

# God's People in the Wilderness

Christian Education

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## NUMBERS 7 & 8

Offerings of the Leaders  
Preparation of the Levites

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Hi folks!



(My Selfie)

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**“There will be six designated yawning breaks during my presentation. Please pace your boredom accordingly.”**

# Content of Numbers 7 & 8

- **Chapter 7:** Tabernacle has been set up and the leaders of the tribes present gifts that the officiants (priests, Levites) of the tabernacle will use in the tabernacle service.
- **Chapter 8:** The dedication of the Levites to help the priests in service of the tabernacle.

# Numbers 7.1 – 3

- The transactions mentioned in this chapter took place on the first day of the second month of the second year after their departure from Egypt. (Ex 40.2 and Num 1.1)
- The leaders of the tribes of Israel bring items necessary for the operation of the tabernacle services. (We expand on this shortly.)
- It's interesting that the Hebrew word for offering is *qorban* (vs. 3). Does this remind you of anything?
- Jesus used this term to condemn those who were using *qorban* to keep from caring for their parents ( Mark 7.9 - 13, esp. vs. 11: "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is *qorban* (that is to say, given to God)....'"
- **Note Prov 21.27: "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when they bring it with evil intent!"**

# Numbers 1.4 – 10

- The gifts are “to be used in the service of the tent of meeting and **give them to the Levites**, to each man according to his service.”
- **Two wagons and four oxen** Moses gave to the sons of **Gershon**: They were responsible for transporting the varied curtains of the tabernacle and of the courtyard (Num 4.24 - 28).
- **Four wagons and eight oxen** went to sons of **Merari** who were responsible for transporting the frames, crossbars, posts, bases, ropes, pegs of the tabernacle and of the courtyard (cf. 4.29 - 33).
- But **Moses did not give any carts and oxen** to the sons of **Kohath** because theirs was the service of the holy objects (e.g., the ark), *which they carried on the shoulder* (cf. 4.4 - 20).

# Historical Note

- When transporting the ark to Jerusalem, David did not follow the Kohathite rule, and this led to the death of Uzzah (2 Sam 6.3; remember the story?).
- By the way, 1 Chr 6.29 shows Uzzah was of the clan of Merari; i.e., a Levite, so we may think he should have known better.
- On the other hand, *he was not of the clan of Kohath*, so he may have thought it was OK to transport the ark by wagon since that is how his clan transported everything else associated w/ the tabernacle.

## Numbers 7.10, 11

- <sup>10</sup> The leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed, so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. <sup>11</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Let them present their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar.”
- The pacing that God required for each leader’s gift apparently was worth one day celebration. After all, this was a great occasion for the nation.

# Numbers 7.12 – 83

- The princes of each tribe made their offerings in the order assigned to the tribal encampments (Num 2). It was doubtless the tribes themselves (i.e., not just the chiefs) that presented these gifts through their chiefs. The twelve offerings were strictly alike, and were offered on twelve separate days.
- The offerings were: <sup>13</sup> **one silver dish** whose weight was one hundred and thirty shekels, **one silver bowl** of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of **fine flour mixed with oil** for a **grain offering**; <sup>14</sup> **one gold pan** of ten shekels, full of incense; <sup>15</sup> **one bull, one ram, one male lamb one year old**, for a **burnt offering**; <sup>16</sup> **one male goat** for a **sin offering**; <sup>17</sup> and for the sacrifice of **peace offerings**, **two oxen, five rams, five male goats, five male lambs** one year old.
- For the total, multiply by 12 (cf. vss. 84 – 88).

# What About the Sacrifices?

- **The grain offering:** The only non-blood sacrifice. Leaven and honey were forbidden. Offered as first fruits of the land. It was voluntary, and part was given to the priests (Lv 2).
- **The burnt offering:** Totally consumed by the fire, an offering solely to the Lord (Lv 1). Burnt whole overnite (Lv 6.8 – 13). The skin was given to the priests. Limited to bulls, rams, and birds.
- **The sin offering:** For unintentional sins of the nation, of priests, or of individuals. Totally burnt as an atonement (Lv 4). Also for ritual impurity (Lv 5).
- **The peace offering:** Consecrated meal between two or more parties before the Lord as a commitment to peace and mutual well-being. Peace offerings could be thanksgiving offerings, freewill offerings, and **wave offerings**. Parts of the sacrifice (breast, right thigh) were given to the priests. Could be cattle, sheep, or goat. Had to be eaten within one day, and leftovers burnt in two days (Lv 3 & 7).
- **The guilt offering:** (Not mentioned here.) For reparations. (cf. Lv 5)

## Question

Why should we even bother studying tabernacle sacrifices in this day and age?

