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Numbers

The book of Numbers continues the story about the people of Israel as they travelled through the desert. In the second year of this journey, not far from Mount Sinai, God spoke to Moses in the Meeting Tent. God told Moses to take a census. This was a record of how many men were in the community. It also included what each man could do. This record would help the Israelites prepare for the difficult journey ahead. Most of the men were able to serve in the army. This was very important because the Israelites faced many enemies. Some from the tribe of Levi were to serve as priests of God in the Meeting Tent. But most of the Levites were to serve as workers who took care of the Holy Tent or as guards for the Tent. God also gave Moses instructions about how the people should live to please him. These instructions would help the Israelites in day-to-day life. They covered things like health problems, marriage problems, crime, military defence and worship.

Once the people were prepared to travel, they began their journey to Paran. And then the complaining began. They complained about not having the food that they used to enjoy. Even though they hated the hard work in Egypt, they really missed the food there. They also complained about Moses being their leader. They were glad to follow him out of Egypt to freedom, but not through the desert. And when God told Moses to send twelve spies to scout out the land of Canaan, all but two doubted that the Israelites could

capture the land. This led to loud demands for a new leader.

All this complaining made the Lord angry because it showed a lack of trust in him. This section of Numbers describes most of the forty years that the Israelites travelled through the desert. God kept them in the desert until a whole generation of those who doubted had died. These were the people who constantly complained and refused to obey.

A new generation of Israelites had to learn from their parents' mistakes. In time, they moved closer to the land God had promised their ancestor Abraham. They went from the area of Kadesh to Moab, east of the Jordan River. There God continued to prepare his people. They would soon be ready to take the land he had promised. God would open the way for them to make it their home again. Numbers ends as it begins, with clear instructions to the people about how to live.

In the book of Numbers, God's people...

Prepare for the journey (1:1 – 10:11)

Begin a forty-year journey filled with hard lessons (10:12 – 21:35)

Prepare to take the land God had promised them (22:1 – 36:13)

Moses Counts the Israelites

1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Meeting Tent. This was in the desert of Sinai. It was on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites left Egypt. He said to Moses, ²“Count all the Israelites. List the name of each man with his family and his family group. ³You and Aaron must count the men who are 20 years old or older, the ones who are able to serve in

the army. List them by their divisions.

⁴One man from each tribe will help you. This man will be the leader of his tribe.

⁵These are the names of the men who will stand with you and help you:

from the tribe of Reuben—Elizur son of Shedeur;

⁶from the tribe of Simeon—Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

⁷from the tribe of Judah—Nahshon son of Amminadab;

⁸from the tribe of Issachar—Nethanel son of Zuar;

⁹from the tribe of Zebulun—Eliab son of Helon;

¹⁰from the descendants of Joseph:

from the tribe of Ephraim—Elishama son of Ammihud;

from the tribe of Manasseh—Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;

¹¹from the tribe of Benjamin—Abidan son of Gideoni;

¹²from the tribe of Dan—Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

¹³from the tribe of Asher—Pagiël son of Ocran;

¹⁴from the tribe of Gad—Eliasaph son of Deuel;*

¹⁵from the tribe of Naphtali—Ahira son of Enan.”

¹⁶All these men were the leaders of their families. The people also chose them to be leaders of their tribes.

¹⁷Moses and Aaron took the men who had been chosen to be leaders ¹⁸and called all the Israelites together on the first day of the second month. Then the people were listed by their families and their family groups. All the men who were 20 years old or older were listed. ¹⁹Moses did exactly what the LORD commanded—he counted the people while they were in the desert of Sinai.

²⁰The tribe of Reuben was counted. (Reuben was the firstborn son of Israel.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²¹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

²²The tribe of Simeon was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

²³The total number of men counted from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

²⁴The tribe of Gad was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

²⁵The total number of men counted from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

²⁶The tribe of Judah was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

²⁷The total number of men counted from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

²⁸The tribe of Issachar was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

²⁹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

³⁰The tribe of Zebulun was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

³¹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

* **1:14 Deuel** Or “Reuel”.

³²The tribe of Ephraim was counted. (Ephraim was Joseph's son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

³³The total number of men counted from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.

³⁴The tribe of Manasseh was counted. (Manasseh was also Joseph's son.) The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁵The total number of men counted from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

³⁶The tribe of Benjamin was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁷The total number of men counted from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

³⁸The tribe of Dan was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

³⁹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

⁴⁰The tribe of Asher was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups.

⁴¹The total number of men counted from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

⁴²The tribe of Naphtali was counted. The names of all the men who were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed by name with their families and family groups. ⁴³The total number of men

counted from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

⁴⁴Moses, Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel counted these men. (There was one leader from each tribe.) ⁴⁵They counted every man who was 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army. Each man was listed with his family. ⁴⁶The total number of men counted was 603,550 men.

⁴⁷The families from the tribe of Levi were not counted with the other Israelites. ⁴⁸The LORD had told Moses: ⁴⁹"Don't count the men from the tribe of Levi or include them with the other Israelites. ⁵⁰Tell the Levites that they are responsible for the Tent of the Agreement. They must take care of that tent and everything that is with it. They must carry the Holy Tent and everything in it. They must make their camp around it and take care of it. ⁵¹Whenever the Holy Tent is moved, the Levites must do it. Whenever the Holy Tent is set up, the Levites must do it. They are the men who will take care of the Holy Tent. Anyone else who tries to take care of the tent must be killed. ⁵²The Israelites will make their camps in separate divisions. Everyone must camp near their family flag. ⁵³The Levites will set up their tents so that they surround the Tent of the Agreement. They will serve as guards and keep the people away from the Tent. This will protect the Israelites from the Lord's anger."

⁵⁴The LORD had given these commandments to Moses. So the Israelites did everything he commanded.

The Camp Arrangement

2 ²The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: ²"The Israelites should make their camps around the Meeting Tent, making sure they are far enough away from it. The tribes will be grouped with their

own divisions. Everyone will camp by the flag of their own family group.

³“The division that Judah leads will camp on the east side of the Holy Tent, where the sun rises. Each tribe will camp by its own flag. The leader of the tribe of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab. ⁴His troops number 74,600 men.

⁵“The tribe of Issachar will camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar. ⁶His troops number 54,400 men.

⁷“The tribe of Zebulun will also camp next to the tribe of Judah. The leader of the tribe of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. ⁸His troops number 57,400 men.

⁹“The total number of men in the three tribes of Judah’s division is 186,400. Judah’s division will be the first group to move when the people travel from one place to another.

¹⁰“The division that Reuben leads will camp south of the Holy Tent. Each tribe will camp by its own flag. The leader of the tribe of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. ¹¹His troops number 46,500 men.

¹²“The tribe of Simeon will camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. ¹³His troops number 59,300 men.

¹⁴“The tribe of Gad will also camp next to the tribe of Reuben. The leader of the tribe of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.† ¹⁵His troops number 45,650 men.

¹⁶“The total number of men in the three tribes of Reuben’s division is 151,450. Reuben’s division will

be the second group to move when the people travel from one place to another.

¹⁷“When the people travel, Levi’s division will move next. They will be between the first two divisions and the last two divisions. All the tribes will travel in the same order that they camp, each with its own flag.

¹⁸“The division that Ephraim leads will camp on the west side of the Holy Tent. Each tribe will camp by its own flag. The leader of the tribe of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. ¹⁹His troops number 40,500 men.

²⁰“The tribe of Manasseh will camp next to the tribe of Ephraim. The leader of the tribe of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. ²¹His troops number 32,200 men.

²²“The tribe of Benjamin will also camp next to the tribe of Ephraim. The leader of the tribe of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni. ²³His troops number 35,400 men.

²⁴“The total number of men in the three tribes of Ephraim’s division is 108,100. Ephraim’s division will be the third group to move when the people travel from one place to another.

²⁵“The division that Dan leads will camp on the north side of the Holy Tent. Each tribe will camp by its own flag. The leader of the tribe of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. ²⁶His troops number 62,700.

²⁷“The tribe of Asher will camp next to the tribe of Dan. The leader of the tribe of Asher is Pagiel son of Ocran. ²⁸His troops number 41,500 men.

†2:14 *Deuel* Or “Reuel”.

²⁹“The tribe of Naphtali will also camp next to the tribe of Dan. The leader of the tribe of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. ³⁰His troops number 53,400 men.

³¹“The total number of men in the three tribes of Dan’s division is 157,600. Dan’s division will be the last to move when the people travel from one place to another. All the tribes will travel as part of their larger divisions.”

³²So these were the Israelites who were counted by families. The total number of Israelite men in the camps, counted by divisions, was 603,550. ³³Moses obeyed the LORD and did not count the Levites with the other Israelites.

³⁴So the Israelites did everything the LORD told Moses. Each family and family group camped and travelled as part of its larger division.

Aaron’s Family, the Priests

3 This is the family history of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD talked to Moses on Mount Sinai.

²Aaron had four sons. Nadab was the firstborn son. Then there were Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ³These sons were the chosen[‡] priests. They were given the special work of serving the LORD as priests. ⁴But Nadab and Abihu died while serving the LORD. They used fire that the LORD did not allow when they made an offering to him. So Nadab and Abihu died there, in the desert of Sinai. They had no sons, so only Eleazar and Ithamar were left to serve the Lord as priests while their father Aaron was still alive.

Levites—the Priests’ Helpers

⁵The LORD said to Moses, ⁶“Bring all the men from the tribe of Levi. Bring them to Aaron the priest. These men will be his helpers. ⁷They will help him by standing guard in front of the Meeting Tent. By guarding the Holy Tent, they will protect all the Israelites from harm. ⁸It is the duty of the Levites to protect everything in the Meeting Tent. And they will also do the work of moving the Tent and everything in it. By doing these things, they will be serving all the Israelites.

⁹“Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites were chosen from all the Israelites to help Aaron and his sons.

¹⁰“Appoint Aaron and his sons to be priests. They must do their duty and serve as priests. Anyone else who tries to come near the holy things[¶] must be killed.”

¹¹The LORD also said to Moses, ^{12–13}“I destroyed all the firstborn in Egypt. At that time I chose all the firstborn from every family in Israel to be mine in a special way. That included all the firstborn men and animals. But now I am choosing the Levites to take their place. Now they will be my special servants. I, the LORD, give this command!”

¹⁴The LORD again said to Moses in the desert of Sinai, ¹⁵“Count all the families and family groups in the tribe of Levi. Count every man or boy who is one month old or older.” ¹⁶So Moses obeyed the LORD. He counted them all.

¹⁷Levi had three sons. Their names were Gershon, Kohath and Merari. ¹⁸Each son was the leader of several family groups.

[‡]3:3 *chosen* Or “anointed”. See anoint in the Word List.

[¶]3:10 *tries ... holy things* Or “tries to serve as a priest”.

The Gershon family groups were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁹The Kohath family groups were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

²⁰The Merari family groups were Mahli and Mushi.

These are the families that belonged to Levi's family groups.

²¹The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. They were the Gershonite family groups.

²²There were 7500 men and boys over one month old in these two family groups. ²³The Gershonite family groups were told to camp in the west. They set up their camp behind the Holy Tent.

²⁴The leader of the family groups of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of Lael.

²⁵In the Meeting Tent, the Gershonites had the job of taking care of the Holy Tent, the outer tent and the covering. They also took care of the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ²⁶They cared for the curtains in the courtyard. And they cared for the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard around the Holy Tent and the altar. And they cared for the ropes used with the curtains. They did all the work of setting up and taking down these things and packing them for travel.

²⁷The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel belonged to the family of Kohath. They were the Kohathite family groups. ²⁸In this family group there were 8300[§] men and boys a month old or over. The Kohathites were given the job of taking care of the things in the Holy Place. ²⁹The Kohathite family groups were given the area to the south of the Holy Tent. This was the area where they camped. ³⁰The leader of the Kohathite family groups was Elizaphan

son of Uzziel. ³¹Their job was to take care of the Holy Box, the table, the lampstand, the altars and the dishes of the Holy Place. They also cared for the curtain in front of the Most Holy Place. They did all the work of setting up and taking down these holy things and packing them for travel.

³²The leader over the leaders of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. Eleazar was in charge of everyone who took care of the holy things.

³³⁻³⁴The family groups of Mahli and Mushi belonged to the Merari family. There were 6200 men and boys who were one month old or older in the Merari family group. ³⁵The leader of the Merari family group was Zuriel son of Abihail. This family group was given the area to the north of the Holy Tent. This is the area where they camped. ³⁶The people from the Merari family were given the job of caring for the frames of the Holy Tent. They cared for all the braces, posts, bases and the tools that were needed. They did all the work of setting up and taking down these things and packing them for travel. ³⁷They also cared for all the posts in the courtyard around the Holy Tent. This included all the bases, tent pegs and ropes.

³⁸Moses, Aaron and his sons camped east of the Holy Tent, in front of the Meeting Tent. They were given the work of caring for the Holy Place. They did this for all the Israelites. Anyone else who came near the Holy Place was to be killed.

³⁹The LORD commanded Moses and Aaron to count all the men and boys one month old or older in Levi's family groups. The total number was 22,000.

[§]3:28 **8300** Some copies of the ancient Greek version have "8300". The Hebrew copies have "8600". See Num. 3:22,28,34,39.

Levites Take the Place of the Firstborn

⁴⁰The LORD said to Moses, “Count all the firstborn men and boys in Israel who are at least one month old. Write their names on a list. ⁴¹I am the LORD. I will take the Levites instead of all the firstborn men and boys of Israel. I will also take the animals from the Levites instead of taking all the firstborn animals from the other people in Israel.”

⁴²So Moses did what the LORD commanded. He counted all the firstborn children of the Israelites. ⁴³He listed all the firstborn men and boys who were one month old or older. There were 22,273 names on that list.

⁴⁴The LORD also said to Moses, ⁴⁵“I, the LORD, give this command: Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn men from the other families of Israel. And I will take the animals of the Levites instead of the animals of the other people. The Levites are mine. ⁴⁶There are 22,000 Levites, but there are 22,273 firstborn sons from the other families. This leaves 273 more firstborn sons than Levites. ⁴⁷Using the official measure, collect 5 pieces** of silver for each of the 273 people. (Each piece of silver by the official measure weighs 11 grammes.†) Collect that silver from the Israelites. ⁴⁸Give the silver to Aaron and his sons as payment for the 273 Israelites.”

