

BOOK OF WILDERNESS

Numbers 1–12

OUT OF EGYPT FOR LIFE WITH GOD

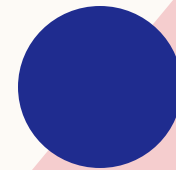
EXODUS 1–18 Deliverance and the journey to Sinai

EXODUS 19–40 Covenant and God's dwelling

LEVITICUS Holiness and life in His presence

NUMBERS 1–10 Preparation and departure

Exodus 19:4–6; 40:34–38; Leviticus 26:11–12; Numbers 10:11–13



THE WILDERNESS

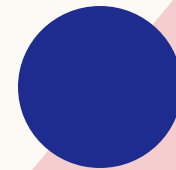
As a Major Bible Theme

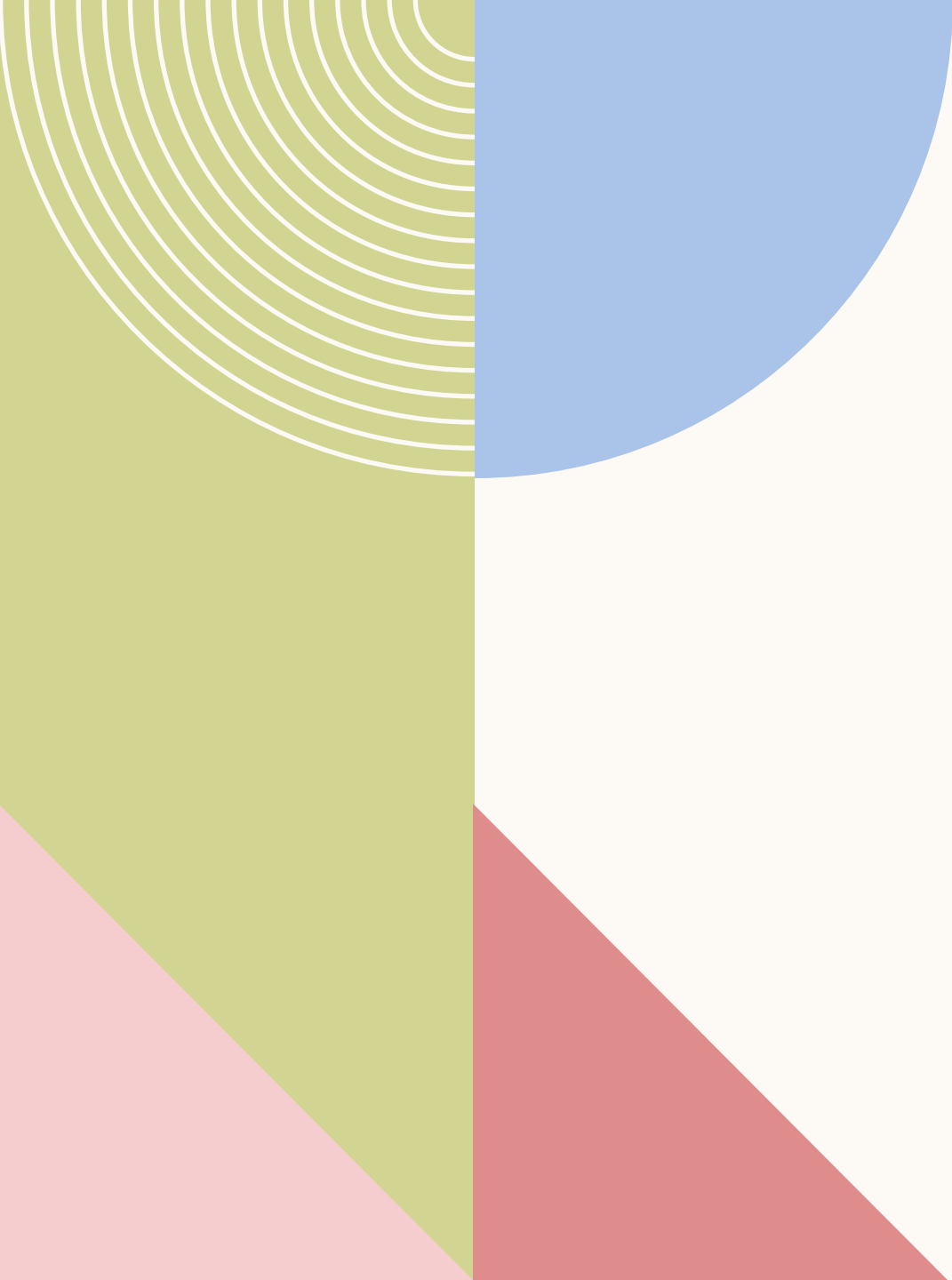
God provides and makes Himself known.

Testing exposes what is in His people's hearts.

Only Jesus enters the wilderness and remains faithful.

One generation prepares to enter at the beginning.
Another prepares to enter at the end.

