioned that the present offering cannot be put in place of another. In such connection, mention is made of the "offering of the month." That refers to the offering that every month was to have, regardless of other purposes. The offering is again said to be according to the "manner" which is a reference to the ordinance of the altar service established in beginning of Leviticus. Sweet "savour" means sweet odor. It was pleasing to God. The word would apply to either taste or smell, and either literally or figura-



tively, always depending on the connection in which it is used. The expression "made by fire" was to distinguish between offerings that were to be burned on the altar, and others. Some things were sacrificed or given up by the Israelites that were not to be burned. They would be given over for the use of the Levites and the priesthood family.

Verse 7. This verse pertains to the great day of atonement. It was the day on which the High Priest went alone into the Most Holy place of the tabernacle. It was the only day this place was entered for services. On this day, while the priest was officiating in this place on behalf of the congregation, all the males of the nation were assembled and in waiting. On this day they were commanded to "afflict" themselves. The word is from ANAH and defined by Strong "to depress, literally or figuratively." It means they were to be concerned about the seriousness of the day. The nation has a High Priest entering the Most Holy place to act for the sake of the whole people and it is a day to be devoted to serious contemplation. Not a time for hilarity or frivolous pastime. They must abstain from all manual labor and spend the day in meditation on the great subject of their dependence upon God for grace and the benediction of the Ruler of the universe. It typified the great office of Christ who had to die a terrible death so as to be able to enter Heaven with the means of salvation for all mankind.

Verses 8-11. These verses outline the general activities of that great day. Some things took place at the altar of burnt sacrifices, and some otherwise. Not all of the services of that day occurred in the Most Holy place. Neither did all of the services of Christ take place in Heaven. The items performed while on earth came first. Again I cannot refrain from reminding the reader that this service was to be observed besides the daily sacrifice and other offerings. What the priest did on that day affected the congregation as a whole only, and did not take the place of any other duty.

Verse 12. The feast mentioned in this verse is elsewhere called the feast of tabernacles. (Lev. 23: 34.) On that occasion the Israelites were to leave their houses and dwell under booths made of boughs of trees. (Lev. 23: 40-43.) That was in celebration of

their forty year experience in the wilderness when they could not live in houses because of the irregular and changeable locations. Here it is also stipulated that it must be a time of holy days.

Verses 13-16. This paragraph gives the sum of the various animals and flour that were to be offered on the days of the feast. That is, a general statement of the service, not the total of all the items. The number of bullocks would diminish as the number of the date of the feast increased. The number of lambs required for each day was the same. In all of the cases the articles offered must be without blemish and in each case the order is to offer according to the "manner" which has already been explained as meaning the ordinance given in beginning of Leviticus. While the information for each day is practically the same, it will be curiously interesting to note briefly for each day the numbers of the various articles. That will be done as follows.

Verses 17-19. Second day, twelve bullocks, fourteen lambs, one kid of the goats.

Verses 20-22. Third day, eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, one kid.

Verses 23-25. Fourth day, ten bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, one kid of goats.

Verses 26-28. Fifth day, nine bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, one kid of goats.

Verses 29-31. Sixth day, eight bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, one kid of goats.

Verses 32-34. Seventh day, seven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs, one kid of goats.

Verses 35-38. After the feast of tabernacles proper has been observed, it was to be followed by another time of sacrifice. This is referred to as the eighth day. This has numerical meaning only here as the feast of tabernacles was confined to the seven days before. After having gone through that strange experience it was fitting in the mind of the Lord for them to assemble solemnly and finish up the importance of the season by the sacrifices described.

Verse 39. The importance of not substituting one ordinance for another is made even more emphatic here in that the writer itemizes the vows and various other offerings which they were to make at other times.

Verse 40. This short verse is informative in that the authority of Moses is again clearly set forth before the reader. Moses told the children of Israel the things recorded. He had been commanded to do so. Not that he was commanded to perform all the things named in the law. He had been commanded to tell the children of Israel those things. That made it identical with any word that God would have spoken directly to them. Again we see an unanswerable rebuke of the sabbatarians, who try to disparage the authority of Moses in the Old Testament.

