

THE LORD WILL LEAD YOU!

(Scripture: Num. 9:17,18)

Numbers 9:17, 18. 17Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. 18At the [k]command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the [l]command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped.

Introduction:

We are coming to an interesting part of Numbers. Many bizarre incidents happened on their route to their promised land. We will have a real good time meditating on those interesting stories. But before that, I want to bring out some important passages to your attention so that you may see the administrative structure, harmony, and order, among the tribes of Israelites. This structure and organization came through the wisdom of God Himself from above.

Second year, they observed the second official Passover ceremony. It must have been very fresh in their minds, and I am sure, they must have observed it with real joy, and a thankful heart to the Lord! We must also observe the Lord's supper as though the sacrifice of the Lamb of God was offered just recently!

Now let us look into some of the events that took place before their journey.

Numbers. 7:1,2. 1Now on the day that Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it with all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; he anointed them and consecrated them also. 2Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers households, made an offering.....

Note, there are two actions that take place. **Consecration** requires the sprinkling of blood, and **anointing** requires the Holy oil. According to New Testament, our body is the living Temple of God, and it must be consecrated by the sprinkling and washing of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ through faith, we must be anointed and be filled by the anointing oil of the Holy Spirit! Then the rivers of living water will flow out through us and that joy of the Lord will be our strength.

When the Lord touches us spiritually, we will also give back gifts as Israelites did, and also our lives as a living sacrifice.

Num. 7:2-5. 2Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers households, made an offering 3When they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two of the leaders and an ox for each one, then they presented them in front of the tabernacle. 4Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

5 Accept these things from them, that they may be [c]used in the service of the tent of meeting, and you shall give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service.”

The leaders of 12 tribes brought 6 carts dragged by 12 oxen. God told Moses to accept these gifts and give them to Levites for the service of the tabernacle according to their service. Please note: these oxen were used not for sacrifice, but for pulling the carts. So, among the Levites, the Gershonites received 2 carts, and 4 oxen, but the sons of Merari received 4 carts, 8 oxen. Why? Because Gershonites had to carry less weight, just the coverings and curtains of the dwelling and the hangings of the court of the temple items, but Merarites had to take charge of the beams and pillars of the whole tabernacle. But the Kohathites did not get any because they had to take care of the holy things inside of the tabernacle, which were to be carried upon their shoulders, and were provided with poles for the purpose.

The rest of that chapter 7 lists all the leaders of various tribes making their offerings they brought. Let me come to the last part of this chapter and point to you something interesting!

Num. 7:89. 89Now when Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the [l]atoning cover that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two [m]cherubim; so He spoke to him.

The access to the tabernacle inside was strictly for Aaron's descendants. How could Moses enter the tabernacle? He was very special to God, and he had special privilege. Likewise, David should not have eaten the holy bread of the tabernacle. But he did and his soldiers. There may always be some exemption, and special circumstances in God's kingdom. Let us not judge too quickly using the Word of God.

God spoke to Moses directly, face to face. But to the Israelites, after they moved away from Sinai mountain, God spoke to them only through Moses, and the prophets indirectly, and through the written words of Scripture. Then, God spoke to us through His Son Jesus Christ very clearly, and then after His death and His resurrection, the Holy Spirit is in constant communication with us. As Moses was able to hear God's voice between the two cherubims, we must also be able to hear the voice of God through the Holy Spirit. Also, God speaks to us through the Scriptures, special circumstances, and through fellow believers, as the book, "Experiencing God" teaches us.

Chapter 8 talks in detail about cleansing the Levites before the service, and presenting them to the lord!

Numbers 8:9-11. 9So you shall present the Levites in front of the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, 10and present the

Levites before the LORD; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. 11 Aaron then shall [i]present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, so that they may [j]qualify to perform the service of the LORD.

Sons of Israel laying hands on them? Probably the leaders and elders of various tribes laying hands on Levites? Heb. 7:7 says that “the lesser person is blessed by the greater.”. Were the Levites less than these elders of tribes? Or is it about the transfer of responsibility?

Another way to look at Levites as the substitutes for the first-born Israelites. Some Jewish scholars think that it was the leaders among the firstborn who laid hands on their head, just like a man laying hands on a lamb before it is offered as a sacrifice. A symbol of substitution. Levites were offered as substitutes of first born to serve the Lord!

Num. 8:12,13. 12 Now the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls; then you are to offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. 13 And you shall have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons to present them as a wave offering to the LORD.

Levites had to pay for their own sins through the sacrifice. Sin offering and burnt offering are important part of our atonement. It is not enough we claim the blood of Jesus. We must also surrender totally as a burnt offering to Him.