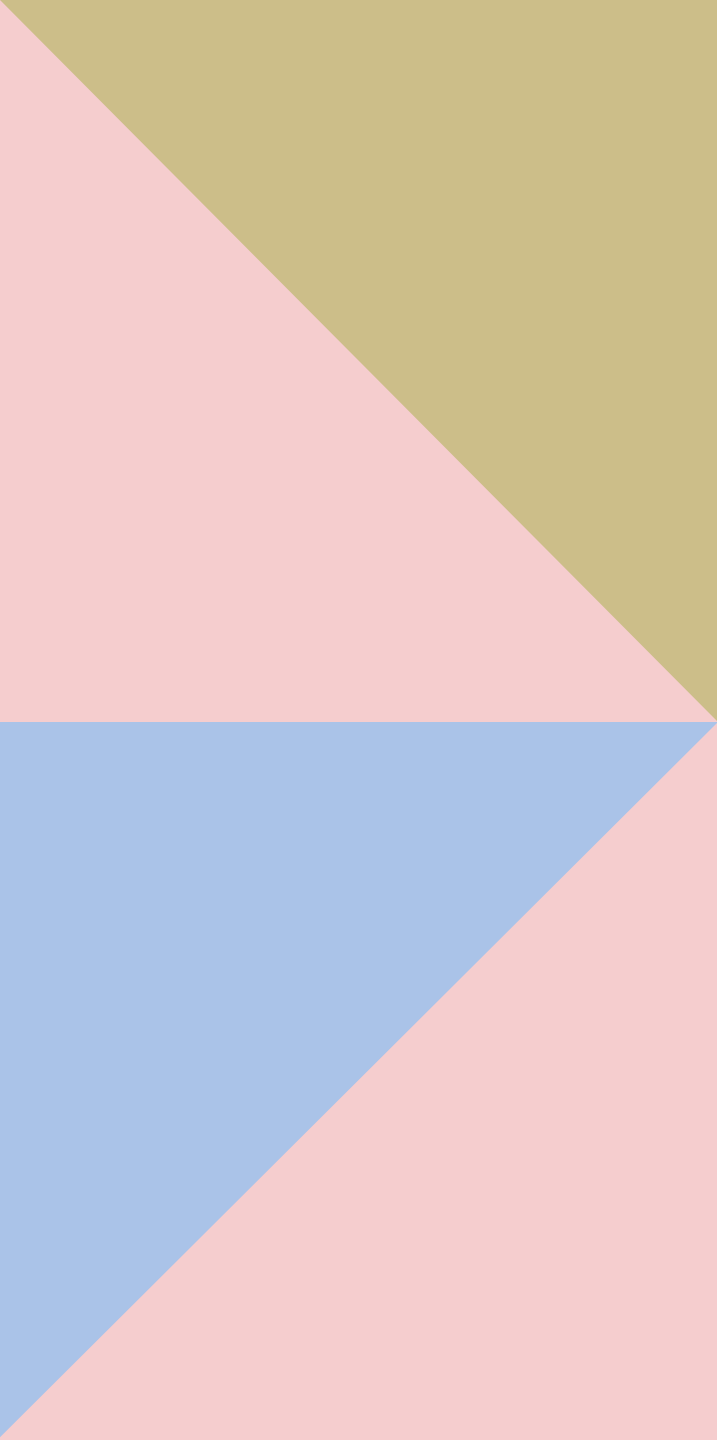




WHEREVER I DWELL AMONG THEM

“...so that they will not defile their camp where
I dwell in their midst.”

Numbers 5:3, NASB 1995, excerpt



GETTING OUR BEARINGS

1–4 People counted, camp arranged, service assigned

5–6 Purity, restitution, fidelity, dedication, blessing

7–8 Offerings, lamps, and the Levites

9–10 Passover, guidance, and departure

11–12 Following God begins to unravel

COUNTED FOR WHAT?

603,550 counted for military service
Men twenty and upward, able to go to war

The Levites receive another assignment:
care for the tabernacle, carry it, and camp around it.

God appoints guardians to protect the congregation.

Protect what from what?

WHO'S IN THE MIDDLE?

NORTH

Dan · Asher · Naphtali
Merari

EAST

Judah · Issachar
Zebulun

WEST

Ephraim
Manasseh
Benjamin

Gershon

TABERNACLE

Kohath

Reuben · Simeon · Gad
SOUTH

Moses, Aaron,
and Aaron's sons

“THEY SHALL BE MINE”