⁴⁹There were not enough Levites to take the place of all the men from the other family groups, so Moses gathered the money for them. ⁵⁰Moses collected the silver from the firstborn men of the Israelites. He collected 1365 pieces‡ of silver, using the official measure. ⁵¹Moses obeyed the LORD’s command

and gave the silver to Aaron and his sons. He did it just as the LORD had told him.

The Jobs of the Kohath Family

4 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²“Count the men in the families of the Kohath family groups. (The Kohath family groups are part of Levi’s family groups.) ³Count all the men from 30 to 50 years old who come to serve. These men will work in the Meeting Tent. ⁴Their job is to carry the most holy things.

⁵“When the Israelites travel to a new place, Aaron and his sons must go into the Meeting Tent and take down the curtain and cover the Box of the Agreement with it. ⁶Then they must cover all of this with covering made from fine leather. And over this they must spread a solid blue cloth and put the poles in the rings on the Holy Box.

⁷“Then they must spread a blue cloth over the table for the holy bread. And on the cloth, they must put the plates, spoons and bowls, and the jars for drink offerings as well as the holy bread. ⁸They must put a red cloth over all these things, cover everything with fine leather and put the poles in the rings of the table.

⁹“Then they must use another blue cloth to cover the lampstand. They must cover its lamps, lamp snuffers and trays, and the jars of oil that are used in the lamps. ¹⁰Then they must wrap everything in fine leather. Then they must put all these things on the frame used for carrying them.

¹¹“They must spread a blue cloth over the gold altar. They must cover that with

**3:47 5 pieces Literally, “five shekels”.

††3:47 11 grammes Literally, “20 gerahs”.

‡‡3:50 1365 pieces Literally, “1365 shekels”.

fine leather. Then they must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

¹²“Then they must gather together all the things that are used for serving in the Holy Place. They must wrap them in a blue cloth and cover them with fine leather. They must put these things on the frame used for carrying them.

¹³“They must clean the ashes out of the bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it. ¹⁴Then they must gather together all the things that are used for worship at the altar. These are the firepans, forks, shovels and the bowls. They must put these things on the bronze altar. Then they must spread a covering of fine leather over the altar and put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

¹⁵“Aaron and his sons must finish covering all the holy things in the Holy Place. Then the men from the Kohath family can go in and begin carrying these things. In this way they will not touch the holy things and die.

¹⁶“Eleazar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for the Holy Tent. He will be responsible for everything in it, including the holy things. He will be responsible for the oil for the lamp, the sweet-smelling incense, the daily offering,^f and the anointing oil.”

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ¹⁸“Be careful! Don’t let these Kohathite family groups be destroyed. ¹⁹You must do these things so that the Kohathite men will not die from touching the most holy things. Aaron and his sons must go in and show each Kohathite man what to do and what to carry. ²⁰If you don’t do this, the Kohathite men might go in and look at the holy things. If they see

them uncovered, even for a moment, they must die.”

The Jobs of the Gershon Family

²¹The LORD said to Moses, ²²“Count the Gershonites, and list them by families and family groups. ²³Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old who come to serve. These men will have the job of caring for the Meeting Tent.

²⁴“This is what the Gershonite families must do and the things they must carry: ²⁵they must carry the curtains of the Holy Tent, the Meeting Tent with its covering and the covering made from fine leather. They must also carry the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ²⁶They must carry the curtains of the courtyard that are around the Holy Tent and the altar. And they must carry the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard. They must also carry all the ropes and all the things that are used with the curtains. The Gershonite men will be responsible for anything that needs to be done to repair these things. ²⁷Aaron and his sons will give orders to the Gershonites for all their work and for what they are responsible to carry. ²⁸This is the work that the men of the Gershonite family groups must do for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.

The Jobs of the Merari Family

²⁹“Count all the men in the families and family groups in the Merari family group. ³⁰Count all the men who are from 30 to 50 years old and come to serve. These men will do a special work for the Meeting Tent. ³¹When you travel, it is their job to carry the frames of the Meeting Tent. They must carry the braces, the posts and the bases. ³²They must also

^f4:16 *daily offering* Offerings that were made twice each day as a gift to God.

carry the posts that are around the courtyard. They must carry the bases, the tent pegs, the ropes and everything that is used for the poles around the courtyard. List the names and tell each man exactly what he must carry. ³³This is what the people from the Merari family groups will do to serve in the work for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work.”

The Levite Families

³⁴Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the Israelites counted the Kohathites. They counted them by families and family groups. ³⁵They counted all the men from 30 to 50 years old who were able to serve. These men were given special work to do for the Meeting Tent.

³⁶There were 2750 men in the Kohath family groups who were qualified to do this work. ³⁷So these men from the Kohath family groups were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD had told Moses to do.

³⁸Also, the Gershonite men were counted by families and family groups. ³⁹All the men from 30 to 50 years old who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. ⁴⁰There were 2630 men in the families and family groups of Gershon who were qualified. ⁴¹So these men from the Gershon family groups were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD had told Moses to do.

⁴²Also, the men in the families and family groups of the Merari family were counted. ⁴³All the men from 30 to 50 years old who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. ⁴⁴There were 3200 men in the Merari

family groups who were qualified. ⁴⁵So these men from the Merari family groups were given their special work. Moses and Aaron did this the way the LORD told Moses to do.

⁴⁶So Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the Israelites counted all the people in Levi’s tribe. They had counted each family and each family group. ⁴⁷All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 who qualified to serve were counted. These men were given a special work to do for the Meeting Tent. They did the work of carrying the Meeting Tent when they travelled. ⁴⁸The total number was 8580. ⁴⁹Each man was counted just as the LORD commanded Moses. Each man was given his own work and told what he must carry just as the LORD had said.

Rules About Cleanliness

5 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the people to send away from the camp anyone who is unclean, that is, anyone who has a dreaded skin disease or discharge and anyone who has touched a dead body. ³Whether they are a man or a woman, send them away so that the camp where I am living among you will not be made unclean.”

⁴So the Israelites obeyed God’s command. They sent those people outside the camp. They did what the LORD had told Moses.

Paying for Doing Wrong

⁵The LORD said to Moses, ⁶“Tell this to the Israelites: Any of you, man or woman, might do something wrong to another person. And then you might sin against the LORD by using his name to swear that you didn’t do anything wrong. Later, when you feel guilty, ⁷you must confess that sin. Then you must make full payment for the wrong you did. And you must add one-fifth to the

value of what you took and give it all to the person you wronged. ⁸But maybe the person is dead and does not have any close relatives to accept the payment. In that case, you will give the payment to the LORD. That is, you will give the full payment to be used by the priest. You must also bring a ram for a sacrifice, and the priest will offer it for you to remove your sin against the LORD.

⁹“If any of you Israelites gives a special gift to God, the priest who accepts that gift can keep it for himself. ¹⁰Each priest may keep the gifts he receives. Every gift given to a priest belongs to that priest.”

Jealous Husbands

¹¹Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹²“Tell the Israelites this: Here’s what a man should do if he thinks his wife has been unfaithful to him. ¹³She might have sex with another man without her husband or anyone else knowing about it. If this happens, she has made herself impure. But she was not caught, so no one could tell her husband what she had done. ¹⁴But he might become jealous and begin to think that his wife has been unfaithful, whether or not she has done anything to make herself impure. ¹⁵If that happens, he must take his wife to the priest. The husband must also take an offering of one kilogramme^{§§} of barley flour. He must not pour oil or incense on the barley flour. This barley flour is a grain offering to the LORD that is given because the husband is jealous. This offering will show that he thinks his wife has been unfaithful to him.

¹⁶“The priest will take the woman before the LORD and make her stand there.

¹⁷Then he will take some holy water and put it in a clay jar. He will put some dirt from the floor of the Holy Tent into the water. ¹⁸He will force the woman to stand before the LORD. Then he will loosen her hair and put the grain offering in her hand. This is the barley flour that her husband gave because he was jealous. At the same time, he will hold the clay jar of water. This is the bitter water that can bring trouble to the woman.

¹⁹“Then the priest will make the woman promise to tell the truth and say to her: ‘If you have not had sex with another man, and if you have not sinned against your husband while you were married to him, then this water that causes trouble will not hurt you. ²⁰But if you have sinned against your husband—if you had sex with a man who is not your husband—then you are impure. ²¹If that is true, you will have much trouble when you drink this special water. You will not be able to have children.* And the LORD will cause your people to speak evil of you and curse you.’

“Then the priest must tell the woman to make an oath. She must agree for the LORD to cause these things to happen to her if she lies. ²²The priest must say, ‘You must drink this water that causes trouble. If you have sinned, you will not be able to have children.’ And the woman should say, ‘I agree to do as you say.’

²³“The priest should write these warnings on a scroll. Then he should wash the words off into the water. ²⁴Then the woman must drink the water that brings trouble. This water will enter her and,

^{§§}5:15 *one kilogramme* Literally, “1/10 of an *ephah*”.

*5:21 *You will ... children* Or “If you are pregnant now, your baby will die.” Literally, “Your loins will fall and your belly will swell.” Also in verse 22.

if she is guilty, it will cause her much suffering.

²⁵“Then the priest will take the grain offering from her (the offering for jealousy) and raise it before the LORD. Then he will carry it to the altar. ²⁶The priest will fill his hands with some of the grain and put it on the altar and let it burn there. After that, he will tell the woman to drink the water. ²⁷If the woman has sinned against her husband, when she drinks the water, it will cause her great suffering. It will make her unable to have children.[†] And her people will speak evil of her and curse her. ²⁸But if the woman has not sinned against her husband and she is pure, the water will not hurt her. She will still be able to have children.

²⁹“So this is the law for cases of jealousy. This is what you should do when it seems that a woman has sinned against her husband. ³⁰Or if the man becomes jealous and thinks his wife has sinned against him, this is what the man should do. The priest must tell her to stand before the LORD. Then the priest will do all these things. This is the law. ³¹Whether the woman is guilty or not, the husband will not be punished. But if the woman is guilty, she will face God’s punishment.”

Nazirites

6 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Tell the Israelites this: If there are people, men or women, who want to make a vow dedicating themselves to the LORD as Nazirites for a time, this is what they must do: ³They must stay away from wine or beer. They must not drink vinegar that is made from wine or from beer. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. ⁴During that special time of dedication, they must not eat

anything that comes from grapes. They must not even eat the seeds or the skins from grapes.

⁵“During the time of their Nazirite vow they must not cut their hair. They must be holy until this time of special dedication to the LORD is ended. They must let their hair grow long.

⁶“They must not go near a dead body at any time during the period for which they have given themselves fully to the LORD. ⁷They must not let themselves be made unclean in this way, even if it is their own father, mother, brother or sister who has died. This is because the hair on their head shows that they are dedicated to God! ⁸They are holy because they have given themselves fully to the LORD for the full time of that dedication. ⁹And if they are with someone who suddenly dies, they will be unclean and will have to shave the hair from their head. They must do that on the seventh day of their purification ceremony when they are made clean. ¹⁰Then on the eighth day, they must bring two doves or two young pigeons and give them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ¹¹Then the priest will offer one bird as a sin offering and the other one as a burnt offering. The sin offering will remove their guilt for being too near a dead body during the special time of dedication. Then they must let the hair on their head grow again as a sign of dedication. ¹²This means they must again give themselves to the LORD for another time of dedication. They must bring a one-year-old male lamb to offer as a guilt offering. They must start again from the beginning with a new time of dedication because they touched a dead body during their time of dedication.

[†]5:27 *make ... children* Or “cause any baby that is in her to die”. Literally, “Her loins will fall and her belly will swell.”

¹³“After their time of dedication is over, Nazirites must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent ¹⁴and give their offering to the LORD. Their offering must be:

a one-year-old male lamb that has nothing wrong with it for a burnt offering;
a one-year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it for a sin offering;

a ram that has nothing wrong with it for a fellowship offering;

¹⁵a basket of bread made without yeast—bread made with fine flour mixed with oil and wafers with oil spread on top;

and the grain offerings and drink offerings that are a part of these gifts.

¹⁶“The priest will give these things to the LORD, and then the priest will make the sin offering and the burnt offering.

¹⁷He will give the basket of bread without yeast to the LORD. Then he will kill the ram as a fellowship offering to the Lord. He will give it to the Lord with the grain offering and the drink offering.

¹⁸“The Nazirites must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. There they must shave off their hair that they grew as a dedication to the Lord. That hair will be put in the fire that is burning under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

¹⁹“After the Nazirites have cut off their hair, the priest will give them a boiled shoulder from the ram and a large and a small cake from the basket. Both of these cakes are made without yeast.

²⁰Then the priest will lift these things up to show that they were presented before the LORD. These things are holy and belong to the priest. Also, the ram’s breast and thigh that were lifted up and pre-

sented belong to the priest. After that, the Nazirites can drink wine.

²¹“These are the rules for those who decide to make the Nazirite vow. They must give all these gifts to the LORD. But they might be able to give much more. If they promise to do more, they must keep their promise. But they must give at least all the things listed in these rules for the Nazirite vow.”

The Priests’ Blessings

²²The LORD said to Moses, ²³“Tell Aaron and his sons that when they bless the Israelites, this is what they should say:

²⁴“May the LORD bless you and keep you safe.

²⁵May the LORD smile down on you[‡] and show you his kindness.

²⁶May the LORD answer your prayers[¶] and give you peace.

²⁷In this way Aaron and his sons will use my name to give a blessing to the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Dedicating the Holy Tent

7 Moses finished setting up the Holy Tent. On that day he dedicated it to God. Moses anointed the Tent and everything in it. He also anointed the altar and all the things used with it.

²Then the leaders of Israel gave offerings to God. These men were the leaders of their families and leaders of their tribes. These were the same men who were in charge of counting the people.

³These leaders brought gifts and gave them to the LORD in front of the Holy Tent. They brought six covered carts and twelve oxen for pulling the carts. Each

[‡]6:25 *May ... on you* Literally, “May the LORD make his face shine on you.”

