

# 18-19 Bible Study #27

4/2/19

# Numbers (Cont) Review

- **Numbers 3:1-4**

- Here we are introduced to the **genealogy of *Levi***, which was initially introduced in **Exodus 6:14-25**
- At that time Father suggested that we pay special attention to the three families of Levi:
  - Gershon
  - Merari
  - **Kohath** – Aaron and Moses
- In this section, we see a return to the genealogy of Levi with *Aaron* and his sons from whom all the priests will come:
  - Abihu – died in the tabernacle for using “unholy fire”
  - Nadab – died in the tabernacle for using “unholy fire”
  - **Eleazar** – served as a priest during the life of Aaron
  - **Ithamar** – served as a priest during the life of Aaron \*



# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 4:1-8**

- This section provides more details concerning the duties of the *Kohathites*
- The priests go in first and take down the curtains and use them to cover the holy objects for transport
- This was designed to prevent the rest of the people from seeing the items that were reserved within the tabernacle
- If this was not done, then each time they moved the Tent of Meeting, everyone would have seen all of the holy objects and they would not have remained “holy” \*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 4:17-20**

- Father Sebastian stated that many of the depictions in the Movie *Indiana Jones* were inaccurate
- But, one scene depicting the covering of the Ark of the Covenant with a blue cloth was correct
- In the scene where they were taking the Ark from the cave, the German soldiers wanted to remove the blue cloth to get a look at the Ark

# Numbers (Cont)

- Indiana Jones told his co-star to cover or close her eyes so as not to look at the Ark
- She did so and survived while everyone else was killed when they looked at the Ark
- He said that he saw the movies when he was very young and was not very religious but thought that there was a God in heaven and we had better not make Him mad! \*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 5**

- This is where we saw the procedure (the water of testing) for a husband who suspected his wife committed adultery without any evidence
- Remember that Father Sebastian suggested that this was what Moses did after the Golden Calf incident to identify those who participated in the incident\*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 6:1-21**

- This is where we learn about the “Vow of the *Nazirite*”
- *Nzr* was to “separate” in the sense of being “cut off” (like cutting the end off of a loaf of bread and putting it aside)
- In this vow, the person was going to separate himself from the regular joys of life in the community for a certain period of time to be “with the Lord”
- To have a quiet time outside the camp to be with the Lord
- This could be for weeks, years, or a lifetime

# Numbers (Cont)

- Father said that this was basically like a “modern retreat”
- During this period of time, the person could not drink any wine or strong drink including:
  - Alcoholic drinks from grapes, fermented honey, dates, barley, or anything that could be fermented
  - Vinegar which was “old wine that had gone bad”
  - Grape juice (which in antiquity only lasted a few hours before turning to alcohol)
- They could not eat grapes, raisins, or anything that came from the vine (because all of these would turn to alcohol)



# Numbers (Cont)

- All of these gave “joy to the heart”
- **Proverbs 31** challenges a king to avoid partying with lots of wine for he was to have a clear mind and exercise justice for the poor
- Throughout the bible, the drinking of wine was associated with “joy” and “feasts” (unless it was in excess)
- **Isaiah** described a feast in which God would restore His kingdom and the mountains would run with rivers of wine
- The “Wedding Feast at Cana” demonstrated Jesus turning an abundance of water into wine

# Numbers (Cont)

- Thus, wine was forbidden when a *Nazirite* separated himself from the community to be with God
- It was to be a time for extreme soberness
- This could have been the cause of the demise of the two sons of Aaron who may have been drinking before offering incense
- A person taking the *Nazarite* vow was also forbidden to touch anything that was dead or unclean
- This was because God was the God of the living and was considered to be holy and set apart

# Numbers (Cont)

- They were to set themselves apart for common, everyday activities
- Father said that they were also required to cut their hair at the beginning, as an easily recognizable outward sign to the community
- This would help the people from inadvertently causing them to come in contact with anything unclean
- At the end of their separation, they would shave their heads again to signify that the vow had ended

# Numbers (Cont)

- Well known *Nazirites* included:
  - Samuel
  - Samson
  - John the Baptist (seemed to exhibit these characteristics)
  - Paul took a vow for a short period of time and cut his hair – **Acts 18:18**)

# Numbers (Cont)

- This vow was completely distinct from someone who was a ***Nazarene***
- *Jesus was a Nazarene* but not a *Nazirite*, as some have mistakenly suggested (if He had been a *Nazirite*, he sure violated all of the rules)
- Furthermore, nowhere in the *Prophets* do we find a reference to the *Messiah* being a *Nazirite*
- In fact, **Isaiah 11** says: “*a branch shall come from the root of the stem of Jesse*”

# Numbers (Cont)

- The word for “branch” in Hebrew is *Nazar*
- The name *Nazareth* was translated as “branch town”
- **Jeremiah** and **Zechariah** refer to the *Messiah* as being like a branch coming forth from its roots
- **Matthew** was referring to this passage in **Isaiah 11:1** when he said, “*and the spirit of the Lord should rest upon him*”
- Immediately after **Matthew** tells us that Jesus was a *Nazarene*, he tells the story of his baptism
- Father stressed the difference in these two words because many get them confused \*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 6:22-27**

- This section contains a familiar “*priestly blessing*” that God directed *Aaron* to use to bless the people of *Israel*

- **Numbers 7** provides a chronology of what the people were doing in a liturgical sense on a daily basis

- **Numbers 8** gives another reference to the *Levitical* priesthood replacing the firstborn priesthood\*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 9:9-12**
- Presents a very interesting liturgical loophole to the major requirements for the Feast of Passover
  - If someone had defiled himself and could not keep the Passover in the first month of the year, they could keep it in the second month
  - They were however, required to celebrate the Passover Feast
  - A similar situation will be presented in the **Book of Deuteronomy**
- This was followed by a brief reminder of the Glory Cloud and Pillar of Fire \*



# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 10:1-10**

- God directed Moses to make two silver trumpets and gave him detailed instruction concerning when they were to be blown by the sons of Aaron (the priests)\*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 10:11-12**

- Finally, we are told about the beginning of the 40 years journey in the wilderness
- Once again, we were given a chronology so we can keep track of where we are in the story
- For some, this may seem irrelevant but for the author of the document this was very important
- This helps make the document relevant and not just something made up

# Numbers (Cont)

- As the people were standing at the foot of Mount Sinai after they had built the Tent of Meeting, started the sacrificial system, and the liturgical process, it was time to move out
- We also know that they had numbered the tribes and given the *Levites* their jobs in support of the tabernacle
- Now it was time to start on the journey to the Promised Land
- This trip should have only taken a few days
- They set out by stages from the wilderness of *Sinai* and the glory cloud settled down in the ***wilderness of Paran***  
\*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 10:13-14**

- The community was led by the Tribe of *Judah*
- They were followed by the tabernacle and then the *Levites*
- Imagine how long it would have taken for them to break down the tabernacle and the rest of the camp to prepare for the departure
- This was not a simple process as over 1 million people were participating
- The move had to be started in an orderly and timely process like a marathon
- *Judah* went first, and once they had cleared the start point the *Levites* with the tabernacle move into place followed by the rest of the tribes \*

# Numbers (Cont)

- **Numbers 10:15-35**

- This section describes how the *Levites* took down the tabernacle and how they transported it during the march
- It also described the tribes and the order of march as well as the beginning of the move within the order of movement
- The passage ends with a brief conversation between Moses and his father-in-law ***Hobad (Reuel – Ex 2:18*** or ***Jethro – Ex 3:1***) followed by a summary prayer concerning future movements of the Ark \*