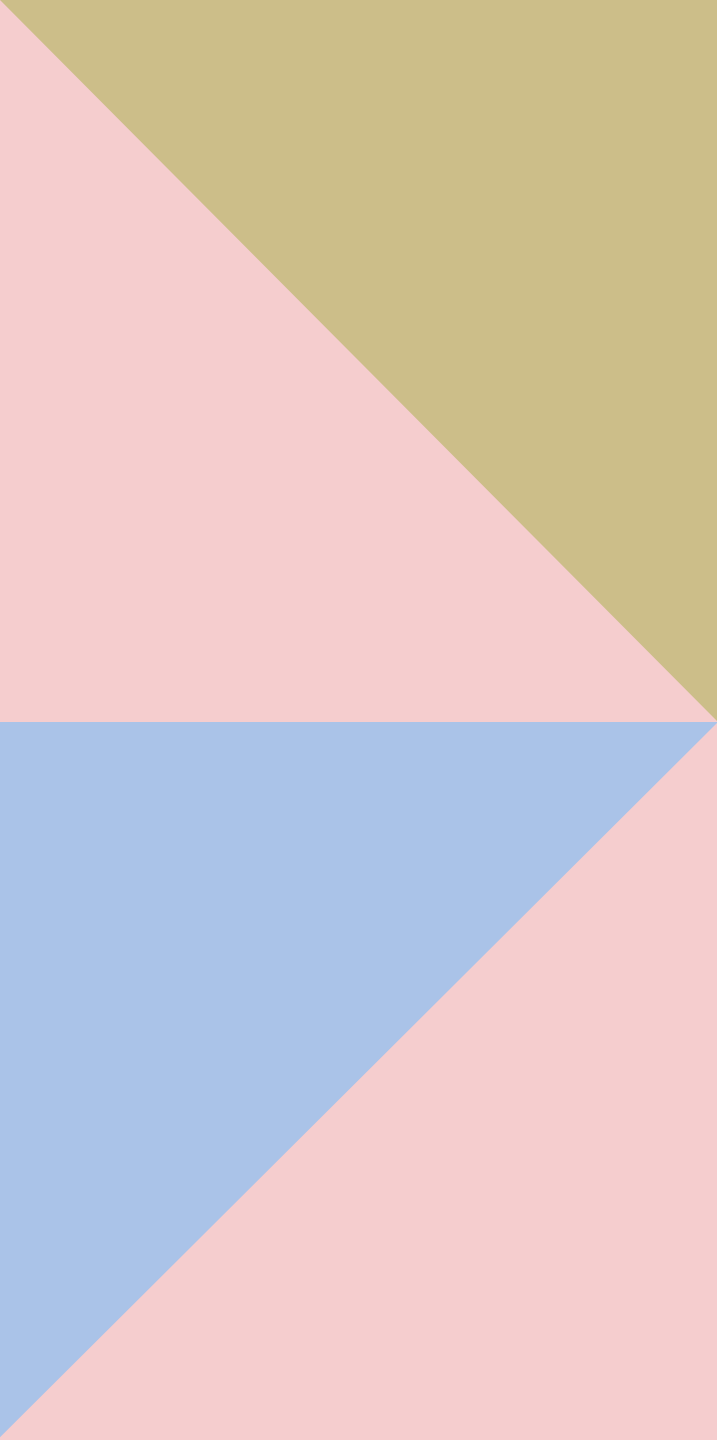
“For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel...”

The Levites take the firstborn’s place. 3:12; 8:16–19

The remaining 273 are redeemed by payment. 3:46–51

Why payment?

Israel’s worship and community life kept Passover deliverance in view. Paul identifies Christ as our Passover sacrifice.



PRIESTS PREPARE LEVITES CARRY

Aaron and his sons cover the holy objects and prepare them for transport.

Kohathites carry them, without touching the holy objects or viewing them uncovered.

Gershon carries curtains and coverings.

Merari carries frames and structural components.

WRONGING YOUR NEIGHBOR

The camp must remain undefiled
because God dwells among them. 5:1–4

Wronging another person is
unfaithfulness to the LORD. 5:6

Confess. Restore what is owed. Add one-fifth. 5:7

Confession and restitution repair breaches
in the community.

JEALOUSY AND NO PROOF

A husband suspects marital unfaithfulness.

There is no witness and she was not caught.

The priest performs the prescribed rite.

The matter is brought before the LORD.

SET APART TO THE LORD

A man or woman may make a special vow.

