

NUMBERS 6-10

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Numbers chapter 6 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

In our study in Leviticus, we saw the children of Israel being prepared to walk in holiness.

Now, as we have seen as we began our study in Numbers, that God is preparing the children of Israel to enter into the Promise Land.

First there was a census for all those who could go to war.

Then how they were to set up camp and then how the camp was to move.

Then we looked at the priesthood and the Levites, their function.

As we will see in our study tonight, we will start out by looking at the Law of the Nazirite and what that is all about.

With that said, let's begin reading in Numbers chapter 6, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

NUMBERS 6

VERSES 1-2

When a person took the vow of a Nazirite, he dedicated himself to the Lord.

In fact, the Hebrew word for "Nazirite" is *NAZIR* and it means to "*set apart.*"

In other words, he was setting himself apart from this world and focused on the Lord. Both men and women could take this vow that could last for 30 days or longer, even your entire life.

And we see that women can take this vow of a Nazarite, as Numbers 6:1 tells us.

The first one we see is Manoah's wife when she was pregnant with Samson, (Judges 13:4), but that does not mean that other women didn't take this vow.

And there was also Samson who was a Nazirite from birth, (Judges 13:5) but he broke the vow by drinking wine and not controlling his lustful passions.

We also see Hannah, the mother of Samuel takes this vow for her son Samuel, (I Samuel 1:11-28).

There was John the Baptist. (Luke 1:15)

And in Acts 18 we see Paul take a vow of a Nazirite for a period of time.

What about us today, is this something we should do?

First of all, in II Corinthians 6:17-18 Paul tells us, "**Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.'** **'I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.'**"

We may not take this vow of a Nazarite, but we should live our lives separated unto the Lord; we should be set apart from the world!

I realize that is hard for many today but look at the reality of what this world is all about, what it has for you and where it is going.

In I John 2:15-17 we are told, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Thus, store up your treasures in Heaven and live for the Lord, dedicate your life to Him!

As we read on, we will see what they were to do and not do in regard to this Nazirite vow.

VERSES 3-8

Here we see the requirements for fulfilling this vow of a Nazirite.

He could not eat or drink anything that came from the grape vine.

He was not to shave his head all the days of his vow unto the Lord. Then, at the end of the vow he was to cut his hair and burn it in the fire.

Lastly, he was not to come near a dead body, not even his own family during the period of time he has taken this vow.

VERSES 9-12

Talk about your bad days. If you were in the middle of your vow and someone died next to you, you would have to cut your hair, offer the sacrifices and then you would have to start all over from day one!

According to Wenham, *“The Mishna relates how Queen Helena had almost completed seven years of a Nazirite vow when she was defiled and therefore had to keep it for another seven years.”*

Can you imagine that! You were so close! Praise God for Jesus. The sacrifice was made for our sins, once for all and now our dedication is out of love to the Lord.

VERSES 13-15

When a person took the vow of the Nazirite it was not only a sacrifice of his life, but it was costly, for at the end of the vow he had to offer extensive sacrifices. Thus, you did not take this vow without counting the cost!

We see in Acts chapter 21 Paul was asked by his brethren to help pay the cost for some men who had taken this vow to help offset the cost.

What does it cost us, or does it cost us anything?

That is a great question because I wonder how many Christians, as they give their lives over to the Lord have counted the cost of lost relationships, jobs, and-so-on? It will cost you to follow Jesus if you dedicate your life to Him!

In fact, Jesus said in Matthew 5:10, **“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

In other words, persecution for standing up for the things of God found in the Word of God as you have consecrated your life to the Lord! Not for being obnoxious!

VERSES 16-21

Thus, the vow of the Nazirite, which, like I said, could last 30 days or longer, even an entire lifetime, but the usual timeframe would be a short period of time, when it ends there were sacrifices to be made.

In regard to this vow, George Williams makes these interesting remarks. He wrote, *“Thus the Nazirite was, and is, an enigma to the children of this world. To be joyful, he withdrew from joy; to be strong, he became weak.”*

In other words, for us today, our joy is not found in the things of this world, but in the Lord. And we truly are puzzling to the people of this world in the way we live our life for the Lord!

VERSES 22-27

The priests were to bless the people and folks, the Bible speaks of us as priests, which tells me we are to bring the blessings of God to people.

Yes, to our brothers and sisters in Christ but also to a lost world so they can taste and see that the Lord is good!