[¶]6:26 *May ... prayers* Literally, “May the LORD lift his face to you,” that is, “May he accept you into his presence and grant your request.”

leader gave an ox and joined with another leader to give a cart.

⁴The LORD said to Moses, ⁵“Accept these gifts from the leaders. These gifts can be used to pay for the work of moving the Meeting Tent. Give them to the Levites for the different jobs done by each family group.”

⁶So Moses accepted the carts and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. ⁷He gave two carts and four oxen to the men in Gershon’s group. They needed the carts and the oxen for their work.

⁸Then Moses gave four carts and eight oxen to the men in Merari’s group. They needed the carts and oxen for their work. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest was responsible for the work of all these men.

⁹Moses did not give any oxen or carts to the men in Kohath’s group, because their job was to carry the holy things on their shoulders.

¹⁰When Moses anointed the altar, the leaders brought offerings for its dedication. They gave their offerings to the Lord at the altar. ¹¹The LORD told Moses, “Each day one leader must bring his gift for the dedication of the altar.”

¹²⁻⁸³§Each of the twelve leaders brought these gifts:

Each leader brought one silver plate that weighed about 1.5 kilogrammes.** Each leader brought one silver bowl that weighed almost 1 kilogramme.†† Both of these gifts were weighed by the official measure. The bowl and the plate were each filled with fine flour mixed with oil. This was to be used as a grain offering.

Each leader also brought a large gold spoon that weighed 115 grammes.‡‡ The spoon was filled with incense.

Each leader also brought 1 young bull, 1 ram and 1 male lamb a year old. These animals were for a burnt offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader brought 2 cattle, 5 rams, 5 male goats and 5 male lambs a year old. All of them were sacrificed for a fellowship offering.

On the first day, the leader of the tribe of Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab brought his gifts.

On the second day, the leader of the tribe of Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar brought his gifts.

On the third day, the leader of the tribe of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon brought his gifts.

On the fourth day, the leader of the tribe of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur brought his gifts.

On the fifth day, the leader of the tribe of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai brought his gifts.

On the sixth day, the leader of the tribe of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel^{¶¶} brought his gifts.

On the seventh day, the leader of the tribe of Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammi-hud brought his gifts.

On the eighth day, the leader of the tribe of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur brought his gifts.

On the ninth day, the leader of the tribe of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni brought his gifts.

§7:12-83 In the Hebrew text each leader’s gift is listed separately. But the text is the same for each gift, so these verses have been combined for easier reading.

**7:12-83 1.5 kilogrammes Literally, “130 shekels”. Also in verse 85.

††7:12-83 1 kilogramme Literally, “70 shekels”. Also in verse 85.

‡‡7:12-83 115 grammes Literally, “10 shekels”. Also in verse 86.

¶¶7:12-83 Deuel Or “Reuel”.

On the tenth day, the leader of the tribe of Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishad-dai brought his gifts.

On the eleventh day, the leader of the tribe of Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran brought his gifts.

On the twelfth day, the leader of the tribe of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan brought his gifts.

⁸⁴ So all these things were the gifts from the leaders of the Israelites. They brought them during the time that Moses dedicated the altar by anointing it. They brought 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls and 12 gold spoons. ⁸⁵ Each silver plate weighed about 1.5 kilogrammes. And each bowl weighed almost 1 kilogramme. The silver plates and the silver bowls together all weighed 27 kilogrammes, ⁸⁸ using the official measure. ⁸⁶ The 12 gold spoons filled with incense weighed 115 grammes each, using the official measure. The 12 gold spoons all together weighed about 1.5 kilogrammes.*

⁸⁷ The total number of animals for the burnt offering was 12 bulls, 12 rams and 12 one-year-old male lambs. There were also the grain offerings that must be given with these offerings. And there were 12 male goats to be used for a sin offering. ⁸⁸ The leaders also gave animals to be killed and used as a fellowship offering. The total number of these animals was 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats and 60 one-year-old male lambs. In this way they dedicated the altar after Moses had anointed it.

⁸⁹ When Moses went into the Meeting Tent to speak to the Lord, he heard the Lord's voice speaking to him. The voice

was coming from the area between the two winged creatures on the cover on top of the Box of the Agreement. In this way the Lord spoke to Moses.

The Lampstand

8 The LORD said to Moses, ² "Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps in the place I showed you. These lamps will light the area in front of the lampstand."

³ Aaron did this. He put the lamps in the right place so that they lighted the area in front of the lampstand. He obeyed the command that the LORD gave Moses. ⁴ This is how the lampstand was made: It was made from hammered gold, all the way from the gold base at the bottom to the gold flowers at the top. It looked just like the pattern that the LORD had shown to Moses.

Dedicating the Levites

⁵ The LORD said to Moses, ⁶ "Separate the Levites from the other Israelites. Make these Levites clean. ⁷ This is what you should do to make them clean: Sprinkle the special water from the sin offering on them. This water will make them clean. Then they must shave their bodies and wash their clothes. This will make their bodies clean.

⁸ "They must take a young bull and the grain offering that must be offered with it. This grain offering will be flour mixed with oil. Then take another young bull for a sin offering. ⁹ Bring the Levites to the area in front of the Meeting Tent. Then bring all the Israelites together at that place. ¹⁰ Bring the Levites before the LORD. The Israelites will put their hands on them.† ¹¹ Aaron will give the Levites

§§7:85 27 kilogrammes Literally, "2400 shekels".

*7:86 1.5 kilogrammes Literally, "120 shekels".

†8:10 put their hands on them This showed that the people shared in appointing the Levites to their special work.

to the LORD as an offering from the Israelites. Then the Levites will be ready to do their special work for the LORD.

¹²“Tell the Levites to put their hands on the heads of the bulls. One bull will be a sin offering and the other bull will be used as a burnt offering to the LORD. These offerings will make the Levites pure. ¹³Tell the Levites to stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give the Levites to the LORD. They will be like an offering. ¹⁴This will make the Levites holy. They will be different from the other Israelites. The Levites will belong to me.

¹⁵“So make the Levites pure and give them to the Lord as a special offering.[‡] After you do this, they can come and do their work at the Meeting Tent. ¹⁶The Israelites will give me the Levites. They will belong to me. In the past I told every Israelite family to give me their firstborn son. But now I am taking the Levites in place of these firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. ¹⁷Every firstborn in Israel—man or animal—is mine, because I killed all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt. And I chose to take the firstborn sons to belong to me. ¹⁸But now I will take the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. ¹⁹I chose the Levites from among all the Israelites. And I give them as gifts to Aaron and his sons. I want them to do the hard work at the Meeting Tent for all the Israelites. They will take all the risks of this work in place of the other Israelites. Then no great sickness or trouble will come to the Israelites for touching any of the holy things used in the Tent.”

²⁰So Moses, Aaron and all the Israelites obeyed the LORD. They did with the Levites everything that the

Lord commanded Moses. ²¹The Levites made themselves clean and washed their clothes. Then Aaron gave them to the LORD as special offerings. Aaron gave the offerings that covered their sins and made them pure. ²²After that, the Levites came to the Meeting Tent to do their work. Aaron and his sons watched them. They were responsible for the work of the Levites. Aaron and his sons did what the LORD commanded Moses.

²³Then the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴“This is a special command for the Levites: Every Levite man who is 25 years old or older must come and share in the work at the Meeting Tent. ²⁵But when a man is 50 years old, he will retire from this hard work. ²⁶Men who are at least 50 years old will be on duty to help their brothers, but they will not do the work themselves. That is what you must do for the Levites so that they can do their duty.”

Passover

9 The LORD spoke to Moses in the desert of Sinai. This was during the first month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said to Moses, ²“The Israelites must celebrate Passover at the chosen time. ³They must offer the Passover sacrifice just before dark on the fourteenth day of this month. They must do this at the chosen time, and they must follow all the rules about Passover.”

⁴So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate Passover. ⁵The people did this in the desert of Sinai just before dark on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶But some of the people could not celebrate Passover that day. They were

[‡]8:15 *special offering* Literally, “a lifted offering”. Also in verse 21.

unclean because they had touched a dead body. So they went to Moses and Aaron that day ⁷ and said to Moses, “We touched a dead body and became unclean. But why must we be kept from offering our gifts to the LORD at the chosen time with the rest of the Israelites?”

⁸ Moses said to them, “Wait here until I find out what the LORD says you must do.”

⁹ Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰ “Tell the Israelites this: It might happen that you or your descendants cannot celebrate the LORD’s Passover at the right time. Someone might be unclean because they touched a dead body, or they might be away on a trip. They will still be able to celebrate Passover at another time. ¹¹ They must offer the Passover sacrifice just before dark on the fourteenth day of the second month. At that time they must eat the lamb, the bread made without yeast and the bitter herbs. ¹² They must not leave any of the Passover lamb until the next morning. And they must not break any of the bones of the lamb. They must follow all the rules about Passover. ¹³ Anyone who is clean and not away on a trip must celebrate Passover at the right time. If they do not offer the Passover sacrifice, they must be separated from their people. They are guilty and must be punished because they did not give the Passover sacrifice to the LORD at the right time.

¹⁴ “An immigrant living among you might want to share in the LORD’s Passover with you. This is allowed, but that person must follow all the rules about Passover. The same rules are for everyone.”

The Cloud and the Fire

¹⁵ On the day the Holy Tent, the Tent of the Agreement, was set up, a cloud

covered it. At night the cloud over the Holy Tent looked like fire. ¹⁶ The cloud stayed over the Holy Tent all the time. And at night the cloud looked like fire. ¹⁷ When the cloud moved from its place over the Holy Tent, the Israelites followed it. When the cloud stopped, that is the place where the Israelites camped. ¹⁸ This was the way the LORD showed the Israelites when to move and when to stop and set up camp. While the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent, the people continued to camp in that same place. ¹⁹ Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Holy Tent for a long time. The Israelites obeyed the LORD and did not move. ²⁰ Sometimes the cloud was over the Holy Tent for only a few days. So the people obeyed the LORD’s command—they followed the cloud when it moved. ²¹ Sometimes the cloud stayed only during the night—the next morning the cloud moved. So the people gathered their things and followed it. If the cloud moved, during the day or during the night, they followed it. ²² If the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent for two days, a month or a year, the people stayed at that place. They did not leave until the cloud moved. When the cloud rose from its place and moved, they also moved. ²³ So the people obeyed the LORD’s commands. They camped when the LORD told them to, and they moved when he told them to. They watched carefully and obeyed the LORD’s commands to Moses.

The Silver Trumpets

10 The LORD said to Moses, ² “Make two trumpets. Use silver and hammer it to make the trumpets. These trumpets will be for calling the people together and for telling them when it is time to move the camp. ³ If you blow long blasts on both trumpets, all the

people must meet together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ⁴But if you blow long blasts on only one trumpet, only the leaders will come to meet with you. (These are the leaders of the twelve tribes of Israel.)

⁵“Short blasts on the trumpets will be the way to tell the people to move the camp. The first time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the tribes camping on the east side of the Meeting Tent must begin to move. ⁶The second time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the tribes camping on the south side of the Meeting Tent will begin to move. ⁷But if you want to gather the people together for a special meeting, blow the trumpets in a different way—blow a long steady blast on the trumpets. ⁸Only Aaron’s sons, the priests, should blow the trumpets. This is a law for you that will continue forever, for generations to come.

⁹“If you are fighting an enemy in your own land, blow loudly on the trumpets before you go to fight them. The LORD your God will hear you, and he will save you from your enemies. ¹⁰Also blow these trumpets for your special meetings, New Moon celebrations and all your happy times together. Blow the trumpets when you give your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. This will be a special way for your God to remember you. I command you to do this; I am the LORD your God.”

The Israelites Move Their Camp

¹¹On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites left Egypt, the cloud rose from above the Tent of the Agreement. ¹²So the Israelites began their journey. They left the desert of Sinai and travelled until the cloud stopped in the desert of

Paran. ¹³This was the first time the people moved their camp. They moved it the way the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁴The three divisions from Judah’s camp went first. They travelled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Judah. Nahshon son of Amminadab was the commander of that group. ¹⁵Next came the tribe of Issachar. Nethanel son of Zuar was the commander of that group. ¹⁶And then came the tribe of Zebulun. Eliab son of Helon was the commander of that group.

¹⁷Then the Holy Tent was taken down. And the men from the Gershon and the Merari families carried the Holy Tent. So the people from these families were next in line.

¹⁸Then came the three divisions from Reuben’s camp. They travelled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Reuben. Elizur son of Shedeur was the commander of that group. ¹⁹Next came the tribe of Simeon. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was the commander of that group. ²⁰And then came the tribe of Gad. Eliasaph son of Deuel^f was the commander of that group. ²¹Then came the Kohath family. They carried the holy things from inside the Holy Tent. These people came at this time so that the other people could set up the Holy Tent and make it ready at the new camp before these people arrived.

²²Next came the three groups from Ephraim’s camp. They travelled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Ephraim. Elishama son of Ammihud was the commander of that group. ²³Next came the tribe of Manasseh. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was the commander of that group. ²⁴Then came the tribe of Benjamin. Abidan son of Gideon was the commander of that group.

^f10:20 *Deuel* Or “Reuel”.

²⁵The last three tribes in the line were the rear guard for all the other tribes. These were the groups from Dan's camp. They travelled under their flag. The first group was the tribe of Dan. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was their commander. ²⁶Next came the tribe of Asher. Pagiel son of Ocran was the commander of that group. ²⁷Then came the tribe of Naphthali. Ahira son of Enan was the commander of that group. ²⁸That was the way the Israelites marched when they moved from place to place.

²⁹Hobab was the son of Reuel, the Midianite. (Reuel was Moses' father-in-law.) Moses said to Hobab, "We are travelling to the land that the LORD promised to give to us. Come with us and we will be good to you. The LORD has promised good things to the Israelites."

³⁰But Hobab answered, "No, I will not go with you. I will go back to my homeland and to my own people."

³¹Then Moses said, "Please don't leave us. You know more about the desert than we do. You can be our guide. ³²If you come with us, we will share with you all the good things that the LORD gives us."

³³So they began travelling from the mountain of the LORD. The priests took the Box of the LORD's Agreement and walked in front of the people. They carried the Holy Box for three days, looking for a place to camp. ³⁴The LORD's cloud was over them every day. And when they left their camp every morning, the cloud was there to lead them.