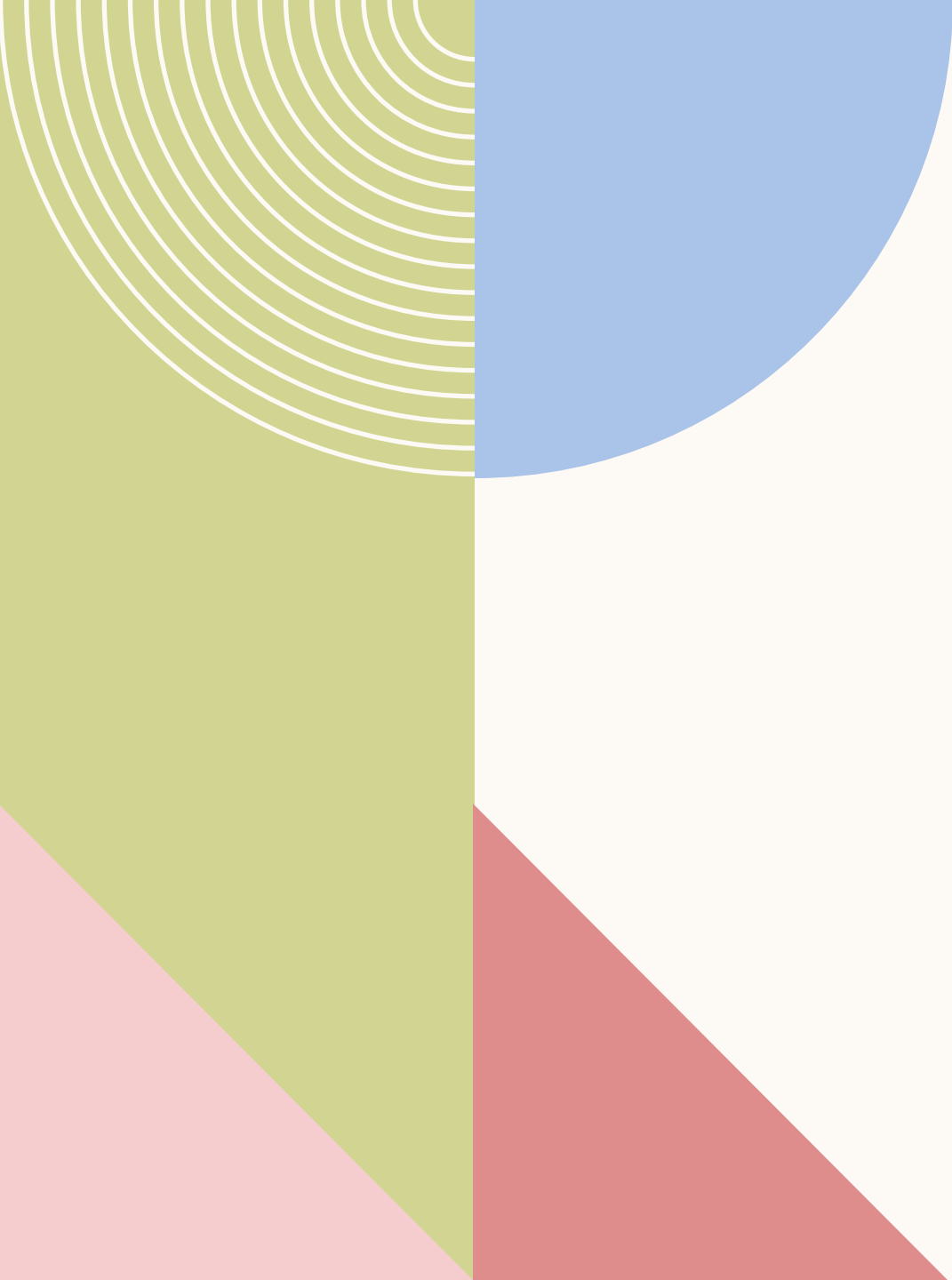
No grape products. No haircut. No contact with the dead.

“All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.”

Explicit: Samson (Judges 13:5)

Likely vow context: Acts 21:23–26

Related: Samuel (1 Samuel 1:11), John (Luke 1:15)



THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

“The LORD bless you, and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine on you,
And be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance on you,
And give you peace.”

DEDICATION OFFERINGS

Each tribe brings the same offering for the altar.

Judah Issachar Zebulun
Reuben Simeon Gad
Ephraim Manasseh Benjamin
Dan Asher Naphtali

Carts and oxen support the work of transport.

Moses enters the tent and hears God's voice. 7:89

PEOPLE PRESENTED FOR SERVICE

The lamps give light before the lampstand. 8:1–4

The Levites are cleansed.

Israel lays hands on them.

Aaron presents them before the LORD.

God gives them to serve on Israel's behalf
and protect the congregation. 8:19

WHEN YOU CAN'T

Some are unclean through contact with a dead person.

“Why are we restrained from presenting the offering of the LORD...?” 9:7

Moses waits for God’s answer.

God provides a second-month Passover for the unclean or those on a distant journey.

This differs from being able but refusing. 9:13

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

PASSOVER SACRIFICE

“Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.” 1 Cor. 5:7

NO BROKEN BONE

Numbers 9:12; Exodus 12:46; John 19:33–36

PARTICIPATION OR REFUSAL

Numbers 9:13; compare Hebrews 10:26–29

LEAVE NONE UNTIL MORNING (Numbers 9:12)

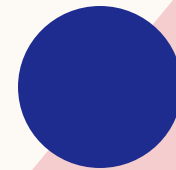
Finality? Resurrection? A question for reflection.