### NUMBERS 30

Verses 1, 2. Vows were not generally required of the children of Israel. Only at certain times or for special purposes did the Lord command a vow. A vow could be voluntarily made at any time with certain restrictions. When a vow was made, the Lord came into the situation with his directions. One thing required was that a vow not be arbitrarily broken even though made voluntarily, any more than if the Lord had commanded it.

Verses 3, 4. This paragraph concerns a woman unmarried and still in her father's house. She is subject to her father's authority. In his hearing she may make a vow. The vow might not be approved by the father. If so, and he objects, the vow is not binding and the woman is released from its obligations. If he says nothing against the vow at the time she made it, it is binding and neither he nor she can alter it afterward. It must stand as made.

Verse 5. This verse is explained in preceding paragraph except for the word "forgive." It is used in a technical sense and not a moral one. It means the same as cancelling a debt found to be unnecessary.

Verses 6-8. The same restrictions apply in the case of a married woman as that of a daughter at home. If her husband hears the vow and says nothing, the vow must be carried out and neither she nor the husband can lawfully cancel it. But if the husband disapproved at the time the vow was made, it is legally canceled.

Verse 9. The regulations in the vow of a widow, or divorced woman, were the same as with a single woman except that she is bound to the vow with a certain exception which will be noted below.

Verses 10-12. This paragraph pertains to the vow of a widow or one divorced, but who was not a widow at the time of making the vow. In that case, the restrictions are the same as with the wife still living with her husband. That is, a woman might make a vow in the hearing of her husband, yet the vow might be such as not to take effect for some time. If, when the time arrives for the vow to be carried out the woman has become a widow, or divorced, that fact will not alter her obligations. If the husband had let it stand at the time he heard it then it is still binding on her even though she afterward became divorced or a widow. The significant conclusion we should get from this whole law about vows is that "silence gives consent." This is an old saying, but well supported in this law just now being considered. The principle is taught that when a person knows of a circumstance including some principle of right or wrong, his silence commits him to that situation. Sometimes a person will not say what he believes concerning questions that come up regarding a human expedient. When asked how he stands concerning the so-called evil he will say he is neither for nor against. But that is not true in God's estimation. Jesus taught that he that is not for him is against him. When a man will not "take a stand" against any human institution formed against the Lord's institution, he must be regarded as being for it.

Verses 13-16. This paragraph teaches the principle of responsibility of a husband or father who heard and approved of the vow made by the wife or daughter. If that husband or father afterward interferes with the carrying out of that vow, he alone must bear the results of such breach. That is what is meant by the words in verse 15, that "he shall bear *her* iniquity."

### NUMBERS 31

Verses 1, 2. The grievous offence of the Midianites in the matter of Balaam is still held up for divine vengeance and Moses is commanded to bring on an attack.

Verses 3-6. An army of twelve thousand men was raised and sent against the Midianites under the leadership of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest. The army was sent out on the mission equipped with the instruments previously ordained to be used on such occasions. (Chapter 10: 1-9.)

Verse 7. In usual cases a military operation is directed against the soldiers of the enemy and the civilians are not supposed to be attacked even when the enemy has joined battle with the aggressor. In this case there is no evidence that the Midianites had engaged primarily in joint combat. The leaders performed the usual practice of attacking only the males in general.

Verse 8. The Midianites occupied a larger territory than the Moabites, yet the two peoples were joined in many interests. They had both united in the conspiracy against Israel when Balaam was employed in an effort to curse Israel. He belonged in the region of the Euphrates river, but evidently spent some time on various occasions with the Midianites, with whom he sympathized. By being associated with them at this time he suffered the fate of the others and was slain.

Verse 9. As stated in verse 7, the males only were slain. The women and children were taken captive together with the possessions of the people. Then Israel destroyed the cities.

Verses 10-12. After destroying the cities and castles they brought the captives home with them and had them in the presence of the congregation.

Verses 13, 14. Of course the preceding paragraph was not meant to say they brought these heathen captives within the camp, but near it. Then Moses and the priest went out to meet the group. When Moses saw whom they had, he was wroth because they had all the women alive with them.

Verses 15, 16. The reason for the wrath of Moses is given here. Among the women taken alive were the ones who had seduced the men of Israel to commit fornication with them and to worship their idols. That iniquity had been brought about through the counsel of Balaam. They had killed him in the battle but had allowed his accomplices to escape punishment.