³⁵When the people lifted the Holy Box to move the camp, Moses always said, "Get up, LORD! May your enemies be scattered. May your enemies run away from you."

³⁶And when the Holy Box was put in its place, Moses always said,

"Come back, LORD, to the millions of Israelites."

The People Complain Again

11 The people started complaining about their troubles. The LORD heard their complaints and became angry. Fire from the LORD burned among the people. The fire burned some of the areas at the edge of the camp. ²So the people cried to Moses for help. He prayed to the LORD, and the fire stopped burning. ³So that place was called Taberah.[§] The people gave the place that name because the LORD caused a fire to burn in their camp.

The 70 Older Leaders

⁴There was a gang of foreigners travelling with the Israelites, and they began wanting other things to eat. Soon all the Israelites began crying and complaining, "We want to eat meat!" ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost us nothing. We also had good vegetables like cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. ⁶But now we have lost our strength. We never see anything to eat but this manna!" ⁷(The manna was like small coriander seeds, and it looked like sap from a tree. ⁸The people gathered the manna. Then they used rocks to crush it and cooked it in a pot. Or they ground it into flour and made thin cakes with it. The cakes tasted like sweet cakes cooked with olive oil. ⁹The manna fell on the ground each night when the ground became wet with dew.)

¹⁰Moses heard the people complaining. People from every family were sitting by their tents and crying. The LORD became very angry, and this made Moses very upset. ¹¹He asked the LORD, "Why did you bring this trouble on me? I

[§]11:3 *Taberah* This name means "burning".

am your servant. What did I do wrong? What did I do to upset you? Why did you give me responsibility for all these people? ¹²Am I their mother? You know that I did not give birth to them. But you are asking me to take care of them, like a nurse carrying a baby in her arms. Why must I carry them to the land that you promised our fathers? ¹³They keep crying for meat to eat. But where would I ever get enough meat to feed them all? ¹⁴I cannot take care of all these people alone. It is too much for me. ¹⁵If you plan to continue giving me their troubles, kill me now. If you accept me as your servant, let me die now. Then I will be finished with all my troubles!”

¹⁶The LORD said to Moses, “Bring to me 70 of the older leaders of Israel—men respected by the people. Bring them to the Meeting Tent. Let them stand there with you. ¹⁷Then I will come down and speak with you there. The Spirit** is on you now. But I will also give some of that Spirit to them. Then they will help you take care of the people. In this way you will not have to be responsible for these people alone.

¹⁸“Tell the people this: Make yourselves ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you cried out and said, ‘We need meat to eat! It was better for us in Egypt!’ So now the LORD will give you meat. And you will eat it. ¹⁹You will eat it for more than one, or two, or five, or ten or even twenty days! ²⁰You will eat that meat for a whole month until it comes out your nose and you are sick of it. This will happen to you because you complained against the LORD. He lives among you and knows what you

need, but you cried and complained to him! You said, ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt?’”

²¹Moses said, “There are 600,000 soldiers here, and you say, ‘I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!’ ²²If we were to kill all the sheep and cattle, that would still not be enough to feed this many people for a month. And if we caught all the fish in the sea, it would not be enough for them!”

²³But the LORD said to Moses, “Don’t limit my power! You will see that I can do what I say I can do.”

²⁴So Moses went out to speak with the people. He told them what the LORD had said. Then he gathered 70 of the leaders together and told them to stand around the Tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. He gave the 70 leaders some of the same Spirit that he had given to Moses. After the Spirit came down on them, they began to prophesy.†† But that was the only time they ever did this.

²⁶Two men named Eldad and Medad were on the list of leaders. They did not go out to the Tent but stayed in the camp. But the Spirit also came on them, and they began prophesying in the camp. ²⁷A young man ran and told Moses. The man said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

²⁸Joshua son of Nun said to Moses, “Moses, sir, you must stop them!” (Joshua had been Moses’ assistant since Joshua was a boy.)

²⁹But Moses answered, “Are you afraid the people will think that I am not the leader now? I wish that all the LORD’s people were able to prophesy. I wish that the LORD would give his Spirit

** 11:17 *Spirit* Or “spirit”. Also in verses 25,29.

†† 11:25 *prophesy* Usually this means “to speak for God”. But here, it might mean that God’s Spirit took control of these men in some special way. Also in verse 26.

to all of them!”³⁰ Then Moses and the leaders of Israel went back to the camp.

The Quail Come

³¹ Then the LORD made a powerful wind blow in from the sea, and it blew quail into the area all around the camp. The ground was covered with quail about a metre high and as far as a man could walk in one day. ³² They went out and gathered quail all that day and all that night. And they gathered quail all the next day too! The smallest amount anyone gathered was at least 1000 kilograms. Then the people spread the quail meat all around the camp to dry in the sun.

³³ But as soon as the people put the meat in their mouths, before they had even chewed it, the LORD became very angry and caused the people to become very sick. ³⁴ So the people named that place Kibroth Hattaavah,^{‡‡} because there they buried those who had the strong desire for meat.

³⁵ From Kibroth Hattaavah the people travelled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Criticize Moses

12 Miriam and Aaron began to criticize Moses. They thought he was acting like he was better than other Israelites because he had married a Cushite woman. ² They said, “Moses is not the only one the LORD has used to speak to the people. He has also spoken through us!” And the LORD heard this.

³ (Moses was really a very humble man. In fact, he was more humble than anyone else on earth.)

⁴ Suddenly, the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “You three, come to the Meeting Tent, now!” So Moses,

Aaron and Miriam went to the Tent. ⁵ The LORD came down in the tall cloud and stood at the entrance to the Tent. He called out, “Aaron and Miriam!” They went to him. ⁶ God said, “Listen to me: “You will have prophets.

I, the LORD, will let them learn about me through visions;

I will speak to them in dreams.

⁷ But Moses is not like that.

He is my faithful servant.

I trust him with everyone in my house.

⁸ When I speak to him, I talk face to face with him.

I don’t use stories with hidden meanings; I show him clearly what I want him to know.

And Moses can look at the very image of the LORD.

So why were you brave enough to speak against my servant Moses?”

⁹ The LORD was very angry with them, and he left them. ¹⁰ The cloud rose from the Tent. Aaron turned and looked at Miriam. Her skin was white like snow—she had a terrible skin disease!

¹¹ Then Aaron said to Moses, “Please, sir, forgive us for the foolish sin that we did. ¹² Don’t let her be like a baby who is born dead, with its skin falling apart.”

¹³ So Moses prayed to the LORD, “God, please heal her from this sickness!”

¹⁴ The LORD answered Moses, “If her father had spat in her face, she would be shamed for seven days. So put her outside the camp for seven days. After that, she can come back into the camp.”

¹⁵ So they took Miriam outside the camp for seven days. And the people did not move from that place until she had been brought in again. ¹⁶ After that, the people left Hazeroth and travelled to the desert of Paran where they set up camp.

^{‡‡}11:34 *Kibroth Hattaavah* This name means “Graves of Strong Desire”.

The Spies Go to Canaan

13 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Send some men to explore the land of Canaan. I will give this land to the Israelites. Send one leader from each of the twelve tribes.”

³ So Moses obeyed the LORD’s command and sent out the Israelite leaders while the people were camped in the desert of Paran. ⁴ These are their names: from the tribe of Reuben—Shammua son of Zaccur;

⁵ from the tribe of Simeon—Shaphat son of Hori;

⁶ from the tribe of Judah—Caleb son of Jephunneh;

⁷ from the tribe of Issachar—Igal son of Joseph;

⁸ from the tribe of Ephraim—Hoshea^f son of Nun;

⁹ from the tribe of Benjamin—Palti son of Raphu;

¹⁰ from the tribe of Zebulun—Gaddiel son of Sodi;

¹¹ from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe from Joseph)—Gaddi son of Susi;

¹² from the tribe of Dan—Ammiel son of Gemalli;

¹³ from the tribe of Asher—Sethur son of Michael;

¹⁴ from the tribe of Naphtali—Nahbi son of Vophsi;

¹⁵ from the tribe of Gad—Geuel son of Maki.

¹⁶ These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by another name. Moses called him Joshua.)

¹⁷ When Moses was sending them out to explore Canaan, he said, “Go through the Negev and then into the hill country. ¹⁸ See what the land looks like. Learn

about the people who live there. Are they strong or are they weak? Are they few or are they many? ¹⁹ Learn about the land that they live in. Is it good land or bad land? What kind of towns do they live in? Do the towns have walls protecting them? Are the towns strongly defended? ²⁰ And learn other things about the land. Is the soil good for growing things, or is it poor soil? Are there trees on the land? Be brave and bring back some of the fruit from that land.” (This was during the time when the first grapes should be ripe.)

²¹ So they went to explore the country. They explored the area from the desert of Zin to Rehob and Lebo Hamath. ²² They entered the country through the Negev and went to Hebron. (The town of Hebron was built seven years before the town of Zoan in Egypt.) Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai lived there. These men were descendants of Anak. ²³ Then the spies went to Eshcol Valley. There they cut off a branch from a grapevine that had a bunch of grapes on it. They put that branch on a pole, and two men carried it between them. They also carried some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴ That place is called the Eshcol^{§§} Valley, because there the men of Israel cut off the bunch of grapes.

²⁵ The men explored that country for 40 days, and then they went back to the camp. ²⁶ The Israelites were camped near Kadesh, in the desert of Paran. The men went to Moses and Aaron and all the Israelites. They told Moses, Aaron and all the people what they had seen and showed them the fruit from the land. ²⁷ The men told Moses, “We went to the land where you sent us. It is a

^f13:8 *Hoshea* Or “Joshua”.

^{§§}13:24 *Eshcol* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “a bunch of grapes”.

land filled with many good things!^{*} Here is some of the fruit that grows there.²⁸ But the people living there are very powerful. The cities are very large and strongly defended. We even saw some Anakites there.²⁹ The Amalekites live in the Negev. The Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live near the sea and by the Jordan River.”

³⁰ Caleb told the people near Moses to be quiet. Then Caleb said, “We should go up and take that land for ourselves. We can certainly take that land.”

³¹ But the men who had gone with him said, “We cannot fight those people! They are much stronger than we are.” ³² So those men gave a report that discouraged the people. They said, “The land we saw is full of strong people. They are strong enough to easily defeat anyone who goes there. ³³ We saw the giant Nephilim people there! (The descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim.) We felt like little grasshoppers. Yes, we were like grasshoppers to them!”

The People Complain Again

14 That night all the people in the camp began shouting loudly and weeping. ² The Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron. All the people came together and said to Moses and Aaron, “We should have died in Egypt or in the desert. ³ Why is the LORD bringing us into this new land to be killed in war? The enemy will kill us and take our wives and children! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt.”

⁴ Then the people said to each other, “Let’s choose another leader and go back to Egypt.”

⁵ This frightened Moses and Aaron, and they threw themselves face down

on the ground in front of all the people gathered there. ⁶ Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes to show how upset they were. (Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were two of the men who explored the land.) ⁷ These two men said to all the Israelites gathered there, “The land that we saw is very good. ⁸ It is a land filled with many good things. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land. And he will give that land to us. ⁹ So don’t turn against the LORD! Don’t be afraid of the people in that land. We can defeat them. They have no protection, nothing to keep them safe. But we have the LORD with us, so don’t be afraid!”

¹⁰ All the people began talking about killing Joshua and Caleb with stones. But the glory of the LORD appeared over the Meeting Tent where all the people could see it. ¹¹ The LORD spoke to Moses and said, “How long will these people continue to turn against me? They show that they don’t trust me or believe in my power, in spite of the many miracles I have done among them. ¹² I will kill them all with a terrible sickness. I will destroy them, and I will use you to make another nation. Your nation will be greater and stronger than these people.”

¹³ Then Moses said to the LORD, “If you do that, the Egyptians will hear about it! They know that you used your great power to bring your people out of Egypt. ¹⁴ The Egyptians will tell the people of Canaan that you destroyed the Israelites. The Canaanites have already heard that you, LORD, are with your people. They know that you have appeared to your people face to face. They know that your cloud stays over your people. They know that you use

^{*}13:27 *land ... things* Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey”. Also in 14:8.

the cloud to lead your people during the day. And they know the cloud becomes a fire to lead your people at night. ¹⁵ So you must not kill your people all at once. If you kill them now, all the nations who have heard about your power will say, ¹⁶ ‘The LORD was not able to bring them into the land he promised them. So he killed them in the desert.’

¹⁷ “So now, Lord, show how much self-control you have! Show it the way you said you would. ¹⁸ You said, ‘The LORD is patient and always faithful to show his love. He forgives† even those who refuse to obey and break the law. But he does not cancel all punishment for those who are guilty. He punishes them, and he also punishes their children, their grandchildren and even their great-grandchildren for those bad things.’ ¹⁹ Now, show your great love to these people. Forgive their sin. Forgive them the same way you have been forgiving them since the time they left Egypt until now.”

²⁰ The LORD answered, “Yes, I have forgiven the people as you asked. ²¹ But I tell you the truth. As surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, I make you this promise: ²² None of the people I led out of Egypt will ever see the land of Canaan. They saw my glory and the great signs that I did in Egypt and in the desert. But they disobeyed me and tested me ten times. ²³ I promised their ancestors I would give them that land. But none of those people who turned against me will ever enter that land! ²⁴ But my servant Caleb is different. He follows me completely. So I will bring him into the land that he has already seen, and his people will get that land. ²⁵ The Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valley. So tomorrow you must leave this place.

Go back to the desert on the road to the Red Sea.”

The Lord Punishes the People

²⁶ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁷ “How long will these evil people continue to complain against me? I have heard their complaints and their grumbling. ²⁸ So tell them, ‘As surely as I live, says the LORD, I will do to you exactly what you told me you wanted. ²⁹ You will die in this desert. Every person who is 20 years old or older and was counted as one of my people will die. You complained against me. ³⁰ So none of you will ever enter and live in the land that I promised to give you. Only Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun will enter that land. ³¹ You were afraid and complained that your enemies in that new land would take your children away from you. But I tell you that I will bring them into the land. They will enjoy what you refused to accept. ³² As for you people, you will die in this desert. ³³ Your children will wander around like shepherds here in the desert for 40 years. They will suffer because you were not faithful to me. They must suffer until all of you lie dead in the desert. ³⁴ For 40 years you will suffer for your sins. (That is one year for each of the 40 days that the men explored the land.) You will know that it is a terrible thing for me to be against you.’ ³⁵ I am the LORD, and I have spoken. And I promise that I will do these things to all these evil people. They have come together against me. So they will all die here in this desert.”