WHEN THE CLOUD MOVED

At the LORD's command they set out.
At the LORD's command they encamped.

Whether the cloud remained days, a month,
or longer, they waited.

Even with God's visible guidance, Israel still
wrestled with trusting, obeying, and waiting for Him.

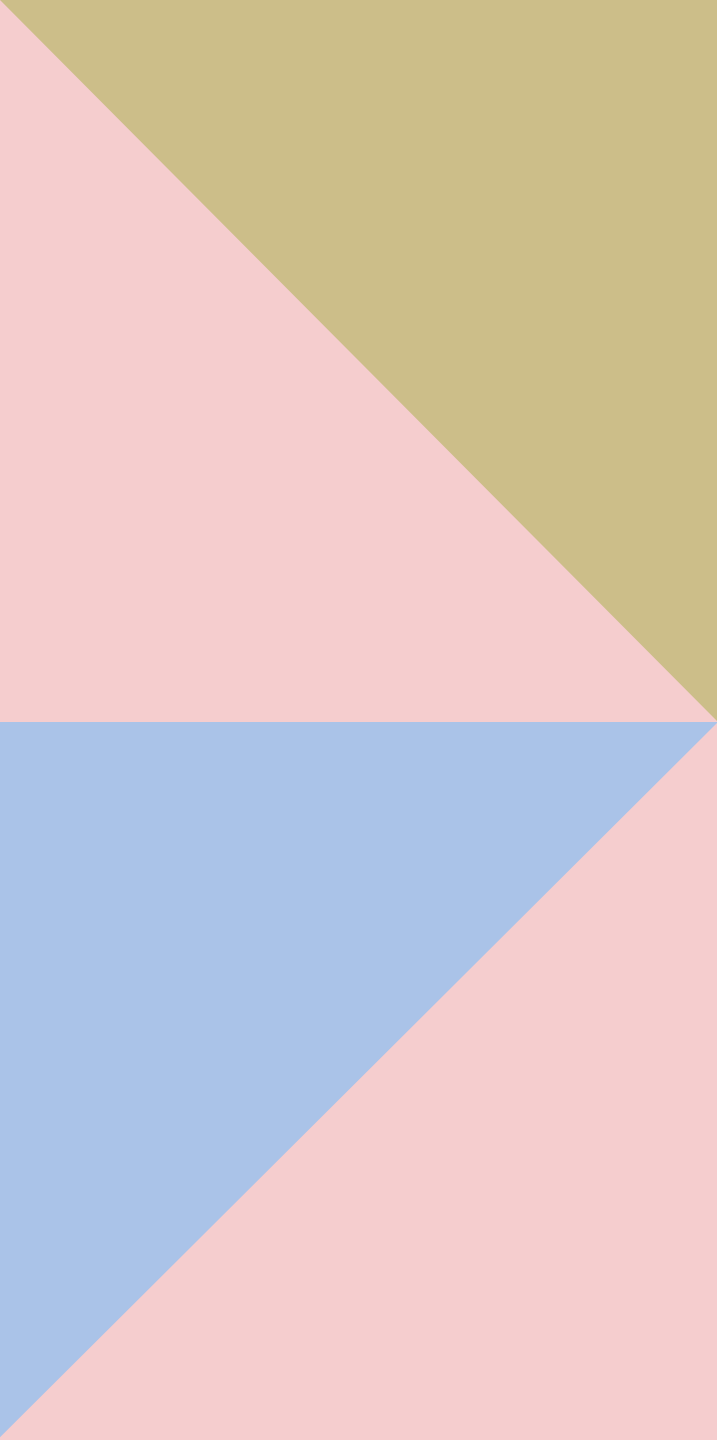


NOW THEY SET OUT

Silver trumpets summon the people
and signal movement. 10:1–10

Judah's group
Gershon and Merari with the tabernacle
Reuben's group
Kohath with the holy objects
Ephraim's group, then Dan's group

“Rise up, O LORD!” 10:35



READY TO TRAVEL WILLING TO FOLLOW?

God has ordered the camp, provided for holiness, blessed His people, and directed their movement.

Then the complaints begin.

What happens when our desires, our limits, and our ambitions collide with God's leading?

“WELL-OFF IN EGYPT”