Verse 17. Then Moses gave commandment that they should kill all the males among the little ones. This may seem harsh upon first consideration, but the whole nation or group at that place was to be destroyed and that would have left these children orphans. They will not be put at any loss spiritually by their death while it would be disastrous for them to be left in the wicked world without a country. The women who had been

guilty of the wickedness under Balaam's advice were to be killed.

Verse 18. This verse is the object of unfair criticism by certain evil persons. It is represented as teaching that these men were given license to appropriate these virgins to their own lusts in the ordinary sense of the case. If the critics were sincere in their comments they would consider all that the scripture says on such a case. Let the reader turn to Deut. 21: 10-13 and read. There he will learn that when a virgin was taken in battle who pleased some man for a wife, he could so use her. Even then he must let her have respectful consideration and not be hasty in his enjoying of her. This gives the lie to the vile insinuations made in connection with this verse.

Verses 19, 20. This provision of the law would logically be called for at this time since they have just returned from a battle where they have slain many people. While the slaying was commanded, yet it did not release them from the necessity of going through the formalities of cleansing required by the ceremonial law.

Verses 21-24. Everything that had been in possession of the heathen would be considered as unclean. Before it can be appropriated to the use of God's people it must be purified. The metals could stand the fire and were to be cleansed in that way. The things that would burn were to be cleansed by using the water of purification that had been prescribed by the law. After all this had been accomplished, they were free to reenter the camp and be considered clean.

Verses 25, 26. The things taken in the battle with the Midianites were valuable and were to be dispensed among the people as described below.

Verse 27. A general classification was made of the active warriors and the congregation. Not all the people went to the battle. They were not asked to go. Instead, one thousand from each tribe went, but the ones at home are considered. The division was made equal in the first place, but the distinction will be made in the next handling of this prey.

Verses 28, 29. The half of the prey was distributed among the men of war, and of those souls, or men of war, one man out of five hundred was to give to the Lord out of his part including the animals taken in

the battle. It was to be turned over to Eleazar the priest and would thus be used in the tabernacle service.

Verse 30. Of the children of Israel's half of the spoils, there was to be given one out of every fifty. Thus the per cent required of the congregation was ten times as great as that required of the soldiers. That would be fair considering the greater sacrifice they made in the conflict. Lest I leave a misunderstanding about the whole subject I will explain myself more fully. It was not that the person who might number 50, or number 500, must give over all his personal share. That would not be in keeping with any of the law. But the offering was to be made on that basis.

Verses 31-35. This paragraph is the sum of all that was taken by the men of war from the Midianites: 675,500 sheep, 72,000 beeves, 61,000 asses, and 32,000 virgins. All this was to be divided as already seen.

Verses 36, 37. Here one half of the whole booty taken is given, and in next verse the Lord's part of the half is given. The half was 337,500 sheep and the Lord's part was 675. This verifies the remarks made at verse 30 above, for the larger number here divided by 500 will give 675.

Verses 38-40. This paragraph is the rest of the division of the booty including the virgins.

Verse 41. We have previously learned that a special division of the sacrifices was made for the priests for their personal consumption. That is what is meant here.

Verses 42-47. This contains the same subject matter as in verses 36-40 except that the result of the division is not named. That would be only a matter of arithmetic if we wish to have the result tabulated.

Verses 48, 49. The officers appointed to handle the enumeration of the men and their gains in the war now made a report to Moses. They declared that not one man had been overlooked.

Verses 50-53. Besides the beasts and women taken in the battle, and which have been accounted for above, each soldier obtained personal spoils of jewels and other valuables. Now their appreciation is manifested by their making an offering to the Lord of the same.

Verse 54. Moses and the priest took these spoils and brought them into the tabernacle of the congregation to

become a part of the congregational treasury.

## NUMBERS 32

Verse 1. The whole congregation is still east of the Jordan. They are soon to cross over and enter upon the major military project that has been before them. The tribes mentioned here have noticed the condition of the land near them as being good for pasturage which was their concern.

Verses 2-5. The tribes of Gad and Reuben (and later half of Manasseh) came to Moses and requested that they be given their inheritance in that place. The land had already been subjugated before the children of Israel came up this far in their journey, and now these tribes wish it for their place of residence.