³⁶ The men Moses sent to explore the new land were the ones who came back complaining about him to all the Israelites. They said that the people were not strong enough to enter that land.

†14:18 *forgives* Or “spares”.

³⁷The men were responsible for spreading the trouble among the Israelites. So the LORD caused a sickness to kill all those men. ³⁸Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were among the men who were sent out to explore the land. But they are the only ones who did not die.

The People Try to Go Into Canaan

³⁹When Moses told the Israelites this, they were very sad. ⁴⁰Early the next morning the people started to go up to the high hill country. They said, “We have sinned. We are sorry that we did not trust the Lord. We will go to the place that the LORD promised.”

⁴¹But Moses said, “Why are you disobeying the LORD’s command? You will not be successful! ⁴²Don’t go into that land. The LORD is not with you, so your enemies will easily defeat you. ⁴³The Amalekites and Canaanites will fight against you there. You have turned away from the LORD, so he will not be with you when you fight them. And you will be killed in battle.”

⁴⁴But the people did not believe Moses. They went towards the high hill country. But Moses and the Box of the LORD’s Agreement did not go with the people. ⁴⁵The Amalekites and the Canaanites living in the hill country came down and attacked the Israelites and easily defeated them and chased them all the way to Hormah.

Rules About Sacrifices

15 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: I am giving you a land to be your home. When you enter that land, ³you will offer gifts of food to the LORD. Their smell will please the LORD. You will use your cattle, sheep and goats for burnt offerings, sacrifices, special promises, special gifts, fellowship offerings or at your special festivals.

⁴“At the time someone brings their offering, they must also give a grain offering to the LORD. The grain offering will be 1 kilogramme[‡] of fine flour mixed with 1 litre[¶] of olive oil. ⁵Each time you offer a lamb as a burnt offering or sacrifice, you must also prepare a litre of wine as a drink offering.

⁶“If you are giving a ram, you must also prepare a grain offering. This grain offering should be 2 kilogrammes[§] of fine flour mixed with 1.5 litres^{**} of olive oil. ⁷And you must prepare 1.5 litres of wine as a drink offering. Its smell will please the LORD.

⁸“You may also offer a young bull as a burnt offering, a sacrifice, a fellowship offering or to keep a special promise to the LORD. When you do this, ⁹you must also bring a grain offering with the bull. That grain offering should be 3 kilogrammes^{††} of fine flour mixed with 2 litres^{‡‡} of olive oil. ¹⁰Also bring 2 litres of wine as a drink offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ¹¹Each bull or ram or lamb or young goat that you give must be prepared in this way. ¹²Do

[‡]15:4 1 kilogramme Literally, “1/10 of an ephah”.

[¶]15:4 1 litre Literally, “1/4 hin”.

[§]15:6 2 kilogrammes Literally, “2/10 of an ephah”.

^{**}15:6 1.5 litres Literally, “1/3 hin”.

^{††}15:9 3 kilogrammes Literally, “3/10 of an ephah”.

^{‡‡}15:9 2 litres Literally, “1/2 hin”.

this for every one of these animals that you give.

¹³“This is the way every citizen of Israel must give gifts to please the LORD. ¹⁴Immigrants will live among you. If they give gifts to please the LORD, they must offer them the same way you do. ¹⁵The same rules will be for everyone—the Israelites and the immigrants living among you. This law will continue forever. You and the people living among you will be the same before the LORD. ¹⁶This means that you must follow the same laws and the same rules. These laws and rules are for you Israelites and for the other people who are living among you.”

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸“Tell the Israelites this: I am taking you to another land. ¹⁹When you eat the food that grows in that land, you must give part of that food as an offering to the LORD. ²⁰You will gather grain and grind it into flour to make dough for bread. You must give the first bread from that flour as a gift to the Lord. It will be like the grain offering that comes from the threshing floor. ²¹You and all your descendants must give part of the first dough you make from that flour as a gift to the LORD.

²²“As you all try to obey the commands that the LORD gave Moses, what if you fail by mistake to keep some of them? ²³The LORD gave you those commands through Moses, and they have been in effect from the day they were given and will continue from now on. ²⁴If a mistake is made and the community did not see it when it happened, the whole community is still guilty. When you learn about that sin, you must offer a young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must also offer the grain offering and

the drink offering with the bull. And you must offer a male goat as a sin offering.

²⁵“So the priest will remove that sin for the whole community of Israel. And they will be forgiven because the sin was done by mistake and because they brought their offerings—a gift and a sin offering to the LORD for their mistake. ²⁶The whole community of Israel and any immigrants among them will be forgiven for the sin they committed by mistake.

²⁷“But if only one person makes a mistake and sins, that person must bring a female goat that is one year old. That goat will be the sin offering. ²⁸The priest will remove the sin of the one who sinned by mistake. He will remove it before the LORD and that person will be forgiven. ²⁹This law is for everyone who makes a mistake and sins. The same law is for all citizens of Israel and for the immigrants living among you.

³⁰“If someone sins and knows they are doing wrong, they are insulting the LORD. They must be separated from their people. The same law applies to all citizens of Israel and to immigrants living among you. ³¹They thought the LORD’s word was not important, so they broke his commands. That is why they must be separated from their people—they must be punished for their guilt.”

A Man Works on the Day of Rest

³²While the Israelites were in the desert, some of them saw a man gathering firewood on the Sabbath day. ³³The people who saw him gathering the wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community of Israel. ³⁴They guarded the man carefully because they did not know how they should punish him.

³⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must die. All the people must throw

stones at him outside the camp.”³⁶ So the people took him outside the camp and killed him with stones. They did this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

A Way to Remember God’s Commands

³⁷The LORD said to Moses, ³⁸“Speak to the Israelites. Tell them this: Tie several pieces of thread together and tie them in the corner of your clothes. Put a piece of purple thread in each one of these tassels. You must wear these things now and forever. ³⁹When you see these tassels, you will remember all the commands from the LORD and obey them. Then you will not follow your own wishes and desires that cause you to be unfaithful to me. ⁴⁰You will remember to obey all my commands. Then you will be God’s holy people. ⁴¹I am the LORD your God. I am the one who brought you out of Egypt. I did this to be your God. I am the LORD your God.”

Some Leaders Turn Against Moses

16 Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On turned against Moses. (Korah was the son of Izhar. Izhar was the son of Kohath, and Kohath was the son of Levi. Dathan and Abiram were brothers, the sons of Eliab. And On was the son of Peleth. Dathan, Abiram and On were descendants of Reuben.)² These four men gathered 250 other men from Israel and came against Moses. They were leaders who had been chosen by the people. All the people knew them. ³They came as a group to speak against Moses and Aaron and said, “You have gone too far—you are wrong! All the Israelites are holy—the LORD still lives among them. You are making yourselves more important than the rest of the LORD’s people.”

⁴When Moses heard this, he bowed down with his face to the ground. ⁵Then Moses said to Korah and all his followers, “Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who belongs to him. He will show who is holy, and he will bring that man near to him. He will choose him and bring that man near to him. ⁶So Korah, you and all your followers should do this: ⁷Tomorrow put fire and incense in some special pans. Then bring those pans before the LORD. He will choose the man who is holy. You Levites have gone too far—you are wrong!”

⁸Moses also said to Korah, “You Levites, listen to me. ⁹You should be happy that the God of Israel chose you to be different from the rest of the Israelites. He lets you come near to him to do the special work in the LORD’s Holy Tent and to help the Israelites worship him. Isn’t that enough? ¹⁰He brought you Levites near to him to help the priests, but now you are trying to become priests also. ¹¹You and your followers have joined together and turned against the LORD! Did Aaron do anything wrong? No, so why are you complaining against Aaron?”

¹²Then Moses called Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But the two men said, “We will not come! ¹³You have brought us out of a land filled with many good things.^f You brought us to the desert to kill us. And now you want to show that you have even more power over us. ¹⁴Why should we follow you? You promised to bring us into a new land filled with many good things. But where is it? You have not given us the land with fields and vineyards that you said would be ours. Do you think you can keep on fooling these people? No! We will not come.”

^f16:13 *land ... things* Literally, “land flowing with milk and honey”.

¹⁵ So Moses became very angry. He said to the LORD, “I have not done anything wrong to these people. I have never taken anything from them—not even a donkey! Don’t accept their gifts!”

¹⁶ Then Moses said to Korah, “You and all your followers will stand before the LORD tomorrow. Aaron will also be there with you and your followers. ¹⁷ Each of you must bring a pan, put incense in it, and present it to the LORD. There will be 250 pans for the leaders and one pan for you and one pan for Aaron.”

¹⁸ So each man got a pan and put burning incense in it. Then they stood at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron also stood there. ¹⁹ Korah also gathered all the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to everyone there.

²⁰ The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹ “Move away from these men! I want to destroy them now!”

²² But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and cried out, “God, you know what people are thinking. ²³ Please don’t be angry with all these people. Only one man really sinned.”

²³ Then the LORD said to Moses, ²⁴ “Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.”

²⁵ Moses stood and went to Dathan and Abiram. All the leaders of Israel followed him. ²⁶ Moses warned the people, “Move away from the tents of these evil men. Don’t touch anything that belongs to them! If you do, you will be destroyed because of their sins.”

²⁷ So the men moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram went to their tents.

They stood outside of their tents with their wives, children and little babies.

²⁸ Then Moses said, “I will show you proof that the LORD sent me to do all these things. I will show you that all these things were not my own idea. ²⁹ These men will die, but if they die in a normal way—the way people always die—then that will show that the LORD did not really send me. ³⁰ But if the LORD causes them to die in a different way, then you will know that these men have sinned against the LORD. This is the proof: The earth will open and swallow them. They will go down to their grave still alive. And everything that belongs to these men will go down with them.”

³¹ When Moses finished saying these things, the ground under the men opened up. ³² It was as if the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. All of Korah’s men, their families and everything they owned went down into the earth. ³³ They went down into their grave alive. Everything they owned went with them. Then the earth closed over them. They were finished—gone from the camp!

³⁴ The Israelites heard the cries of the men being destroyed. So they all ran in different directions and said, “The earth will swallow us too!”

³⁵ Then a fire came from the LORD and destroyed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

³⁶ The LORD said to Moses, ^{37–38} “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to get all the incense pans from the fire. Tell him to scatter the coals and ashes. These men sinned against me, and their sin cost them their lives. But the incense pans are still holy. The pans became holy when people gave them to the LORD. Hammer

§§16:22 *God, ... thinking* Literally, “God, the God of the spirits of all people”.

the pans into flat sheets. Use the metal sheets to cover the altar. This will be a warning to all the Israelites.”

³⁹ So Eleazar the priest gathered all the bronze pans that the men had brought. These men had all been burned up, but the pans were still there. Then Eleazar told some men to hammer the pans into flat metal. Then he put the metal sheets on the altar. ⁴⁰ He did this the way the LORD commanded him through Moses. This was a sign to help the Israelites remember that only someone from the family of Aaron should burn incense before the LORD. Any other person who burns incense before the Lord will die like Korah and his followers.

Aaron Saves the People

⁴¹ The next day all the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron. They said, “You killed the LORD’s people.”

⁴² The people gathered to complain against Moses and Aaron. But when they looked towards the Meeting Tent, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared there. ⁴³ Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Meeting Tent.

⁴⁴ The LORD said to Moses, ⁴⁵ “Move away from these people so that I can destroy them now.” So Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces to the ground.

⁴⁶ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Get your bronze pan and some fire from the altar. Then put incense in it. Hurry to the people and do the things that will make them pure. The LORD is angry with them. The trouble has already started.”

⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸ So Aaron got the incense and the fire, and he ran to the middle of the people. But the sickness had already started among them. So Aaron stood between the dead and those who were still alive. He did what Moses said to remove their sin, and the sickness stopped

there. ⁴⁹ But 14,700 people died from that sickness—and that is not counting the people who died because of Korah. ⁵⁰ So the terrible sickness was stopped, and Aaron went back to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.

God Proves Aaron Is the High Priest

17 The LORD said to Moses, ² “Speak to the Israelites. Get twelve wooden walking sticks from them. Get one from the leader of each of the twelve tribes. Write the name of each man on his walking stick. ³ On the stick from Levi, write Aaron’s name. There must be one stick for the head of each of the twelve tribes. ⁴ Put these walking sticks in the Meeting Tent in front of the Box of the Agreement. This is the place where I meet with you. ⁵ I will choose one man to be the true priest. You will know which man I choose because his walking stick will begin to grow new leaves. In this way I will stop the people from always complaining against you and me.”

⁶ So Moses spoke to the Israelites. Each of the leaders gave him a walking stick. There were twelve walking sticks. There was one stick from each leader of each tribe. One of the walking sticks belonged to Aaron. ⁷ Moses put the walking sticks before the LORD in the Tent of the Agreement.

⁸ The next day Moses entered the Tent. He saw that Aaron’s walking stick, the stick from the family of Levi, was the one that had grown new leaves. That walking stick had even grown blossoms and made almonds. ⁹ So Moses brought out all the sticks from the LORD’s place. He showed the walking sticks to the Israelites. They all looked at the sticks, and each man took his own stick back.

¹⁰ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Put Aaron’s walking stick back in front of the

Box that holds the Agreement.* This will be a warning for these people who are always turning against me. This will stop their complaining against me so that I will not destroy them.”¹¹ So Moses did what the LORD commanded him.

¹²The Israelites said to Moses, “We know that we will die! We are lost! We will all be destroyed!”¹³ Anyone who even comes near the LORD’s Holy Tent will die. Is it true that we will all die?”