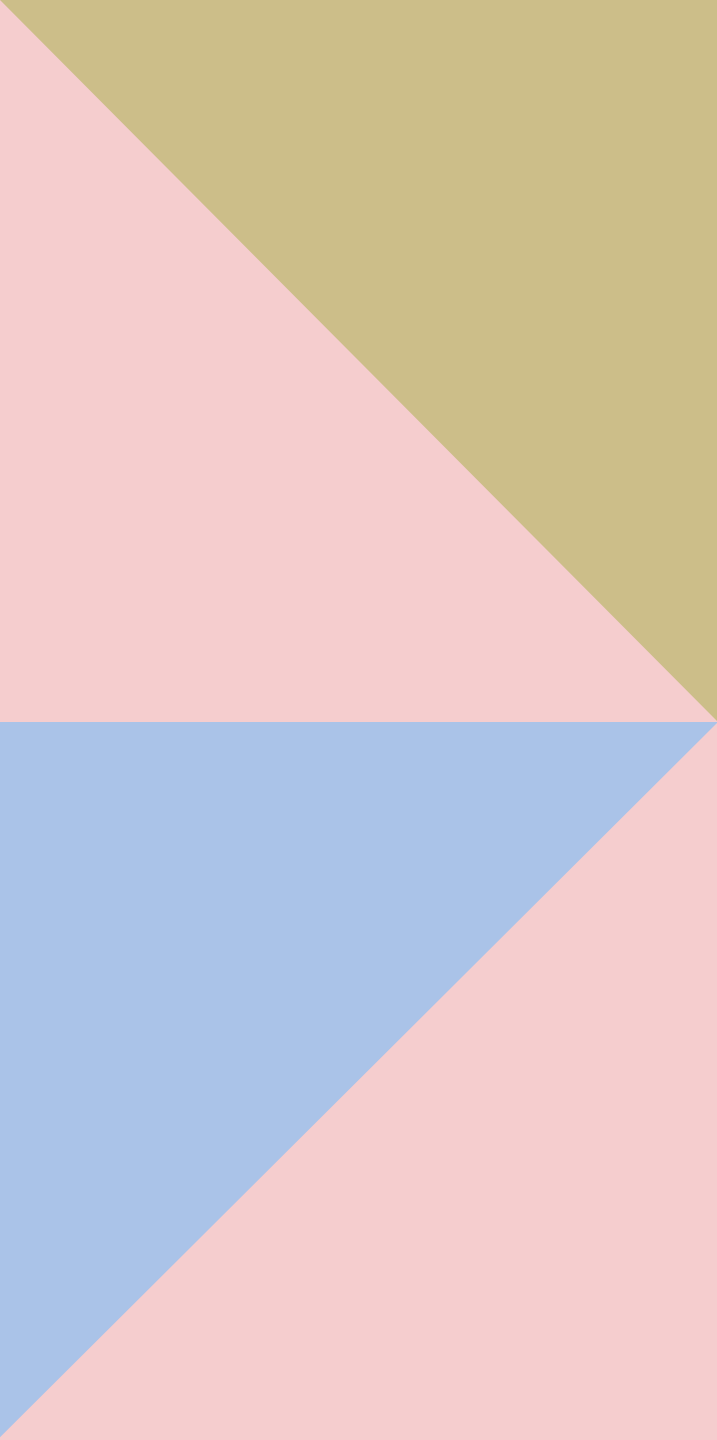
THE PEOPLE’S WORDS

“For it was well-off with us in Egypt.” 11:18

GOD’S DIAGNOSIS

“You have rejected the LORD who is among you...” 11:20

Quail comes. A severe plague follows. 11:31–34



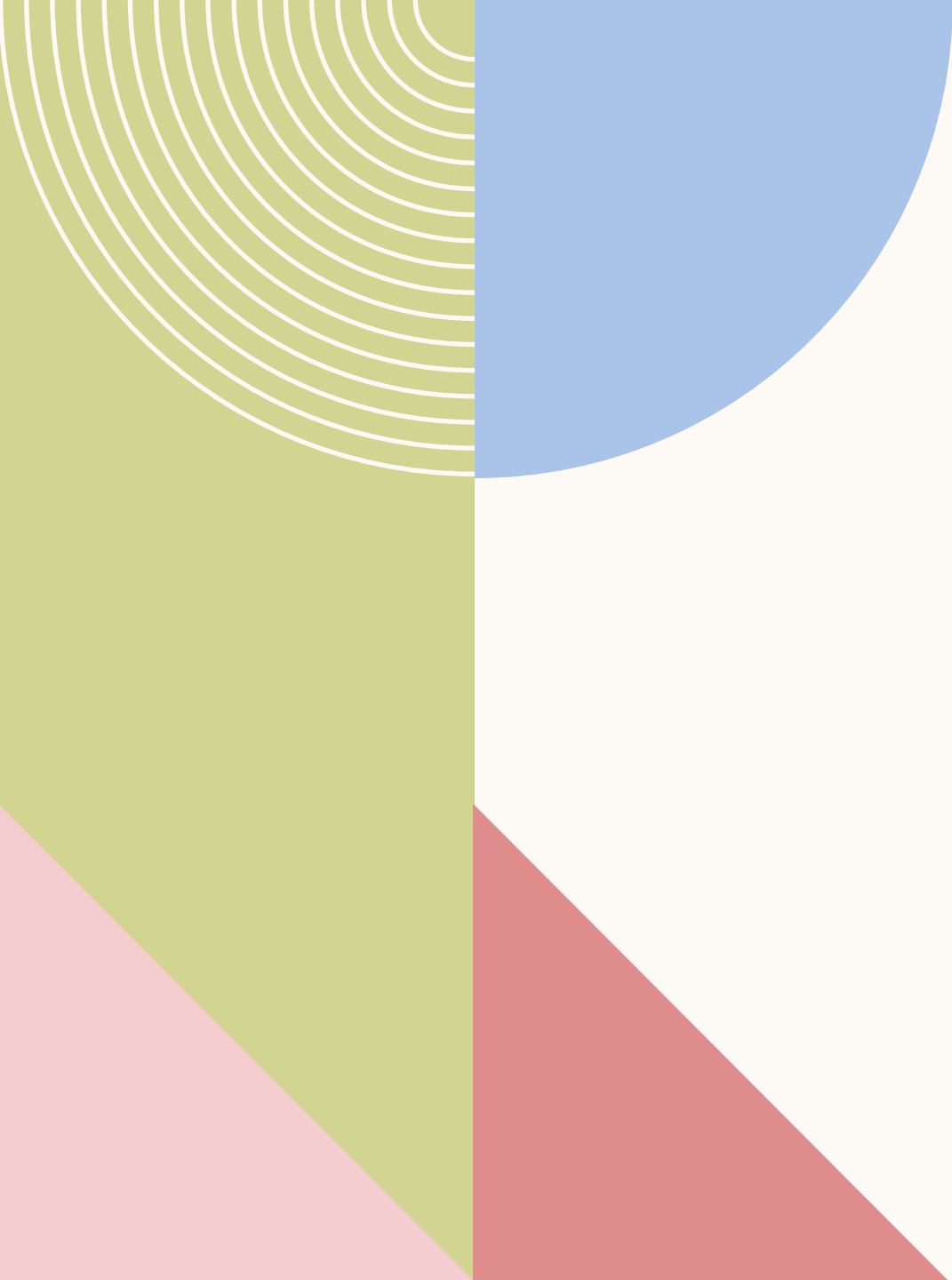
“I CANNOT CARRY ALL THIS PEOPLE ALONE”

The people despise God’s provision.

Moses confesses the weight is too much for him.

God appoints seventy elders
to share the burden.

“Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets,
that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!”