# Some Verses to Consider Re: Jesus

- *Heb 10. 11 – 14:* <sup>11</sup> Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; <sup>12</sup> but he, having offered **one** sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time onward until his enemies be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by **one** offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”
- *1 Peter 3:18:* For Christ also died for sins **once** for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
- *2 Cor 5.21:* He [God] made him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

# Some Verses to Consider Re: Us

- *Romans 12.1*: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.
- *1 Cor 5.7, 8*: <sup>7</sup> Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. [Allusions to the grain offering.]
- *Eph 5.2*: and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. [Same language as in the OT.]

# Continuing...

- Each tribe's contribution was exactly the same, so why the constant repetition, *ad nauseum*, for each tribe? Why not simply describe *once* what was offered, then just give the names of the people who brought them, or just say this is what all the 12 people brought. Why this excess of repetitive detail throughout the long chapter?
- One reason may be to emphasize the quality of the gifts that were given by each tribe.
- A second reason might be to show that this was a grandiose presentation that took a day to complete.
- It may be to emphasize the individuality of the tribes even though they are all united under the Lord. Perhaps an analogous situation is that during graduation from a school, many times, because of the great number of graduates, degrees are confirmed upon all of them simultaneously. But how much more is the individual emphasized when each individual marches up to the podium and receives the degree. (From *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*.)

# Num 7.84

- This was the dedication offering for the altar *on the day* [my emphasis] when it was anointed, from the chiefs of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver basins, twelve golden dishes.
- Notice that the whole 12 days of presentation is seen as one *day*.
- Similar expression in Gen 2.4a: This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, *in the day* [my emphasis] that the Lord God made earth and heaven.
- We need to keep this in mind when we read Genesis chapter 1 and wonder how long a day may have been....
- No, I'm not getting into *THAT* now!

# Num 7.89

- As for the tabernacle, the Lord promised in Ex 25.22: “There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.”
- This verse shows the fulfillment of that promise: “And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him.”

# God Comes into the Camp

- With the people, the tabernacle, and the utensils purified, now Moses becomes the mediator between God and the people within the camp, not on Mt. Sinai.
- God now is truly in the midst of his people!

Questions on Chapter 7 Before We Continue?

# Numbers Chapter 8.1 – 4

- The Lampstand (described more fully in Ex 25.31 – 40, and its construction is explained in Ex 37.17 – 24). The lampstands were hammered gold, not plating over wood, and the design followed what Moses saw on the mountain (Ex 25.31 – 40).
- This section gives instructions for its operation. The important point is that the seven lamps ... give light in front of the lampstand, that is, their light shines on the table opposite it in the tabernacle on which are 12 flat loaves of bread symbolizing the 12 tribes of Israel (Ex 25.23 – 30).
- The light represents (and reflects) the glorious presence of God upon Israel's tribes.