Verse 6. Moses did not understand their full purpose. He thought it was just a scheme of theirs to escape the hardships of the war in Canaan. He chided them for wanting to sit down now in the peaceable possession of their land while the rest of the men of war went over and fought for their inheritance.

Verse 7. The comment of Moses on the effects that would come from their refusing to go on with the war was that it would discourage the others. In modern language, it would weaken their morale, and thus defeat the whole plan of the Lord.

Verse 8. As evidence that such a result would be logical and to be expected he told them about their fathers in the case of the twelve spies. Here is where we learn that the place from where the spies were sent was Kadesh-barnea as well as Paran.

Verse 9. Here he recites the fact that the spies were overawed by the sight of the land and then discouraged the heart of the Israelites. This discouragement caused the congregation of warriors to give way to rash statements and to rebel against going over to take the land.

Verses 10, 11. The rash statements angered the Lord and he decided to grant them the thing they so imprudently called for. And the general principle on which he decided to reject them is stated in the words, "not wholly followed me."

Verse 12. This is a wonderful passage. In contrast with the preceding one let us note carefully that Caleb and Joshua are to be permitted to enter the land of Canaan; not merely



because they had followed the Lord, (almost every person follows the Lord in some degree) but because they had *wholly followed* the Lord. The same service of wholeheartedness is required of us today.

Verse 13. The forty years of this service include the 2 years preceding their arrival at Kadesh-barnea. The 38 additional years wandering in the wilderness will result in the death of all the men of war who had made the rash statements referred to and thus their wish will have been granted. Moses' purpose of inserting that bit of history here was to give emphasis to his warning against their request.

Verses 14, 15. There is not the least indication that these tribes made any attempt to interfere with Moses in this severe speech although they knew it did not apply to them. They respectfully heard his speech and then offered their explanation.

Verse 16. Approaching near Moses they stated their first concern would be to build places of shelter for their cattle and children. That was a good idea in itself. They knew it would be somewhat of a burden to have all that encumbrance with them in the battles to be soon fought against the heathen. They did not want to leave them unprotected so that on their return they might find them gone, and they themselves a burden on the congregation.

Verses 17, 18. They promised to go armed with the rest of the brethren and to remain in the conflict until they had received each his place. They would not return to their homes until all the children of Israel had received their inheritance.

Verse 19. The wording of this verse must not mislead us. It does not mean to be a positive conclusion independent of the authority of Moses. It is made in connection with the previous wish that they be allowed to take their possession on this side.

Verses 20-23. This explanation satisfied Moses and he granted their request. He does so with strong provisos according to their promise and also according to their logical duty in the case. After they have served their people until victory had been won, they might return to their chosen possessions with a clear case before God. He further warns them that if they should think to evade their duty and promise, it will not avail them any-

thing, for their sin would "find them out."

Verse 24. He then endorses their plan to build shelters for their cattle and children as they said they would.

Verses 25-31. The whole agreement is rehearsed in the ears of Joshua, and the priest, and made them understand the terms. Also the tribes were in hearing at the rehearsal and heard Moses say that if they did not go across to fight, they could not have this land on the east side. They would have to take their chances for land on the west side. To all this the tribes again agreed.

Verse 32. This language shows that the land of Canaan was restricted to the part across the Jordan. Since the promised land was greater than the land of Canaan, we can see the two and half tribes were clear of any ingratitude in wanting to have their inheritance on the east side. Besides, when Moses misunderstood their motive and was chastising them, he never intimated there was anything wrong in their wanting to reside over on the east of Jordan. See Gen. 15: 18 for description of the promised land.

Verse 33. The reader will recall that when the children of Israel were in their journey they encountered the lands of Sihon and Og, and were attacked by these kings. The Lord fought for them and gave them the lands of the heathen. (Chap. 21; 24; 35.)

Verses 34-42. After arriving at an understanding with Moses, these tribes went to work to build (rebuild) these cities for the use of their people, while they are with their brethren warring against the heathen on the other side.

### NUMBERS 33

Verse 1. *These are the journeys.* This chapter as a whole gives the record of the journeys of the Israelites from Egypt to the Jordan. Not all of the places they stopped are named but enough of them are so that a person can trace their route on a map.