The Work of the Priests and Levites

18 The LORD said to Aaron, “You, your sons and all the people in your father’s family must be punished for any wrong that is done against the holy place or against the priests.² To prevent that from happening, you must bring the rest of the men from the tribe of Levi to join you. These Levites will help you and your sons do your work in front of the Tent of the Agreement.³ These Levites will be under your control. They will do all the work that needs to be done in the Tent. But they must not go near the things in the Holy Place or the altar. If they do, they will die—and you also will die.⁴ They will join you and work with you. They will be responsible for taking care of the Meeting Tent and doing all the work that must be done there. No one else may come near the place where you are.

⁵“You are responsible for caring for the holy place and the altar. I don’t want to become angry with the Israelites again.⁶ I myself chose the Levites from among all the Israelites. They are as a gift to you. I gave them to you to serve the LORD and work in the Meeting Tent.⁷ But, Aaron, only you and your sons

may serve as priests. You are the only ones who can go near the altar or behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place. I am giving you a gift—your service as a priest. Anyone else who tries to come too close must be killed.”

⁸Then the LORD said to Aaron, “I myself gave you responsibility over all the special gifts people give to me. All the holy gifts that the Israelites give to me, I give to you. You and your sons can share in these gifts. They will always belong to you.⁹ The people will bring gifts, grain offerings, sin offerings and guilt offerings. These offerings are most holy. Your share in the most holy offerings will come from the parts that are not burned. All these things will be for you and your sons.¹⁰ Eat these things only in a very holy place. Every male in your family may eat them, but you must remember that these offerings are holy.

¹¹“The Israelites will bring special gifts that you will lift up to me. I give these gifts to you and your sons and daughters who are with you. This will always be your share. Everyone in your family who is clean will be able to eat them.

¹²“And I give you all the best olive oil and all the best new wine and grain. These are the things that the Israelites give to me, the LORD. These are the first things that they gather in their harvest.¹³ When the people gather a harvest, they bring all the first things to the LORD. So these things I will give to you. And everyone in your family who is clean may eat them.

¹⁴“Anything in Israel that is a special gift to God[†] belongs to you.

***17:10** *Box that holds the Agreement* Literally, “Testimony”. See Agreement in the Word List.

[†]**18:14** *special gift to God* Anything offered to God that could not be bought back. See Lev. 27:28-29.

¹⁵“A woman’s first baby and an animal’s first baby must be offered to the LORD. But they will belong to you. The firstborn of unclean animals must be bought back. And every firstborn child must be bought back. ¹⁶Accept the payment for this when the baby is one month old. The cost will be 5 pieces[‡] of silver. You must use the official measure to weigh this silver. Each piece of silver by the official measure is 11 grammes.[¶]

¹⁷“But the firstborn cow, sheep or goat cannot be bought back. These animals are holy. Splash their blood on the altar and burn their fat as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ¹⁸But the meat from these animals will be yours. And also the breast that was lifted up to the Lord will be yours. And the right thigh from other offerings will be yours. ¹⁹I, the LORD, give you everything that the Israelites offer to me as holy gifts. This is your share forever. I give it to you and your sons and daughters. It is an agreement with the LORD that cannot be broken.[§] I make this promise to you and to your descendants.”

²⁰The LORD also said to Aaron, “You will not get any of the land. And you will not own anything that the other people own. I myself will be yours. The Israelites will get the land that I promised, but I am my gift to you.

²¹“The Israelites will give one-tenth of all their crops and newborn animals. So I give that one-tenth to the Levites. This is their payment for the work that they do while they serve at the Meeting Tent. ²²But the other Israelites must never again go near that Meeting Tent. If they do, they must be put to death!

²³The Levites will do the work of caring for the Meeting Tent. They must be punished for anything done against it. This is a law that will continue forever. The Levites will not get any of the land that I promised to the other Israelites. ²⁴But the Israelites will give one-tenth of their crops and newborn animals to the LORD, and I will give that one-tenth to the Levites. That is why I said these words about the Levites: They will not get the land that I promised the Israelites.”

²⁵The LORD said to Moses, ²⁶“Speak to the Levites and tell them: The Israelites will give one-tenth of their crops and newborn animals to the LORD. That one-tenth will belong to you Levites. But you must give one-tenth of that to the Lord as your offering. ²⁷That tenth will be your offering to the Lord. It will be like grain from the threshing floor or wine from the winepress. ²⁸In this way you will also give an offering to the LORD just as the other Israelites do. You will get the one-tenth that the Israelites give to the LORD, and then you will give one-tenth of that to Aaron the priest.

²⁹When the Israelites give you one-tenth of their crops and newborn animals, then you must give the best and the holiest part of these things as your gift to the LORD.

³⁰“Moses, tell this to the Levites: When you give the best part of what you receive to the Lord, it will be the same as grain from your own threshing floor and wine from your own winepress. ³¹You and your families can eat all that is left. This is your payment for the work you do in the Meeting Tent. ³²And if you always give the best part of it to the Lord, you

[‡]18:16 5 pieces Literally, “5 shekels”.

[¶]18:16 11 grammes Literally, “20 gerahs”.

[§]18:19 It is an agreement ... broken Literally, “It is an eternal, salt agreement before the LORD.”

can eat what is left without guilt. By doing this, you will show your respect for these gifts as holy offerings from the Israelites, and you will avoid being put to death.”

Ashes and Water for Cleansing

19 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: ²“This is a law from the teachings that the LORD gave to the Israelites. Get a red cow that has nothing wrong with it. That cow must not have any bruises. And it must never have worn a yoke. ³Give that cow to Eleazar, and he will take it outside the camp and kill it there. ⁴Then Eleazar the priest must put some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle some of the blood towards the Holy Tent. He must do this seven times. ⁵Then the whole cow must be burned as Eleazar watches. The skin, the meat, the blood and the intestines must all be burned. ⁶Then the priest must take a cedar stick, a hyssop branch and some red string. He must throw these things into the fire where the cow is burning. ⁷The priest must wash his clothes and then bathe his body in water. Then he must come back into the camp. He will be unclean until evening. ⁸The man who burns that cow must wash himself and his clothes in water. He will be unclean until evening.

⁹“Then someone who is clean will collect the ashes from the cow and put them in a clean place outside the camp. These ashes must be kept safe for the Israelites to use in the water for the cleansing ceremony. These ashes are for cleansing from sin.

¹⁰“The man who collected the cow’s ashes must wash his clothes. He will be unclean until evening.

“This rule will continue forever. This rule is for the citizens of Israel and for the immigrants living with you. ¹¹Those who touch a dead body will be unclean for seven days. ¹²They must wash themselves with the special water on the third day and again on the seventh day. If they don’t do this, they will remain unclean. ¹³Those who touch the body of someone who has died are unclean. If they do not purify themselves, they make the LORD’s Holy Tent unclean. So they must be separated from the Israelites. Because the special water was not sprinkled on them, they remain unclean.

¹⁴“This is the rule about those who die in their tents: If someone dies in the tent, everyone in the tent will be unclean for seven days. ¹⁵And every jar or pot without a lid becomes unclean. ¹⁶What if there is a dead body out in a field? The person may have died in battle or from some other cause. Whoever touches that dead body, or its bones or even its grave, will be unclean for seven days.

¹⁷“If you have become unclean, someone must use the ashes from the burned cow to make you clean again. He must pour fresh water** over the ashes into a jar. ¹⁸And then someone who is clean must take a hyssop branch and dip it into the water. He must sprinkle it over the tent, the dishes and any people who were in the tent. The same must be done for anyone who touches a dead body, its bones or even a grave.

¹⁹“The one who is clean must sprinkle this water on you on the third day and again on the seventh day to make you clean. Then you must wash your clothes and bathe yourself in water, and that evening you will be clean.

²⁰“Whoever becomes unclean and does not make themselves clean again

**19:17 *fresh water* Literally, “living water”. This means fresh, flowing water.

must be separated from the community. If they are not sprinkled with the special water for cleansing, they remain unclean and will be guilty of making the LORD's Holy Tent unclean. ²¹ This rule will never change. And whoever sprinkled the special water must also wash his clothes. And anyone else who touches that water will be unclean until evening. ²² And if an unclean person touches anything, it becomes unclean, and anyone else who touches it will be unclean until evening."

Miriam Dies

20 All the Israelites arrived at the desert of Zin in the first month of the year. The people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died and was buried there.

Moses Disobeys God

² There was not enough water for the people, so they met together to complain against Moses and Aaron. ³ The people argued with Moses and said, "Maybe we should have died in front of the LORD like our brothers did. ⁴ Why did you bring the LORD's people into this desert? Do you want us and our animals to die here? ⁵ Why did you bring us from Egypt? Why did you bring us to this bad place? There is no grain. There are no figs, grapes or pomegranates, and there is no water to drink."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron left the crowd of people and went to the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They bowed down with their faces to the ground, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

⁷ The LORD spoke to Moses and said, ⁸ "Get the special walking stick. Take your brother Aaron and the crowd of people and go to that rock. Speak to the rock in front of the people. Then wa-

ter will flow from the rock, and you can give that water to the people and to their animals."

⁹ The walking stick was in the Holy Tent, in front of the LORD. Moses took the walking stick as the Lord said. ¹⁰ Moses and Aaron told the people to meet together in front of the rock. Then Moses said, "You people are always complaining. Now listen to me. We will cause water to flow from this rock." ¹¹ Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice. Water began flowing from the rock, and the people and their animals drank that water.

¹² But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "You did not trust me enough to honour me and show the people that I am holy. You did not show the Israelites that the power to make the water came from me. So you will not lead the people into the land that I have given them."

¹³ This place was called the waters of Meribah.^{††} This is where the Israelites argued with the LORD and where he showed them that he was holy.

Edom Will Not Let Israel Pass

¹⁴ While Moses was at Kadesh, he sent some men to the king of Edom with this message:

"This message is from your Israelite relatives. You know about all the troubles we have had. ¹⁵ Many years ago our ancestors went down into Egypt, and we lived there for many years. The people of Egypt were cruel to us. ¹⁶ But we asked the LORD for help, and he heard us and sent an angel to help us. The Lord has brought us out of Egypt.

"Now we are here at Kadesh, where your land begins. ¹⁷ Please let us travel through your country. We

^{††} **20:13 Meribah** This name means "argument" or "rebellion".

will not travel through any fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King's Road. We will not leave that road to the right or to the left. We will stay on the road until we have travelled through your country."

¹⁸ But the king of Edom answered, "You may not travel through our land. If you try to travel through our land, we will come and fight you with swords."

¹⁹ The Israelites answered, "We will travel along the main road. If we or our animals drink any of your water, we will pay you for it. We only want to walk through your country. We don't want to take it for ourselves."

²⁰ But again the king of Edom answered, "We will not allow you to come through our country."

Then the king of Edom gathered a large and powerful army and went out to fight against the Israelites. ²¹ The Edomites refused to let the Israelites travel through their country, so the Israelites turned around and went another way.

Aaron Dies

²² All the Israelites travelled from Kadesh to Mount Hor. ²³ Mount Hor was near the border of Edom. The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁴ "It is time for Aaron to die and go to be with his ancestors. Aaron will not enter the land that I promised to the Israelites. Moses, I say this to you because both you and Aaron rebelled against the command I gave you at the waters of Meribah.

²⁵ "Now, bring Aaron and his son Eleazar up to Mount Hor. ²⁶ Take Aaron's special clothes from him and put

these clothes on his son Eleazar. Aaron will die there on the mountain. And he will go to be with his ancestors."

²⁷ Moses obeyed the LORD's command. Moses, Aaron and Eleazar went up on Mount Hor. All the Israelites watched them go. ²⁸ Moses removed Aaron's special clothes and put them on Aaron's son Eleazar. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came back down the mountain. ²⁹ When all the Israelites learned that Aaron was dead, everyone in Israel mourned for 30 days.

War With the Canaanites

21 The Canaanite king of Arad lived in the Negev. He heard that the Israelites were coming on the road that goes through Atharim, so he attacked the Israelites before they reached Arad. The king's army captured some of the people and made them prisoners. ² Then the Israelites made a special promise to the LORD: "Please help us defeat these people. If you do this, we will give their cities to you. We will totally destroy them."

³ The LORD listened to the Israelites and helped them defeat the Canaanites. They completely destroyed the Canaanites and their cities. So that place was named Hormah.††

The Bronze Snake

⁴ The Israelites left Mount Hor and travelled on the road that goes to the Red Sea. They did this to go around the country of Edom. But the people became impatient. ⁵ They began complaining against God and Moses. The people said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We will die here in the desert!

††**21:3 Hormah** This name means "completely destroyed" or "a gift given totally to God". See Lev. 27:28-29.

There is no bread and no water! And we hate this terrible food!”

⁶So the LORD sent poisonous snakes among the people. The snakes bit the people, and many of the Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We know that we sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD. Ask him to take away these snakes.” So Moses prayed for them.

⁸The LORD said to Moses, “Make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. If anyone is bitten by a snake, that person should look at the bronze snake on the pole. Then that person will not die.” ⁹So Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when a snake bit anyone, that person looked at the bronze snake on the pole and lived.

The Journey to Moab

¹⁰The Israelites left that place and camped at Oboth. ¹¹Then they left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim in the desert east of Moab. ¹²They left that place and camped in Zered Valley. ¹³Then they moved and camped across from the Arnon River in the desert that begins at the Ammonite border. The Arnon River was the border between Moab and the Amorites. ¹⁴That is why these words are found in the *Book of the Wars of the LORD*:

“Waheb in Suphah, and the Valleys of the Arnon, ¹⁵and the hills by the valleys that lead to the town of Ar. These places are at the border of Moab.”

¹⁶The Israelites left that place and travelled to Beer.^f There is a well in Beer, where the LORD said to Moses, “Bring the people together here, and I will give them water.” ¹⁷Then the Israelites sang this song:

“Well, flow with water!
Sing about it!

¹⁸This is the well that princes dug. It was opened up by our great leaders, using their staffs and walking sticks.”

From the desert the Israelites travelled to the town of Mattanah. ¹⁹And from Mattanah they went to Nahaliel. Then from Nahaliel they went to Bamoth. ²⁰From Bamoth they travelled to a valley in the land that once belonged to Moab. In this place the top of the Pisgah Mountain looks over the desert.

Sihon and Og

²¹The Israelites sent some men to King Sihon of the Amorites. The men said to the king,

²²“Allow us to travel through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King’s Road. We will stay on that road until we have travelled through your country.”