Now let me ask you this. *“Does God want to bless you?”*

Of course He does, for in these three verses we see the word **“you”** used some six times and the Lord is emphasizing that He wants to bless **YOU!**

He not only wants to bless you, but He also wants to keep you, watch over you, protect you. To have His face shine down upon you just makes you feel His love. He also is gracious to you.

And you may not always believe it, but God is always placing His eyes upon you, paying attention to you. In fact, He numbers the hairs on your head, that is how much He is watching you and how much He knows you. Some of you make it a little easier than others, you don't have as much hair, but He still knows the exact number!

And lastly, He wants to give you His peace, not an absence from storms, but a peace through the storms of life!

When God places His name upon you, He is saying that you are identified with Him. Think of it like this. Say my dad was the President of the United States, I would have access to areas that most people would not because I am identified with him.

Thus, in our relationship with God, all that He has is at our disposal for we are children of God and because God's name is upon us, people are watching what we do. May we give to them the blessings of God. And remember, we are His!

NUMBERS 7

VERSES 1-3

One month prior to what transpired here in Numbers, the Tabernacle was completed – the first day of the first month of the second year according to Exodus 40:1-2.

Clarke put it like this. He wrote, “The transactions mentioned in this chapter took place on the *second day* of the *second month* of the *second year* after their departure from Egypt; and the proper place of this account is immediately after the *tenth* chapter of *Leviticus*.”

And it is during this time that the twelve leaders from the twelve tribes of Israel brought a special offering before the Lord, six carts and twelve oxen to the Levites so that when it was time to move, the Tabernacle could be transported.

VERSES 4-9

The Gershonites received two carts and four oxen, they had the responsibility of transporting the fabrics of the Tabernacle. (Numbers 4:25-26)

The Merarites received four carts and eight oxen, they had the job of transporting the boards and pillars of the Tabernacle. (Numbers 4:31-32)

And then we came to the Kohathites and what did they get?

They received – ***NOTHING!***

First of all, let's deal with the Merarites. We see that the Merarites received twice as much as the Gershonites; why?

Because the Merarites had to carry the wooden framework of the Tabernacle and thus, they needed more carts and oxen for the work.

And then we came to the Kohathites, and they received nothing as I have said, why?

The Kohathites were not to use carts and oxen, they carried the holy things of God with poles upon their shoulders. (Numbers 4:15)

VERSES 10-11

Besides the carts and oxen these twelve leaders would bring their dedication gifts to the Tabernacle, one leader from each tribe for twelve days.

One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

These identical offerings were offered over twelve days, with one day set aside for one of the tribes. To us, this may seem like meaningless repetition in this longest of all the chapters in Numbers.

Nevertheless, God had several important reasons for this.

- To show that each tribe pledged their allegiance to Yahweh; that they each supported the work of the tabernacle and the priesthood, and the system of sacrifice commanded by God and carried out by the priests.
- To show the importance of each individual tribe, giving each tribe its own day of celebration and attention. These tribes were all related, but different – and each of them was important to God and should be regarded as important among Israel as a whole. Each tribe would receive attention, like each graduate at a commencement ceremony.
- To show the importance of each individual gift, giving full attention to every tribe's gift. Every gift mattered.
- To show that God wanted to be approached with some degree of organization and order. The tribes came in a specific order, the same order that they were organized for marching through the wilderness.
- To show that at God's altar, every tribe came as an equal. No tribe was better than the others at the altar for atonement, dedication unto God, and fellowship with the LORD.

- David Guzik, Numbers 7

Now let's see what was given by looking at the first day.

VERSES 12-88

Now we are not going to read through all these verses because each tribe leader will give the same gift.

What did they bring?

Each leader brought a silver platter and a silver bowl filled with flour mixed with oil as a grain offering.

They brought a gold pan with incense.

Also, they brought a young bull, a ram and a male lamb as a burnt offering.

We are not done yet as they brought a young goat for a sin offering.

Then, they brought two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five more male lambs for the peace offering.

These 12 leaders brought this to the Lord, one offering for the leader of a tribe a day for twelve days!

Why did each one bring the exact same gift?

So no one could try to outdo the other and the same is true today as we give. We are to freely give to the Lord, and we are not to draw attention to ourselves when we give.

Also, why does God repeat this over and over instead of just saying that this is what they all gave?

Because all are important and God recognizes what we give to Him, He knows us by name, and He knows what we are giving to Him freely!

VERSE 89

Here we see God speak to Moses in the Holy of Holies as God is dwelling above the Mercy Seat between the Cherubim.

How could Moses do that since he was not a High Priest, not even a priest, just from the tribe of Levi?