Verse 2. Moses wrote the log as here seen. He wrote it by inspiration, but also their journeys were "by the commandment of the Lord." It will not be useful in a work such as the present to make special mention of all the places. No other history is connected with many of them; the mere mention of the name would add no information. We will group a number

of them together that will include places or persons of note.

Verse 3. Rameses gives the location of the Israelites, before departing from the land of Egypt. They left there on the fifteenth of the first month. The passover was kept on the 14th. We shall realize that several million people could not pack and get started very soon, after being commanded, at midnight, to do so. Therefore, by the time they got a good start out of the land it was the fifteenth. And the Egyptians saw them leave. They were too busy with the number of deaths in their own families to bother about trying to hinder them now.

Verse 4. The Egyptians must have about finished the major work of disposing of their dead and thus had opportunity to see them in their movements. They had but newly finished the distressing task and were not in position of body or mind to make any stir as yet.

Verses 5-7. After leaving Rameses their first important stop was Pihahiroth, a place not far from the Red Sea. The history of the events near, and in, the sea is not the subject of Moses here, so that is omitted.

Verse 8. An interesting observation on the brevity of the Bible in some places may be made here. "Passed through the midst of the sea," is a short account of what it took the 14th chapter to detail. The first stop of importance after crossing, was at Marah. Again the distressing experience of the stop is not mentioned.

Verses 9, 10. The Red Sea was the name of the body of water in general; not just that of the small arms that project upward in northwest and northeast fashion. This will account for what might be confusion on the name and place.

Verse 11. Attention of the reader is invited to this name Sin. It must not be confused with Zin which was a different wilderness. The latter was nearer the end of their wandering and not far from the Midianite country. The former was near the mountain of Sinai.

Verses 12-14. Rephidim was the place where they complained for want of water. And Moses was here told to smite the rock which brought forth drinking water. This event is not mentioned here. It is recorded in Ex. 17th chapter.

Verse 15. The brevity of the narrative is certainly seen here in that

only a short verse is devoted to this place of Sinai whereas they spent a year at the place. That history is to be seen in other places. The journeys of the congregation constituted the subject of this portion of the Mosaic writing.

Verses 16-35. This whole paragraph is put down in the manner explained in first and second verses of the chapter.

Verse 36. This mentions the wilderness spoken about in verse 11, and should be distinguished from the wilderness of Sin. It is obvious that the last named place has a significant name only by coincidence, and with no particular meaning.

Verse 37. They pitched in the *edge* of Edom. This is significant. Reference to chapter 20: 21 will explain it was because Israel was not permitted to go through that land.

Verse 38. Take note of the fortieth year, as the year of Aaron's death. That will impress the reader with the fact that they are very near their journey's end since we know that it was in the same year that Moses died. He will survive his brother some months, because the Lord has need of him a little while yet.

Verse 39. Readers who are marking their books should include this verse as it gives the age of Aaron and will be considered in connection with that of Moses later.

Verse 40. The brevity of this verse is another interesting instance of the method of the sacred scripture. Reference to chapter 21: 1-3 will show the circumstances as one where the children of Israel made a vow to God under the law in Lev. 27: 29 and how they carried out that vow.

Verses 41-47. This paragraph stops at the place where Moses was called to take a look at the land to which the congregation was traveling, but which he was not to enter.

Verses 48, 49. This paragraph brings them to the place where they are in our present studies of their experiences, and where they had so much to go through before being led across the Jordan.

Verses 50-53. Most of this paragraph had been delivered to them before, but the subject is so great and the people are so forgetful that repetition was necessary. The pictures mentioned here were figures carved on walls or stones or other surfaces and used as

objects of worship. They were like the carving of a cameo in our times.

Verse 54. They were commanded to decide the division of the land as to the various tribes by the method of the lot. When this procedure is used by man today it is merely a "chance" performance and does not make any logical conclusion. When the Lord resorts to such method he will see to it that the proper conclusion is reached. Such is the meaning of the statement in Prov. 16: 33. This was simply another of the incidences mentioned by Paul in Heb. 1: 1.

Verse 55. The awful prediction and warning of this verse may be considered a history, in the form of prophecy, of the book of Judges. Their past experiences should have taught them that God always meant what he said and said what he meant. We will see that such lesson was missed by the nation and they had to learn it in pain.