Num. 9:15,16. 15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening, it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle until morning. 16 That is how it was continuously; the cloud would cover it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.

The very day the tabernacle was erected and dedicated; the cloud of God’s glory covered the tabernacle. When Solomon built the magnificent temple in his time, the cloud of God’s presence filled the temple. But in this wilderness temple, God’s presence in the evening was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle until morning. It was not exactly fire! It was the glory of the Lord, the Shekinah! What a glorious sight!

God leads them every step of the way.

Scripture. Numbers 9:17,18. 17 Whenever the cloud was lifted from over the tent, afterward the sons of Israel would set out; and in the place where the cloud settled down, there the sons of Israel would camp. 18 At the [k]command of the LORD the sons of Israel would set out, and at the [l]command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud settled over the tabernacle, they remained camped.

God lead Israel, and He directed their path every day. We must also be directed and guided by the Holy Spirit Himself!

There was this prayer offered before the ark of the covenant was moved.

*Num. 10:35,36. 35Then it came about when the ark set out that Moses said,
Rise up, LORD!
And may Your enemies be scattered,
And those who hate You flee from Your presence.” 36And when it came to rest, he said,
Return, LORD,
To the myriad thousands of Israel.”*

There is a familiar song we all sing joyfully!

Let the glory of the Lord rise among us!

Let the praises of the King rise among us,

Let the songs of the Lord rise among us.

Let it rise!

Let the praises of the Lord rise among us.

Let the Joy of the King rise among us.

Oh oh oh. Let it rise. Ooooooh. Let it rise!

Let the Lord rise within us. Are we kindling the Spirit to rise within us, or quenching the Spirit? Are we moving forward in our life with the presence of the Lord, or without the Lord?

Are we kindling the Spirit or quenching the Spirit? Scripture says that out of the belly shall flow the rivers of living water. Let the Holy Spirit rise within us! Let the glory of the Lord rise among us!

The Spirit that is rising within us is our eternal life also! Let the Lord rise among us!

Num. 10:11-13. 11Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from above the [c]tabernacle of the testimony; 12and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled in the wilderness of Paran. 13So they moved on for the first time in accordance with the [d]command of the LORD through Moses.

The order of March must have been a glorious sight to see!

The flag of the camp of the sons of Judah, by their armies, set out first, followed by Issachar, and Zebulun. Then the tabernacle was dismantled, and the Gershonites, and Merarites who are part of Levites carried those camp items. Next, the flag of the camp of Reuben set out with their armies, followed by the tribes of Simeon, and Gad.

Numbers 10:21. 21Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy objects; and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival.

The Lord must be always at the center of our life journey.

Positioning of these people were critical. They were in the center of this March! Tabernacle was set up before their arrival!

Then Ephraim by their armies set out, followed by the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin.

Finally, Dan, by their armies marched behind them, followed by the tribes of Asher and Naphtali!

There was a trumpet signal also for these people!

Numbers 10:1-6. 1The LORD spoke further to Moses, saying, 2 Make yourself two trumpets of silver, you shall make them of hammered work; and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and breaking camp. 3Now when both are blown, all the congregation shall meet you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 4But if only one is blown, then the leaders, the heads of the [a]divisions of Israel, shall meet you. 5And when

you blow an alarm, the camps that are pitched on the east side shall set out. 6Then when you sound an alarm the second time, the camps that are pitched on the south side shall set out; an alarm is to be sounded for them to break camp.

Two trumpets to be made of silver.

When both are blown, the whole congregation gathers.

When it is blown once, that is just for the leaders.

For alarm and alert, a different kind of blowing, and the camp of Judah shall set out first.

The alarm is for the war also. On the first day of the month, and on the appointed feast dates, it was blown also.

This is the last passage, and it sets up the stage for next week story of rebellion.

Numbers 10:33,34.33So they moved on from the mountain of the LORD three days journey, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD going on in front of them for the []three days, to seek out a resting place for them. 34And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

Conclusion:

There are some valuable lessons we can take with us today:

1. God brings structure, order, and harmony in His Kingdom. So should we.
2. Let us be consecrated and washed by the blood of Christ, and be anointed by the Holy Spirit.
3. When the Lord touches us, we will bring our offering to the Lord joyfully.
4. God speaks to us through His Word, through prophets, through the Holy Spirit, through ordinary people, or even donkeys!
5. Jesus paid our sin offering, and so we must offer ourselves as a burnt offering.

6. Spirit of Christ is our glory, and He resides in us. He will lead us and guide us.

7. We must never forget the goodness of the Lord! Lord's supper reminds us that.

Lord's supper must be a critical part of our life like Passover for the Jews.

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