God called Moses and it is only by His grace that he could stand before God and speak with Him.

Folks, the same is true today as we can only speak to God the Father by His grace that He has extended to us through His Son, Jesus Christ!

NUMBERS 8

VERSES 1-4

Aaron, the High Priest was in charge of trimming the wicks and making sure there was enough oil in the lamps so that they would not go out.

Also, these lamps were to point outward for it was the only source of light within the Holy Place!

VERSES 5-7

Remember back in Leviticus chapters 8 and 9 we saw the dedication of the priests.

Now we are looking at the dedication of the Levites, who were not priests.

Of this one writer said, *“The Levites are helpers to the priests, and the language describing their consecration is somewhat distinct from that of the priests. The priests were made holy, the Levites clean; the priests were anointed and washed, the Levites sprinkled; the priests were given new garments, the Levites washed theirs; blood was applied to the priests, it was waved over the Levites.”* (Allen)

Now some may wonder, *“Why did they need this if they were not priests?”*

Here's the thing. Any service given by a child of God unto the Lord needs to be dedicated unto Him, we need to be dedicated unto Him! There should be that cleansing of our lives as we serve Him.

We will see that as we read on.

VERSES 8-15

We see here that as these sacrifices were made, the children of Israel waved the Levites, in a sense, before the Lord, but why?

They were basically saying, "***Lord, these Levites are Yours, to be used for Your glory.***"

So after this, what happens?

Does everybody go home?

No, then it is time for service!

Folks, as you dedicate your life to the Lord it is not just about some ceremony, it is not about some title you obtain, it is about going out and doing the work that God has called you to do!

I have seen this over the years with some people. God is raising them up for service, they get a title or position and then the work stops, they are too big for this or that, they don't have the time or whatever the excuse is.

That is wrong, when you dedicate your life to the Lord it is for service, no matter what that service is.

Now there are others who just serve, they don't have to be reminded, they just do it above and beyond what I would ask them to do.

They see a need, they talk with me, and they do it.

Paul put it like this, and it is simple, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [spiritual worship]. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** (Romans 12:1-2)

Are you willing to lay down your life on the altar of sacrifice and say to the Lord, ***“Here I am, use me!”***

VERSES 16-19

God took the Levites for His use instead of the firstborn in Israel and we dealt with this back in Numbers 3:40-51.

VERSES 20-22

Notice, God instructed them in what they should do, and they did it, they obeyed the Lord.

How about you? What is God speaking to you about, what has He laid upon your heart?

Are you making excuses why you are not doing them?

You see, God knows what He is doing, and His desire is obedience or as we would say, you need to walk by faith!

VERSES 23-26

Now there seems to be a contradiction here.

In Numbers 4:3, 4:23 and 4:30 we are told that their ministry is to start at the age of 30 and yet, here we see that it begins at the age of 25, why is that?

It can be as simple as this. Maybe those first five years were a time of training, their apprenticeship you might say and thus, their active service would begin at the age of 30 and they would continue to the age of 50!

Now, at 50 it did not mean they couldn't serve, but they were excluded from the taking down and setting up, the carrying of the Tabernacle when it was time to move. That was for the younger Levities.

Today, there is no limit, which I am thankful for since 70 is getting closer.

Interestingly enough, when I first came up here, people said I was too young! I was 37 years old at the time!

Now, well, I'm not 37 anymore and I don't hear anyone saying that I am too young, which can be good or bad, I guess!

NUMBERS 9VERSES 1-5

They first celebrated Passover in Egypt the night before they were set free. They were to place the blood of the lamb on their door and the way God instructed them to do this, the blood, I believe, would flow in the shape of a cross.

Those that applied the blood and partook of the lamb were spared from the Angel of death coming and taking their firstborn.

Those that refused to do what they Lord said lost their firstborn that night!

Now, one year out of Egypt, the Tabernacle has been built, and the Lord wants them to celebrate the Feast of Passover, remembering what the Lord did for them in delivering them from their bondage in Egypt.

Not only that but to look forward to the coming Messiah, the Lamb of God who would shed His blood to take away the sins of the world, freeing man from the bondage of sin he is in so that the Angel of death will Passover the lives of all those who receive Jesus!

Today, we remember the Lord's work as we share in communion!

VERSES 6-12

Here comes a problem for some in the camp. This first Passover outside of Egypt was set for the 14th day of the first month, but some had been defiled by coming in contact with a dead body, and yet, they wanted to keep the Passover, it was important to them.