Verse 56. While the threat in this verse had a variety of fulfillment yet the outstanding one was in their being taken into captivity. God had promised to drive out the heathen nations from the land. Instead, he drove out his people through the instrumentality of other heathen nations, the Assyrians and Babylonians.

### NUMBERS 34

Verses 1, 2. The land of Canaan is here spoken of as an inheritance falling to the people of God. We always think of inheritance as being something actually being bestowed on a person to which he was already entitled. That is the case here. God had previously given this land to them through their great ancestor, Abram. (Gen. 12: 7.) Thus, when they go over and fight for the possession, it will be a warfare of defence, battling for the possession of property already rightfully theirs, but being occupied by people of foreign origin.

Verses 3, 4. "Quarter" and "border" are words meaning, in general, the limits or lines dividing off the land considered. The details of these various descriptions of said borders may be seen in any good map of the country.

Verse 5. Starting from the place last named in the preceding paragraph the line struck out in a curve (compass) until it joined with the "river of Egypt." This name should not mislead the reader. It was the name of

a small stream flowing in a north-westerly direction, into the sea, and forming the southern boundary of the land.

Verse 6. The "great sea" here is the Mediterranean Sea, which formed the western line of the promised land.

Verses 7-12. As stated a number of times previously, a distinction must always be made between the "promised land" and the land of Canaan. Because of this distinctive fact, the two are sometimes confusing. Particularly so because the distinction is not specifically made by the writers in the scriptures. On a subject such as the geographical descriptions of the land the best information we can obtain is from some good map that has been made by men who have traveled in the country. See the Preface on this idea of consulting works of reference now in existence. Another observation that should be made in the present connection is that the land as a whole is being bounded in above description. The divisions among the tribes come later on.

Verse 13. The explanation that Moses gave the people in this verse verifies the remarks of the preceding paragraph, for it is explained here that the outline recorded, pertained only to the possession of the nine and a half tribes who were to settle on the west of the Jordan.

Verses 14, 15. The two and a half tribes are said here to "have received" their inheritance on "this side" or east side as they were still on that side. Since their operations had already brought the land under subjugation to the children of Israel, it might well be spoken of as having been received.

Verses 16-18. It is always practical to have work done in an orderly manner. That result can be accomplished by assigning to men their specific task. Thus in the matter of dividing the land among the tribes it was directed that a man be selected from each tribe for the work. The whole thing would be under the supervision of Eleazar the priest and Joshua their next leader.

Verses 19-29. This paragraph simply names the men from the tribes selected to do the work outlined in foregoing verses.

### NUMBERS 35

Verse 1. It is always well to keep our "bearings" when following a narrative. Thus we note that the con-

gregation is at its last stand before crossing Jordan. It is just opposite Jericho and in the plains of Moab.

Verse 2. It has already been learned that the tribe of Levi was not numbered with the other tribes because of their exclusive appointments concerning the tabernacle. Today the suburbs of a city are the outskirts of the unit or the residential districts. In other words, the edges of the city, but still a part of it. The word in the scriptures has a different meaning. It is from *MIGRASHAH* and defined "a suburb (i. e. open country whither flocks are driven for pasture), hence the area around a building, or margin of the sea."—Strong.

Verse 3. Since the Levites had no single unit or landed estate as a whole they must have cities in which to dwell. The suburbs were for the use of their cattle and beasts in general. Question might arise as to what use they had for such place for cattle since they were not to engage in gainful occupation. There is nothing said about their reproducing these things. The other tribes were required to give to the Levites a tenth of their increase and this included cattle. These were for the personal use and consumption of the tribe. They needed a place to keep them from one time of tithing to another, and these suburbs were for that purpose.

Verses 4, 5. Any person knows that one thousand cubits and two thousand cubits are not the same. The cities were not required to remain just the exact size they happened to have at the time of being possessed. If times of prosperity should come and the city needed to be enlarged, there must be room for expansion without having to encroach upon the pasture land immediately joining the walls of the city. Therefore, they were to measure a distance of one thousand cubits from the wall all around and there begin the pasture land. The strip of land for the cattle was to be a thousand cubits. That would make the total measurement all round, including the suburbs or pasture land, two thousand cubits from the walls on all sides.

Verses 6, 7. The total number of cities that were to be given to the Levites was forty-and-eight with their suburbs. Of these there were six set apart to be cities of refuge. These cities were scattered among the possessions of the twelve tribes and taken from them for the exclusive possession of the special tribe.