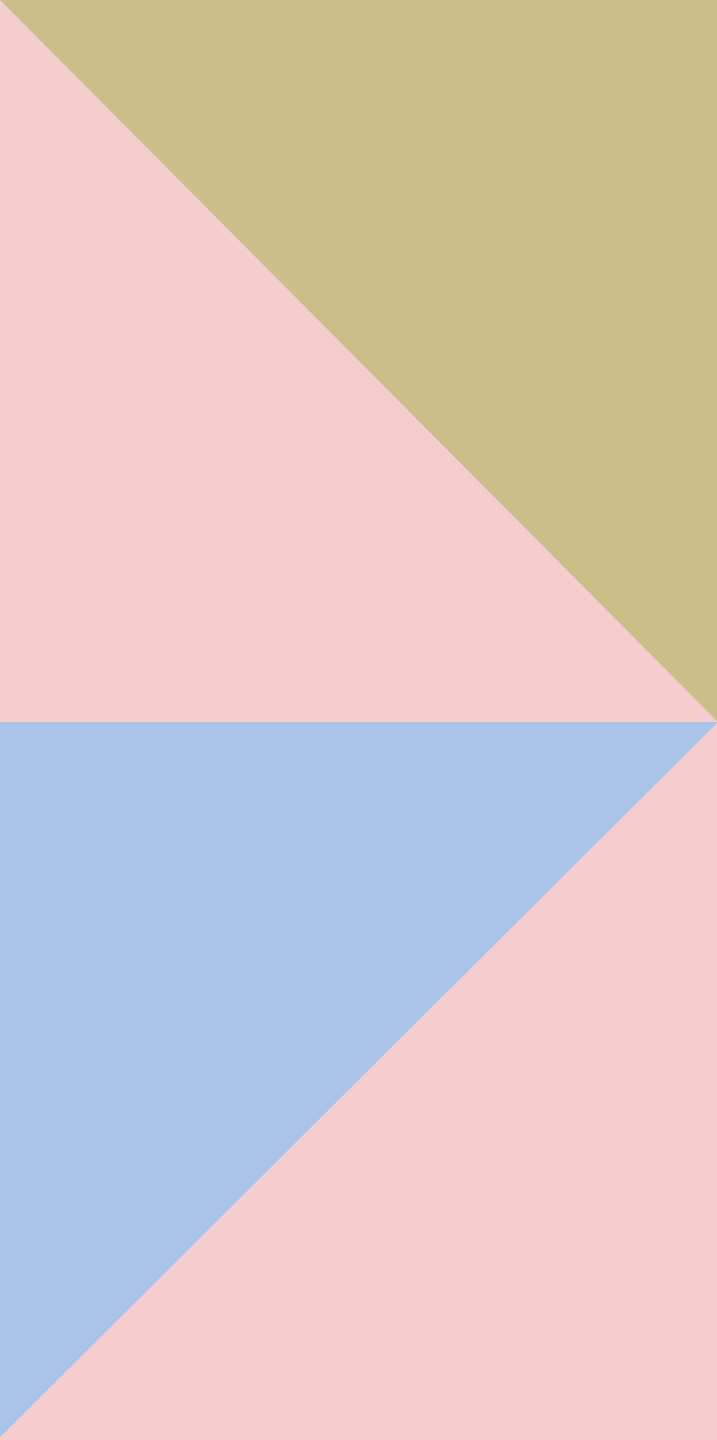


“NOT SO, WITH MY SERVANT MOSES”

“Has the LORD indeed spoken only through
Moses?”

Miriam and Aaron, 12:2

“He is faithful in all My household;
With him I speak mouth to mouth...”
The LORD, 12:7–8



“O GOD, HEAL HER, I PRAY!”

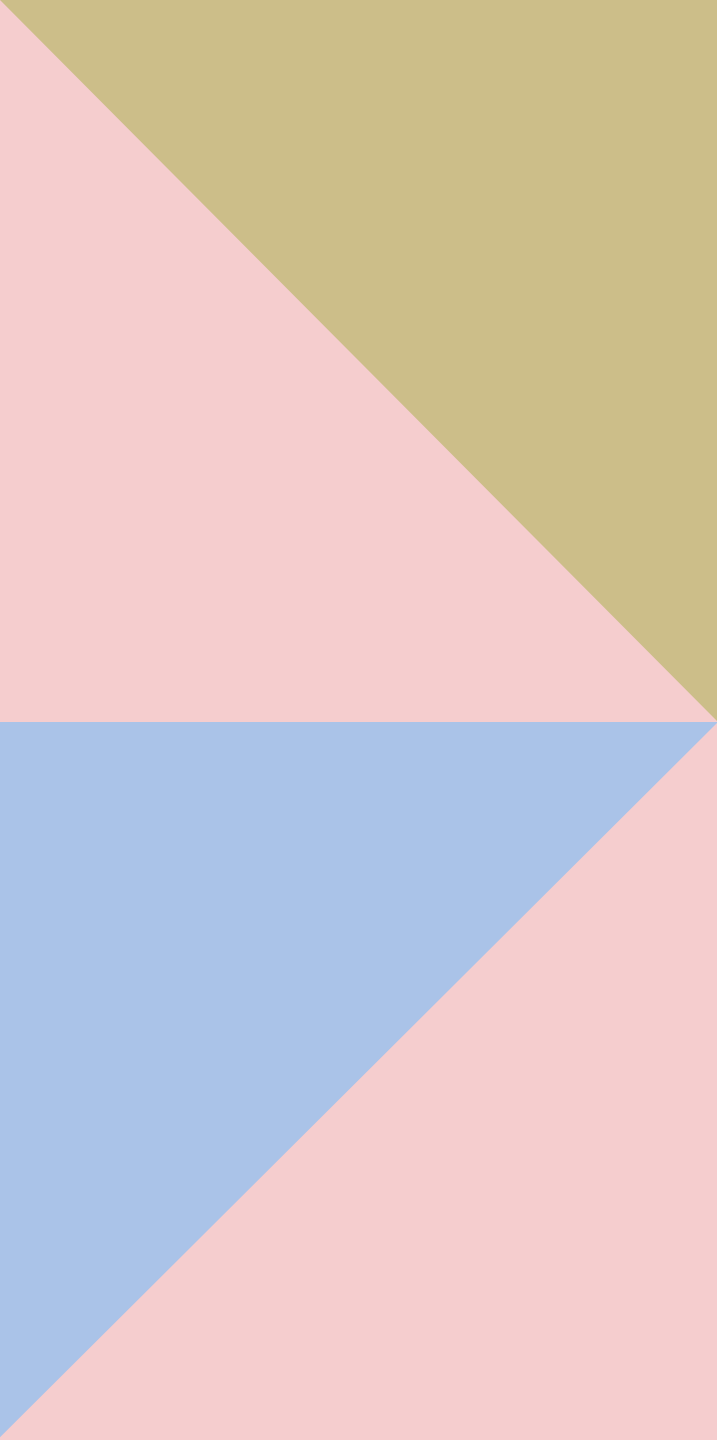
Miriam is stricken.

Aaron acknowledges their sin.

Moses pleads for her healing.

Seven days outside the camp, then brought back.

The people wait until she is brought back.



LIFE WITH GOD IN THEIR MIDST

He brought them out to dwell among them.

He prepared them to move forward with Him.

The wilderness exposed their resistance
and their need for His sustaining care.

Will we receive His provision and His ordering?
Will we move, or wait, with Him?