# The Lampstand and the Shewbread

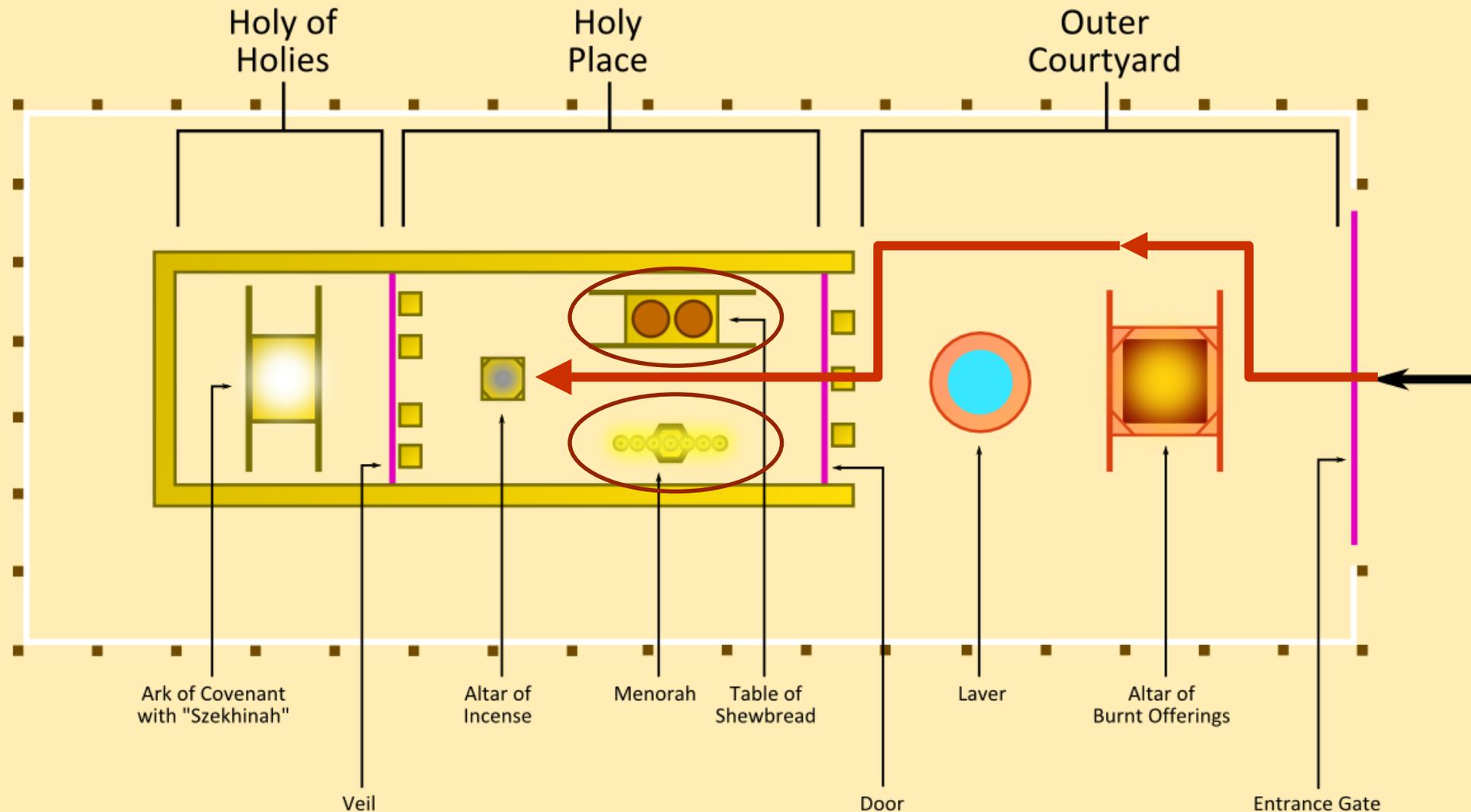


(<https://hmeschlmom.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/lampstand.jpg>)

(<https://growinggodlygenerations.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/table-bread.jpg>)

(<https://graceandtruthdotme2.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/hp.jpg>)

# The Lampstand and the Showbread



(<https://inthebeginningnow.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/tabernacle.png>)

# Symbolic Use of Lampstands

- **Zechariah (4. 2, 11, 14):** “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by the Lord of the whole earth.” (Cf. Rev 11.4 below.)
- **Rev 1.12, 13, 20; 2.1, 5:** The lampstands represent the seven churches.
- **Rev 11.4 – 6:** “<sup>4</sup> These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. <sup>6</sup> These have the **power** to shut up the sky, so that **rain will not fall** during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the **waters to turn** them into **blood**, and to **strike the earth with every plague**, as often as they desire.” (Moses and Elijah?)

# This Reminds Us of Jesus's Words

- Jn 8.12; 9.5: “I am the light of the world....”
- Jn 6. 35, 48: “I am the bread of life....”

## From *Barnes' Notes*

- The Levites could only undertake their duties (Num 3; 4) after the formal exchange of the Levites for the first-born (Num 3.44 – 51. The distinction between the "consecration" of the priests (Lv 8) and the less solemn "purification" of the Levites (Num 8:21) is marked. These rites of purification are similar to those incumbent on the priests of Egypt.

# Cleansing of the Levites

- **The first phase: The "purifying water."** (Lit. "the water of sin," or "the water for impurity." I.e., the water that purifies from sin or uncleanness.)
- **Num 19.9:** And a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a unclean place. And they shall be kept for the water for impurity for the congregation of the people of Israel; it is a sin offering.
- **Num 19.7:** For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt sin offering, and fresh water shall be added in a vessel.
- **Lev 8.6:** And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.
- This is the "the water of bitterness that brings a curse" mentioned in Num 5.18 re: the woman suspected of adultery.

# Second and Third Phases

- **Second phase: The shaving of their entire bodies**, symbolically showing the fullness of their cleansing. This is what someone with serious skin disease was supposed to do as described in Lv 13.33; 14.8, 9.
- We know from the historian Herodotus that the Egyptians regularly shaved their whole bodies every other day. They also wore wigs and shaved their heads in order to avoid lice .
- The Levites' shaving, however, was one time.
- **Third phase: Washing the Levites' garments.**

# Num 8.5 – 10

- These verses describe the cleansing of the Levites and may be compared to the account detailing the ordination of Aaron and his sons that we see in Leviticus chapter 8. Remember, the **Levites** were **helpers** to the priests, and the language describing the consecration is, however, somewhat distinct from that of the priests.
  - The **priests** were made **holy**; the **Levites** were **made clean**.
  - The **priests** were **anointed** and **washed**; the **Levites** were **sprinkled**.
  - The **priests** were given **new garments**; the **Levites** **washed theirs**.
  - **Blood** was applied to the **priests**; **water** was **sprinkled** over the **Levites**.

## Num 8.9 – 13

- The Levites are presented to the Lord in front of the whole congregation.
- The Levites are taken to the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle).
- Aaron presents the Levites before the Lord as the congregation lays hands on the heads of the Levites. The Levites are a **wave offering** (a kind of peace offering).
- The Levites lay hands on the bulls and present one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.
- Again, the Levites are a wave offering—a living one. (Cp. Rom 12.1, 2 that we are to be a living sacrifice before the Lord.)

This is as Far as We Got Today  
(10/28/18)