Verse 8. While these forty eight cities were taken from all the tribes and were scattered variously over the territory as a whole, the appropriation was made according to the extent of the possessions of any given tribe.

Verses 9-11. The system given under Moses is sometimes called a "theocracy." That means "governed by the Lord." The only government the Israelites had for either their religious or civil guidance was the law of Moses. For this reason some provisions of the system look more like a civil government with its penal and punitive statutes, than like a religious system. Among the conditions arising among men living in a community is that of death, caused by one man toward another. The law of capital punishment given in Gen. 9: 6 required that when one man killed another he must be punished with death. It is known that a killing might not always be deliberate and hence would not come under the heading of murder. Therefore, it was necessary to make some provision for the protection of the killer, who was not guilty of murder. That was the purpose of these cities of refuge.

Verse 12. The avenger of the killing was the brother or near kinsman of the man killed. (Gen. 9: 5.) Theoretically, he had the lawful right to slay any man who killed his brother. Yet the killer might not be a murderer and thus not deserve any punishment. As protection from the vengeance of the executioner the city of refuge was open to him. He must be admitted therein and held until he has opportunity to be heard before the congregation.

Verses 13, 14. The location of three cities on either side of Jordan was because two and a half tribes of the children of Israel would be living over there, and there were times when it would be difficult, if not impossible to cross the Jordan. Therefore, the merciful provision was made that a killer would have the easiest possible means of protection until he could have a fair trial.

Verse 15. It is the principle of all civilized governments that a foreigner who may be sojourning in the land must be obedient to the laws of that land. By the same token he should be entitled to the protection of that land. Hence these cities of refuge were for the benefit of all classes as to citizenship.



Verses 16-18. The reader will note a difference is made between a manslayer and a murderer. That distinction is just and should be observed today. All murder is killing but not all killing is murder. This distinction is ignored by the sentimentalists who cry out against capital punishment for murder. They try to make the law of God contradict itself because it condemns murder, yet commands the death of the murderer. This subject is treated at length at Gen. 9: 6.

Verse 19. As to who was to avenge the slaying, the reference has already been made to Gen. 9: 5. Note here that he was authorized to slay the other man "when he meeteth him." No opportunity was provided for explanation then. Therefore, the city of refuge was provided for his protection until the guilt or innocence had been determined by the congregation. Of course a man having killed another, whether deliberately or otherwise, would not lose any time trying to get to one of these cities for refuge from the avenger. That is why the word "flee" is used here and also why Paul used the word "fled" in Heb. 6: 18, when considering the refuge provided for the sinner if we will flee to the salvation offered in Christ.

Verses 20, 21. This paragraph describes a murderer. He is one who intended to kill the other and was prompted by the motive of hate. He is a murderer and not merely a manslayer. He was to be punished with death.

Verses 22, 23. Now the man who was killed under circumstances here described was just as certainly slain as was possible for a man to be, but the question of guilt is what was to be considered. If the killing was not deliberate, then it was not murder.

Verse 24. The court having jurisdiction in the trial of the slayer was the congregation, and he must be taken from the city of refuge to which he had fled, to the assembling place, and there tried by the officers in power. They must decide whether the killing was deliberate and therefore was murder, or was not deliberate and thus not murder. After reaching their conclusion they must deal with the case as follows.

Verse 25. Having found the man not guilty of murder, he must be escorted back to the city of refuge to which he had fled. This must be done under

protection from the revenger of blood. The only means of safety from this revenger for the present is the protection of the city of refuge. The revenger of blood was never permitted to enter the city to hunt out the slayer, but there was a limit to the time he was required to remain in the city, and that was until the death of the High Priest that was in service at the time.

Verses 26-28. If at any time in course of the life of that High Priest the slayer should venture to go outside of the city he would endanger himself. If the revenger of blood found him out there he was authorized to kill him. This was regardless of the fact that he had been found not guilty of murder by the congregation. If the man were found guilty of murder by the congregation, he was to be turned over directly to the revenger of blood for execution.