Now, they did not hide this problem and tried to partake of the Passover in this condition, but they brought it to Moses to see what could be done.

They sounded sincere and from a human perspective, why not let them join in Passover?

Because it would be against what God has said, thus, Moses does not rush to make a decision, but we are told that Moses told them, "**Stand still, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you.**" Numbers 9:8.

That is a wise thing to do, to seek God's council in all things!

This is an important lesson for us to learn and a great example of what can happen if we don't is found in Joshua chapter 9.

The Gibeonites heard of the conquests of the children of Israel, and they were concerned that they would not be able to stand against them. Thus, they took a ***“Better red than dead”*** mentality!

You see, the people of Gibeon knew they were no match for the children of Israel. And don't get the idea that these people were weak and that is why they surrendered. They were not weak, but a strong city.

Joshua 10:2 says **“... Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.”**

You see, they heard what had happened to Jericho and Ai, and realized that they could not defeat the children of Israel by direct assault, no matter how big their army was.

Thus, the people of Gibeon would do something completely different. They would send representatives to the children of Israel and would not come against them by direct assault but through deception.

That is one of the ways that Satan attacks us, by subtle deception. Kind of a Trojan horse mentality. If you can't destroy them by direct assault, then you can deceive them into a false sense of security.

And what they told Joshua, and the children of Israel, was this, **“We have come from a far country, now therefore, make a covenant with us.”**

In other words, they did not come from the land of Canaan, which they did, but they said they came from a land far away and thus, they would not be destroyed.

Also, that means that the local news, the crossing of the Jordan River, the destruction of the cities of Jericho and Ai, they could not speak of for it would give them away.

So they speak of past victories for the children of Israel by saying “**We have heard.**”

They heard of the destruction of the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, who were defeated on the East side of the Jordan River, before they entered the Promised Land. And how the Lord brought them out of Egypt. You see, it was the old news that had time to spread to the far countries. They planned this deception very well, down to the last detail.

Notice the deception here in Joshua 9:12-15 as the Gibeonites speak to Joshua and the men of Israel, “**This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.’ Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the Lord. So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.**”

Now, from an outward appearance it looks like they came from a far country. From a human perspective, these guys were telling the truth. They saw their food and clothes, and how worn and old they were. They could have tasted the bread and wine. They could have smelled the odor of their clothes. They heard with their ears the supposedly true story of their journey. And as good as our human senses are, we can’t always trust them. You see, what looks true on the outside or the surface may in reality be rotten on the inside.

The mistake of Joshua was that he did not seek direction from the Lord. If he did, he would not have fallen into this trap.

Listen to what we are told regarding what they didn't do. We are told, "**... they did not ask counsel of the Lord.**" Joshua 9:14.

That is a dangerous place to be, to speak before you seek direction from the Lord!

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us what we are to do, "**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**"

And for Joshua and the Children of Israel, in only three days they found out their mistake but because of that mistake, they would have to live with the consequences of it for the rest of their life!

Thus, may we learn the lesson and seek the Lord before we do something we will regret, no matter how right or good it may seem. God knows best!

VERSES 13-14

Here we see a person who really doesn't care, is indifferent to the Feast of Passover.

If a person did this, they were to be cut off from the people. I wonder how many so-called Christians have no care or concern about Passover. And what I mean by that is they just don't care much about the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross of Calvary for them? It is not that big of a deal!

It is a huge deal, and it is something we truly do not deserve! May we never lose sight of what our Lord did for us to save us!

VERSES 15-16

Remember back in Exodus 40:34-38 as the Tabernacle was completed and the sacrifices made, we are told, **“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”**

The Shekinah glory or the presence of God was seen as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

The cloud protected them from the heat of the sun in their desert wanderings. The pillar of fire kept them warm in the cold desert nights and this Shekinah glory was a constant reminder that God was with them. And that when the Shekinah glory moved, it was time for them to move, but always being directed by God as they journeyed!

VERSES 17-23

Here we see God guide them in their journeys to the Promise Land.

When the cloud or the glory of God moved, the children of Israel would break camp and follow, but it was the Lord who was always leading them.

When His glory was above the Tabernacle, they remained in that location!

For us as Christians, we must let the Lord lead us in our journeys, to follow after our good shepherd where He is leading us and as we do, Paul tells us, “**And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.**” Colossians 3:15.

We may not have the Shekinah glory shining to guide us, but we do have the presence of God ruling in our hearts and by His Spirit, He does lead us. Jesus goes before us and as we follow, we will have His peace!