²³But King Sihon would not allow the Israelites to travel through his country. He gathered his whole army and marched out to the desert to fight against the Israelites. The king’s army fought against the Israelites at Jahaz.

²⁴But the Israelites defeated the king and took his land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. The Israelites took the land as far as the Ammonite border. They stopped at that border because it was strongly defended by the Ammonites. ²⁵Israel took all the Amorite cities and began living in them. They even defeated the city of Heshbon and all the small towns around it. ²⁶Heshbon was the city where Sihon, the Amorite king, lived. In the past Sihon had

^f21:16 *Beer* This Hebrew name means “well”.

fought with the king of Moab. Sihon had taken the land as far as the Arnon River.

²⁷ That is why the singers sing this song: “Go in and rebuild Heshbon!

Make Sihon’s city strong.

²⁸ A fire began in Heshbon.

The fire began in Sihon’s city.

The fire destroyed Ar in Moab.

It burned^{§§} the hills above Arnon River.

²⁹ It is bad for you, Moab!

Chemosh, your god, has left you in ruins!

He has let Sihon, king of the Amorites, chase away your men

and take your women as prisoners.

³⁰ But we defeated those Amorites.

We destroyed their towns from Heshbon to Dibon,

from Nashim to Nophah, near Medeba.”

³¹ So the Israelites made their camp in the land of the Amorites.

³² Moses sent some men to look at the town of Jazer. Then the Israelites captured that town and the small towns that were around it. They forced the Amorites who were living there to leave.

³³ Then the Israelites travelled on the road towards Bashan. King Og of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet the Israelites. They fought at Edrei.

³⁴ But the LORD said to Moses, “Don’t be afraid of that king. I will allow you to defeat him. You will take his whole army and all his land. Do the same to him as you did to Sihon, the Amorite king who lived in Heshbon.”

³⁵ So the Israelites defeated Og and his army. They killed him, his sons and all his army, until no one was left alive. Then the Israelites took all his land.

Balaam and the King of Moab

22 The Israelites travelled on and camped in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan River across from Jericho.

² King Balak son of Zippor saw everything the Israelites had done to the Amorites. ³ He and all the Moabites were frightened of the Israelites because there were so many of them. They were very afraid.

⁴ The Moabites said to the leaders of Midian, “This huge group of people will destroy everything around us, the way an ox eats all the grass in a field.”

So King Balak ⁵ sent some men to Balaam son of Beor. Balaam was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River. This was where Balaam’s people lived.* This was Balak’s message:

“A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover all the land. They have camped next to me. ⁶ Come and help me. These people are too powerful for me. I know that you have great power. If you bless people, good things happen to them. And if you curse people, bad things happen to them. So come and curse these people. Maybe then I will be able to defeat them and force them to leave my country.”

⁷ The leaders of Moab and Midian left. They went to talk to Balaam. They carried with them money to pay him for his

^{§§}**21:28** *burned* This follows the ancient Greek version (literally, “swallowed”). The traditional Hebrew text has “lord (of)”. The difference would be caused by switching the order of two Hebrew letters.

***22:5** *This ... lived* Or “This was the land of the Ammonites.”

service.[†] Then they told him what Balak had said.

⁸Balaam said to them, “Stay here for the night. I will talk to the LORD and tell you the answer he gives me.” So the leaders of Moab stayed there with Balaam that night.

⁹God came to Balaam and asked, “Who are these men with you?”

¹⁰Balaam said to God, “The king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, sent them to give me a message. ¹¹This is the message: A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover the land. So come and curse these people. Then maybe I will be able to fight them and force them to leave my land.”

¹²But God said to Balaam, “Don’t go with them. You must not curse those people. They are my people.”

¹³The next morning Balaam got up and said to Balak’s leaders, “Go back to your own country. The LORD will not let me go with you.”

¹⁴So the leaders of Moab went back to Balak and told him this. They said, “Balaam refused to come with us.”

¹⁵So Balak sent other leaders to Balaam. This time he sent many more than the first time. And these leaders were much more important than the first ones he sent. ¹⁶They went to Balaam and said, “This is what Balak son of Zippor says to you:

“Please don’t let anything stop you from coming. ¹⁷I will pay you very well,[‡] and I will do whatever you ask. Come and curse these people for me.”

¹⁸Balaam gave Balak’s officials his answer. He said, “I must obey the LORD my God. I cannot do anything, great or small, against his command. Even if King Balak offers to give me his beautiful home filled with silver and gold, I will not do anything against the Lord’s command. ¹⁹But you can stay here tonight like the other men did, and during the night I will learn what the LORD wants to tell me.”

²⁰That night God came to Balaam. God said, “These men have come again to ask you to go with them. Go with them, but do only what I tell you to do.”

Balaam and His Donkey

²¹The next morning, Balaam got up, put a saddle on his donkey, and went with the Moabite leaders. ²²Balaam was riding on his donkey. Two of his servants were with him. While Balaam was travelling, God became angry. So the angel of the LORD stood in the road in front of Balaam to stop him.

²³When Balaam’s donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a sword in his hand, the donkey turned from the road and went into the field. Balaam could not see the angel, so he was very angry at the donkey. He hit the donkey and forced it to go back on the road.

²⁴Later, the angel of the LORD stood at a place where the road became narrow. This was between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides of the road. ²⁵Again the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, so the donkey walked very close to one wall. This crushed Balaam’s

[†]22:7 *for his service* Or “for the things he needed to make curses”. In ancient times, when people asked for bad things to happen to other people, they often wrote the curses on special bowls and used them in ceremonies. They did this to try to force these bad things to happen. See Deut. 18:10.

[‡]22:17 *I will pay you very well* Or “I will honour you very much.”

foot against the wall. So Balaam hit his donkey again.

²⁶ Later, the angel of the LORD stood at another place where the road became narrow. There was no place where the donkey could go around him. It could not turn to the left or to the right. ²⁷ The donkey saw the angel of the LORD. So the donkey lay down with Balaam sitting on top of it. Balaam was very angry at the donkey. So he hit it with his walking stick.

²⁸ Then the LORD caused the donkey to speak. The donkey said to Balaam, “Why are you angry at me? What have I done to you? You have hit me three times!”

²⁹ Balaam answered the donkey, “You have made me look foolish. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!”

³⁰ But the donkey said to Balaam, “Look, I am your donkey. You have ridden me for so many years. And you know that I have never done this to you before!”

“That is true,” Balaam said.

³¹ Then the LORD allowed Balaam to see the angel. The LORD’s angel was standing in the road, holding a sword in his hand. Balaam bowed low to the ground.

³² Then the angel of the LORD asked Balaam, “Why did you hit your donkey three times? I am the one who came to stop you. You are not doing what is right.” ³³ Your donkey saw me and turned away from me. That happened three times. If the donkey had not turned away, I probably would have killed you already. And I would have let your donkey live.”

³⁴ Then Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, “I have sinned. I did not know that you were standing in the road. If I am doing wrong, I will go back home.”

³⁵ Then the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “No, you can go with these men. But be careful. Speak only the words that I will tell you to say.” So Balaam went with the leaders that Balak had sent.

³⁶ When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite town[§] near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country. ³⁷ When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, “I asked you before to come. Why didn’t you come to me? Did you think I might not be able to pay you?”

³⁸ Balaam answered, “Well, I am here now. I came, but I might not be able to do what you asked. I can only say the words God tells me to say.”

³⁹ Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth. ⁴⁰ Balak killed some cattle and some sheep as his sacrifice. He gave some of the meat to Balaam and some to the leaders who were with him.

⁴¹ The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there they could see part of the Israelite camp.

Balaam’s First Message

23 Balaam said, “Build seven altars here. And prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.” ² Balak did what Balaam asked. Then Balak and Balaam offered a ram and a bull on each of the altars.

³ Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here near this altar. I will go to another place. Maybe the LORD will come to me, and whatever he shows me I will

^{22:32} *You are not ... right* Or “You should not be going this way.” The Hebrew text is not clear.

^{§22:36} *Moabite town* Or possibly, “Ar Moab”.

tell you.” Then Balaam went away to a higher place.

⁴God came to Balaam at that place, and Balaam said, “I have prepared seven altars. And I have offered a bull and a ram as burnt offerings on each altar.”

⁵Then the LORD gave Balaam a message for Balak and said, “Go back to Balak and say the things that I have given you to say.”

⁶So Balaam went back to Balak. Balak was still standing beside his burnt offerings, and all the leaders of Moab were standing there with Balak. ⁷Then Balaam spoke, and this was his message:

“Balak, the king of Moab,
brought me here from the eastern mountains of Aram.

Balak said to me,
‘Come, curse Jacob for me.
Come, speak against the Israelites.’

⁸But God is not against them,
so I cannot speak against them either!
The LORD has not asked for bad things
to happen to these people.

So I cannot do that either.
⁹I see them from the top of the
mountain;

I watch them from the high hills.
They live by themselves.
They do not join with other nations.

¹⁰Counting Jacob’s people is like counting
dust!

Who can count a cloud of dust?
May I die with honour like these good
people.

Let my life end as happily as theirs!”

¹¹Balak said to Balaam, “What have
you done to me? I brought you here to
curse my enemies, but you have blessed
them!”

¹²But Balaam answered, “I must say
the things that the LORD tells me to say.”

¹³Then Balak said to him, “So come
with me to another place. From there
you can see more of these people, but
not all of them. I want you to curse the
ones you can see from there.” ¹⁴So Balak
led Balaam to Watchmen Hills.** This
was on top of Mount Pisgah. There Balak
built seven altars and offered a bull and
a ram as burnt offerings on each altar.

¹⁵Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stay
here by your burnt offerings while I go
and meet with God over there.”

¹⁶So the LORD came to Balaam and
told Balaam what to say. Then he told
Balaam to go back to Balak and say
these things. ¹⁷So Balaam went to Balak.
Balak was still standing beside his burnt
offerings. The leaders of Moab were
there with him. Balak asked him, “What
did the LORD say?”

Balaam’s Second Message

¹⁸Then Balaam said this:
“Stand up, Balak, and listen to me.
Hear me, Balak son of Zippor.

¹⁹God is not a man;
he will not lie.
God is not a human being;
his decisions will not change.
If he says he will do something,
then he will do it.

If he makes a promise,
then he will do what he promised.

²⁰He told me to bless them.

He blessed them, so I cannot change
that.

²¹No disaster is planned for the descen-
dants of Jacob.

No trouble is ahead for the Israelites.
The LORD their God is with them.
The Great King is with them!

²²God brought them out of Egypt;
they are as strong as a wild ox.

**23:14 *Watchmen Hills* Or “the fields of Zophim”.

²³No curse can defeat the people of Jacob.

No magic can stop the Israelites.

People look at them and say,

‘See what God has done!’

²⁴The people are as strong as lions,

and they fight like a lion

that will not rest until it eats what it has caught,

until it drinks the blood of what it has killed.”

²⁵Then Balak said to Balaam, “If you will not curse these people, then at least do not bless them!”

²⁶Balaam answered, “I told you before that I can only say what the LORD tells me to say.”

²⁷Then Balak said to Balaam, “So come with me to another place. Maybe God will be pleased and will allow you to curse them from that place.” ²⁸So Balak led Balaam to the top of Mount Peor, which looks out over the desert.

²⁹Balaam said, “Build seven altars here. Then prepare seven bulls and seven rams for the altars.” ³⁰Balak did what Balaam asked. Balak offered the bulls and rams on the altars.

Balaam’s Third Message

24 Balaam saw that the LORD wanted to bless Israel, so he did not try to change that by using any kind of magic. But Balaam turned and looked towards the desert. ²He saw all the Israelites with each tribe in a separate camp. Then the Spirit of God came on him, ³and he gave this message:

“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.

I am speaking about things I see clearly.

⁴These are the words I heard from God.

I saw what God All-Powerful^{††} showed me.

I humbly tell what I clearly see.

⁵“People of Jacob, your tents are beautiful!

Israelites, your homes are beautiful!

⁶You are like rows of palm trees

planted by the streams.

You are like gardens

growing by the rivers.

You are like sweet-smelling bushes

planted by the LORD.

You are like cedar trees

growing by the water.

⁷You will always have enough water,

enough water for your seeds to grow.

Your king will be greater than King Agag.

Your kingdom will be very great.

⁸“God brought them out of Egypt;

they are as strong as a wild ox.

They will defeat all their enemies

and break their bones and shatter their arrows.

⁹Israel is like a lion,

curled up and lying down.

Yes, they are like a young lion,

and no one wants to wake him!

Anyone who blesses you

will be blessed.

And anyone who curses you

will be cursed.”

¹⁰When Balak heard this, he angrily struck his fist against his hand and said to Balaam, “I called you to come and curse my enemies. But you have blessed them. You have blessed them three times. ¹¹Now leave and go home! I told you that I would give you a very good payment, but the LORD has caused you to lose your reward.”

¹²Balaam said to Balak, “You sent men to ask me to come. Don’t you remember what I told them? I said, ¹³‘Even if Balak gives me his house filled with silver and gold, I can still say only what

^{††}24:4 *God All-Powerful* Hebrew, “El Shaddai”. Also in verse 16.

the LORD commands me to say. I cannot do anything myself, good or bad. I must say what the LORD commands.’¹⁴ Now I am going back to my own people. But I will give you this warning. I will tell you what these Israelites will do to your people in the future.”

Balaam’s Last Message

¹⁵ Then Balaam gave this message:

“This message is from Balaam son of Beor.

I am speaking about things I see clearly.

¹⁶ I heard this message from God.

I learned what God Most High taught me.

I saw what God All-Powerful showed me.

I humbly tell what I clearly see.

¹⁷ “I see him coming, but not now.

I see him coming, but not soon.

Like a star, he will rise from the people of Jacob.

He will come as king from the people of Israel.

He will crush the heads of the Moabites and crack the skulls of the Shethites.

¹⁸ Israel will grow strong!

He will get the land of Edom.

He will get the land of Seir,[‡] his enemy.

¹⁹ “A new ruler will come from the descendants of Jacob.

That ruler will destroy the people left alive in the cities.”

²⁰ Then Balaam saw the Amalekites and said this:

“Amalek is the strongest of all nations, but even Amalek will be destroyed!”