Verses 29, 30. The special item in this passage is that it required more than one witness to prove a man guilty of murder. Two men might be out together, but with no one else in sight. One of them might kill the other. Afterward the revenger of blood would learn about it. Then he would have the power to slay the surviving one, if he caught him out, regardless of guilt or innocence. Even if the "brother" of the slain man were present on the occasion the killer might outrun him and reach the city of refuge. When brought to the congregation the revenger could be used as a witness. Since there would be no question of fact as to the killing the thing to be settled would be the motive. Here is where more than one witness must be required. Previous knowledge of threats or intimations of bodily harm might prove the guilty mind of the killer and that would prove him a murderer.

Verses 31, 32. Fines for petty offences may be regarded as just punishment. In the case of a murderer, no amount of money can be accepted in place of the punishment required, that is the death of the murderer.

Verses 33, 34. Here is a serious paragraph in the declarations of God. It is not merely an arbitrary law, or edict, issued by the Lord but a statement of a positive truth. The land that allows a murderer to live is a polluted land. It has the stain of blood on it. The only way that stain can be removed is by the blood of the one guilty of the murder. Hence,

any court or jury that finds a man guilty of murder and then does not require that the murderer be put to death is itself guilty of murder. I could not conscientiously sentence a man guilty of murder, to any kind of punishment except capital punishment. Anything less is an insult to God, in whose image every man has been created, which fact is the divine basis of, and motive for, capital punishment for murder.

### NUMBERS 36

Verses 1-4. In order to understand this paragraph the reader should turn back to chapter 27: 1-11 and read carefully the provision that was made then on behalf of these women who had been bereft of the men who should have inherited land. An addition was made in the provision for land by giving these women what would have been possessed by the men. Now a difficulty seemed to come to these later men of the tribe. They fear that the favor extended to the women to retain the land might become strictly a personal possession of theirs. Afterwards they might decide to marry outside of the tribe. In that case the property would become alienated from its original tribe and that was objectionable in their view of the matter. It was likewise objectionable to the Lord. Therefore, he now ordains that if these women wish to retain the property, they must marry within their own tribe so that the land would not pass from one tribe to another.

Verse 5, 6. This is the decree of God as referred to in close of preceding paragraph. God wished to keep the tribal distinctions intact and thus would not permit the lines to be interrupted through the intermarriages of the members thereof.

Verse 7. The fathers referred to in this verse meant the ones who were heads of the tribes at the time of distribution of the land. They must be respected in the matter of the land as well as in other matters.

Verse 8. This law was not meant especially as a curb on the choice of men with whom marriage might be contracted, but if they desired to retain their land they must marry within the tribe of their fathers. Otherwise, they would forfeit their land.

Verse 9. Nothing new in this verse, but the importance of the ordinance is seen in that it is repeated so fre-

quently. That is a circumstance to be noted in numerous places in the scriptures.

Verses 10-12. It is gratifying to know these daughters obeyed the Lord in this matter. Many times we see people disregard the law of God when the subject of marriage is under consideration. However, since these women could carry out the natural inclination for marriage and at the same time do so in a way not to lose their property, perhaps the consideration was partly of personal motive as well as desire to please God.

Verse 13. Once more we see the important thought brought forth that the laws and commandments placed over the children of Israel were from the Lord. They were commanded "by the hand of Moses." This ought to settle the question of the authority of Moses in the Old Testament.

### DEUTERONOMY 1

*General remarks.* The books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew but the titles are Greek words, except when the names of the writers are used. The title of this book is from two Greek words, DEUTEROS which means "the second" and NOMOS which means "a law."—Liddell & Scott. Hence the popular definition, "repetition of law," is correct as a title. The contents of the book will justify the word. Although much new matter will be found in it, yet much also is practically the same as what the people had been told before. The first few chapters will be found to be a recital of the Jews' history after leaving Egypt and coming on down to their arrival in the plains of Moab.

Verse 1. The congregation is located near the Jordan and not far from the spot where they will cross when the time comes for their final move against the enemy.

Verse 2. The actual time they used in going from Horeb, or Sinai, to the place from which the twelve spies were sent was about a year. The time that would have been necessary at the ordinary rate of travel for those days was eleven days. Thus it can be seen that God wanted them to have some experience in wilderness travel before entering their final goal. Had they been submissive to God's will, they would have ended their journeys at Kadesh-barnea; however, after their sin at that place, the Lord decreed 38 years more of wandering.