NUMBERS 10

VERSES 1-2

How do you get the attention of two to three million people or more?

They would do that by blowing the silver trumpets and these two silver trumpets would alert the people it was time to break camp and who should go next, to gather the people together, preparing for war, for Feast Days.

Obviously, they would blow different sounds for different things.

In the military they would blow the trumpet to wake up the soldiers, for retreat and so on.

Thus, if the sounds were all the same you would not know if you should run for your life or to just wake up!

Cole described them like this, these trumpets, “*These instruments were about two feet long with very narrow tubes, and when blown in certain patterns, they emitted a bright and piercing sound that would communicate clearly to the people the desired intent.*”

VERSES 3-10

Here we are told of the different trumpet sounds and how they were to alert the people to what they should do.

Folks, there are many different trumpets being blown in the Scriptures but the one I am listening for is the one that gather's God's people together as He meets us in the air, we call it the Rapture of the church.

Paul put it like this in I Thessalonians 4:15-18, **“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.”**

Folks, if we were going through the Tribulation Period, these words would not be comforting!

VERSES 11-13

They have been at Mount Sinai for about 14 months and now it is time for them to break camp and move on to the Promise Land.

And from Numbers 10:11 through 22:1 we see a record of their journey as they end up in the plains of Moab with Jericho on the other side of the River in the Promise Land.

VERSES 14-28

Notice, as they begin to move it is not chaotic or disorganized, but God has told them how the camp was to move, and it would take some time from when the first tribe started out until the last.

I remember running the Chicago Marathon and since there were some 10,000 runners in the race, by the time I crossed the starting line; it took some 10 minutes or so.

Obviously this would be a lot longer but God has it under control, He organized this march to the Promise Land!

The tribe of Judah led the way, and the name “**Judah**” means praise.

Thus, praise leads the way as the children of Israel were on the move.

What a great lesson for us as we go out. That we don’t go out grumpy, complaining, mad, angry but we go out in praise unto the Lord for all He has done, is doing and will do in our lives and most of all, for all that He is – **ALMIGHTY GOD!**

It is as the Psalmist said in Psalm 146:1-2, “**Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.**”

May we go out in praise!

VERSES 29-32

Hobab was the brother-in-law of Moses, the son of Reuel or Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.

Hobab was desert smart and thus, Moses asks him to go with them to help them, not guide them for the Lord would do that, but help out since he had desert experience.

Was this a lack of faith on the part of Moses?

Some would say yes, but I think he was just being smart.

God uses people in our lives to help us and that is what I see going on here and I believe that Hobab, after initially saying no, went with them for in the next verse it says, **“So they departed from the mountain of the Lord on a journey of three days.”**

What happened to these people, the Kenites?

We are told, *“In the Book of Judges we find traces of the presence of Hobab’s descendants as incorporated among the people of Israel. One of them came to be somebody, the Jael who struck the tent-peg through the temples of the sleeping Sisera, for she is called ‘the wife of Heber the Kenite.’ Probably, then, in some sense Hobab must have become a worshipper of Jehovah, and have cast in his lot with his brother-in-law and his people.”*

(Maclaren)

VERSES 33-36

The first leg of their journey to the Promise Land was only three days and God was leading them and will continue to lead them all the way, all they need to do is walk by faith.

Were there times as God was leading them that they came to an oasis in the desert?

Absolutely!

Were there times when they would end up in a dry, barren land? Absolutely!

Folks, God continues to lead us today, not by the cloud by day or the fire by night, but by His Spirit and all He asks us to do, as He asked the children of Israel to do, is to walk by faith!

Yes, there may be times of refreshing and there may not be, but God is leading! You see, He is not only preparing the place for us to go but He is preparing us for the place He is sending us! Remember that God is before us and all we must do is follow!

I like these two prayers of Moses – on the move – drive out the enemies!

When they are camping - dwell amongst us!

In other words, ***“God, drive out the enemies before us because they are too strong for us to do it and Lord, as we settle into the land, dwell amongst us!”***

That is a great prayer and as I close this evening, let me leave you with these words from Spurgeon to challenge you in your walk.

He wrote, ***“Will you and I go home and pray this prayer by ourselves, fervently laying hold upon the horns of God’s altar? I charge you, my brethren in Christ, do not neglect this private duty. Go, each of you, to your chambers; shut to your doors; cry to him who hears in secret, and let this be the burden of your cry - ‘Rise up, Lord; and let thine enemies be scattered.’”***

May we do that and see what the Lord can do in us and through us for His glory as we walk by faith and follow after Him!