²¹ Then Balaam saw the Kenites and said this:

“You believe your country is safe,

like a bird’s nest high on a mountain.

²² But you Kenites will be destroyed when Assyria takes you away as prisoners.”

²³ Then Balaam said this:

“No one can live when God does this.

²⁴ Ships will come from Cyprus.

They will defeat Assyria and Eber,[¶]

but those ships will also be destroyed.”

²⁵ Then Balaam got up and went back home, and Balak went his own way.

Israel at Peor

25 While the Israelites were camped near Acacia, the men committed sexual sins with Moabite women.

² The Moabite women invited the men to come and join in their sacrifices to their false gods. So the Israelites joined in worshipping these false gods—they ate the sacrifices and worshipped these gods. ³ There the Israelites began worshipping the false god, Baal of Peor. And the LORD became very angry with them.

⁴ The LORD said to Moses, “Get all the leaders of these people. Then kill them so that all the people can see.^{§§} Lay their bodies before the LORD. Then the LORD will not show his anger against all the Israelites.”

⁵ So Moses said to Israel’s judges, “Each of you must find the men in your tribe who have joined in worship of the false god, Baal of Peor. Then you must kill these men.”

⁶ Moses and all the leaders of Israel were gathered at the entrance to the Meeting Tent. While they were all crying there, an Israelite man brought a Midianite woman home to his family. Everyone could see what was happen-

[‡]**24:18 Seir** Another name for Edom.

[¶]**24:24 Eber** This might mean the people living west of the Euphrates River, or it might mean the “Hebrews”, the descendants of Eber. See Gen. 10:21.

^{§§}**25:4 so that all the people can see** Literally, “before the sun”.

ing. ⁷ When Phinehas son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest saw it, he left the meeting and got his spear. ⁸ He followed the Israelite man into the tent. Then he pushed his spear through both of them—through the Israelite man and into the woman’s stomach. At that time there was a great sickness among the Israelites. But when Phinehas killed these two people, the sickness stopped. ⁹ But 24,000 people had already died from that sickness.

¹⁰ The LORD said to Moses, ¹¹ “I was so angry with the Israelites that I wanted to kill them. But Phinehas, son of Eleazar and grandson of Aaron the priest, has saved them from my anger. He did this by showing that he feels strongly, just as I do, that my people must worship only me. ¹² Tell Phinehas that I am making an agreement of friendship with him. ¹³ This is the agreement: he and all his family who live after him will always be priests, because he was so eager to take action for his God. What he did for the Israelites turned my anger away from them.”

¹⁴ The Israelite man who was killed with the Midianite woman was named Zimri son of Salu. He was the leader of a family in the tribe of Simeon. ¹⁵ And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi.* She was the daughter of Zur. Zur was the head of a family and leader of a Midianite tribe.

¹⁶ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷ “The Midianites are your enemies. You must kill them. ¹⁸ They have already made you their enemies. They tricked you at Peor. And they tricked you with the woman named Cozbi. She was the daughter of a Midianite leader, but she was killed when the sickness came to the Israelites. That sickness was caused be-

cause the people were tricked into worshipping the false god Baal of Peor.”

The People Are Counted Again

26 After the great sickness, the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. ² He said, “Count the Israelites. Count all the men who are 20 years old or older and list them by families. These are the men who are able to serve in the army of Israel.”

³ At this time the people were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho. Moses and Eleazar the priest said to the people, ⁴ “You must count every man who is 20 years old or older. The LORD gave Moses this command.” Here is the list of the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

⁵ These were the family groups from the tribe of Reuben (Reuben was the first-born son of Israel):

Hanoch—the Hanochite family group;

Pallu—the Palluite family group;

⁶ Hezron—the Hezronite family group;

Carmi—the Carmite family group.

⁷ The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Reuben was 43,730.

⁸ Pallu’s son was Eliab. ⁹ Eliab had three sons—Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. Remember, Dathan and Abiram were the two leaders who turned against Moses and Aaron. They joined with Korah’s followers who turned against the LORD. ¹⁰ That was the time when the earth opened up and swallowed these leaders along with Korah. And 250 followers of Korah also died when fire burned them up! That was a warning to all the Israelites. ¹¹ But the other people

*25:15 *Cozbi* This name is like the Hebrew word meaning “my lie”.

who were from the family of Korah did not die.

¹² These were the family groups from the tribe of Simeon:

Nemuel—the Nemuelite family group;

Jamin—the Jaminite family group;

Jakin—the Jakinite family group;

¹³ Zerah—the Zerahite family group;

Shaul—the Shaulite family group.

¹⁴ The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Simeon was 22,200.

¹⁵ These were the family groups from the tribe of Gad:

Zephon—the Zephonite family group;

Haggi—the Haggite family group;

Shuni—the Shunite family group;

¹⁶ Ozni—the Oznite family group;

Eri—the Erite family group;

¹⁷ Arodi—the Arodite family group;

Areli—the Arelite family group.

¹⁸ The total number of men in these family groups from the tribe of Gad was 40,500.

¹⁹⁻²⁰ These were the family groups from the tribe of Judah:

Shelah—the Shelanite family group;

Perez—the Perezite family group;

Zerah—the Zerahite family group.

(Two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan, died in Canaan.)

²¹ These were the family groups from Perez:

Hezron—the Hezronite family group;

Hamul—the Hamulite family group.

²² These were the family groups from the tribe of Judah. The total number of men was 76,500.

²³ These were the family groups from the tribe of Issachar:

Tola—the Tolaite family group;

Puah—the Puite family group;

²⁴ Jashub—the Jashubite family group;

Shimron—the Shimronite family group.

²⁵ These were the family groups from the tribe of Issachar. The total number of men was 64,300.

²⁶ These were the family groups from the tribe of Zebulun:

Sered—the Seredite family group;

Elon—the Elonite family group;

Jahleel—the Jahleelite family group.

²⁷ These were the family groups from the tribe of Zebulun. The total number of men was 60,500.

²⁸ Joseph's two sons were Manasseh and Ephraim. Each son became a tribe with its own family groups. ²⁹ These were the family groups of Manasseh:

Makir—the Makirite family groups.

(Makir was the father of Gilead.)

Gilead—the Gileadite family groups.

³⁰ These were the family groups from Gilead:

Iezer—the Iezerite family group;

Helek—the Helekite family group;

³¹ Asriel—the Asrielite family group;

Shechem—the Shechemite family group;

³² Shemida—the Shemidaite family group;

Hepher—the Hopherite family group.

³³ Zelophehad was the son of Hepher.

But he had no sons—only daughters.

His daughters' names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

³⁴ These are all the family groups from the tribe of Manasseh. The total number of men was 52,700.

³⁵ These were the family groups from the tribe of Ephraim:

Shuthelah—the Shuthelahite family group;

Beker—the Bekerite family group;

Tahan—the Tahanite family group.

³⁶ Eran was from Shuthelah's family group;

Eran—the Eranite family group.

³⁷ These were the family groups from the tribe of Ephraim. The total number of men was 32,500.

These family groups of Manasseh and Ephraim are all the descendants of Joseph.

³⁸ These were the family groups from the tribe of Benjamin:

Bela—the Belaite family group;

Ashbel—the Ashbelite family group;

Ahiram—the Ahiramite family group;

³⁹ Shupham—the Shuphamite family group;

Hupham—the Huphamite family group.

⁴⁰ These were the family groups from Bela:

Ard—the Ardite family group;

Naaman—the Naamanite family group.

⁴¹ These were all the family groups from the tribe of Benjamin. The total number of men was 45,600.

⁴² These were the family groups from the tribe of Dan:

Shuham—the Shuhamite family group.

That was the family group from the tribe of Dan. ⁴³ There were many family groups in the Shuhamite tribe. The total number of men was 64,400.

⁴⁴ These were the family groups from the tribe of Asher:

Imnah—the Imnite family group;

Ishvi—the Ishvite family group;

Beriah—the Beriite family group.

⁴⁵ These were the family groups from Beriah:

Heber—the Heberite family group;

Malkiel—the Malkielite family group.

⁴⁶ (Asher also had a daughter named Serah.) ⁴⁷ These were the family groups in the tribe of Asher. The total number of men was 53,400.

⁴⁸ These were the family groups from the tribe of Naphtali:

Jahzeel—the Jahzeelite family group;

Guni—the Gunitite family group;

⁴⁹ Jezer—the Jezerite family group;

Shillem—the Shillemite family group.

⁵⁰ These were the family groups from the tribe of Naphtali. The total number of men was 45,400.

⁵¹ So the total number of Israelite men was 601,730.

⁵² The LORD said to Moses, ⁵³ “The land will be divided and given to these tribes. Each tribe will get enough land for all the people who were counted. ⁵⁴ A large tribe will get much land, and a small tribe will get less land. How much land they get will depend on the number of people who were counted. ⁵⁵ And you must use lots to decide which tribe gets which part of the land. Each tribe will get its share of the land, and that land will be given the name of that tribe.

⁵⁶ Land will be given to each tribe—large and small. And you will throw lots to make the decisions.”

⁵⁷ They also counted the tribe of Levi. These are the family groups from the tribe of Levi:

Gershon—the Gershonite family group;

Kohath—the Kohathite family group;

Merari—the Merarite family group.

⁵⁸ These are also family groups from the tribe of Levi:

the Libnite family group;

the Hebronite family group;

the Mahlite family group;

the Mushite family group;

the Korahite family group.

Amram was from the Kohath family group. ⁵⁹ Amram’s wife was named Jochebed. She was also from the tribe of Levi. She was born in Egypt. Amram and Jochebed had two sons, Aaron and Moses. They also had a daughter, Miriam.

⁶⁰ Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ⁶¹ But Nadab and Abihu died. They died because they made an offering to the LORD with fire that was not allowed.

⁶²The total number of males one month old or older from the tribe of Levi was 23,000. But these were not counted with the rest of the Israelites because they did not get a share of the land that the Lord gave to the other tribes.

⁶³Moses and Eleazar the priest counted all these people. They counted the Israelites while they were on the plains of Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho. ⁶⁴Many years before, in the desert of Sinai, Moses and Aaron the priest counted the Israelites. But all these people were dead. Not one of them was still alive, ⁶⁵because the LORD told them that they would all die in the desert. The only two men who were left alive were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

27 Zelophehad was the son of Hephher. Hephher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir. Makir was the son of Manasseh. Manasseh was the son of Joseph. Zelophehad had five daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. ²These five women went to the Meeting Tent and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and all the Israelites.

The five daughters said, ³“Our father died while we were travelling through the desert. He was not one of Korah’s followers who turned against the LORD. He died because of his own sin. But he had no sons. ⁴This means that our father’s name will not continue. It is not fair that our father’s name will not continue. So

we ask you to give us some of the land that our father’s brothers will get.”

⁵So Moses asked the LORD what he should do. ⁶The LORD said to him, ⁷“The daughters of Zelophehad are right. They should share the land with their father’s brothers. So give them the land that you would have given to their father.

⁸“So tell the Israelites, ‘If a man has no son, when he dies everything he owns will be given to his daughter. ⁹If he has no daughter, everything he owns will be given to his brothers. ¹⁰If he has no brothers, everything he owns will be given to his father’s brothers. ¹¹If his father had no brothers, everything he owns will be given to the closest relative in his family. This will be a law among the Israelites. The LORD has given this command to Moses.’”

Joshua Is the New Leader

¹²Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up this mountain in the Abarim Mountains. There you will see the land that I am giving to the Israelites. ¹³After you have seen this land, you will die like your brother Aaron. ¹⁴Remember when the people complained against me in the desert of Zin? Both you and Aaron refused to obey my command. You did not show the people my holy power over the water.” This happened at the water of Meribah[†] near Kadesh in the desert of Zin.

¹⁵Moses said to the LORD, ¹⁶“LORD, you are the God who knows what people are thinking. I pray that you will choose a leader for these people.[‡] ¹⁷I pray that you will choose a leader who will lead them out of this land and bring them into

[†]27:14 *water of Meribah* Or “water of rebellion”.

[‡]27:16 *LORD, ... these people* Literally, “May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all people, appoint a man for this community.”

the new land. Then your people will not be like sheep without a shepherd.”

¹⁸ So the LORD said to Moses, “Joshua son of Nun is very wise.[¶] You will place your hands on him. ¹⁹ Tell him to stand in front of Eleazar the priest and all the people. Then make him the new leader.

²⁰ “Give him some of your authority so that all the people will obey him. ²¹ If Joshua needs to make a decision, he will go to Eleazar the priest. Eleazar will use the Urim to learn the LORD’s answer. Then Joshua and all the Israelites will do the things God says. If he says, ‘go to war’, they will go to war. And if he says, ‘go home’, they will go home.”

²² Moses obeyed the LORD. Moses told Joshua to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the Israelites. ²³ Then Moses put his hands on him to show that he was the new leader. He did this just as the LORD told him to.

The Daily Offerings

28 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: ² “Give this command to the Israelites. Tell them to be sure to give the grain offerings and sacrifices to me at the right time as sweet-smelling gifts. ³ These are gifts that they must give to the LORD. Every day they must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁴ Offer one of the lambs in the morning and the other lamb just before dark. ⁵ Also give a grain offering of 1 kilogramme[§] of fine flour mixed with 1 litre^{**} of olive oil.” ⁶ (They started giving the daily offerings

at Mount Sinai as sweet-smelling gifts to the LORD.) ⁷ With each lamb pour 1 litre of wine on the altar as a drink offering. Also, inside the Holy Tent pour out a drink offering of beer for the LORD. ⁸ Offer the second lamb just before dark. Offer it in the same way as the morning offering. Also pour out the drink offering that goes with it. This will be a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD.

The Sabbath Offerings

⁹ “On the Sabbath you must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. With the lambs you must give a drink offering and a grain offering of 2 kilogrammes^{††} of fine flour mixed with olive oil. ¹⁰ This is a special offering for the day of rest. This offering is in addition to the regular daily offering and drink offering.

The Monthly Meetings

¹¹ “On the first day of each month you must offer a special burnt offering to the LORD. This offering will be 2 male bulls, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹² With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 3 kilogrammes^{‡‡} of fine flour mixed with olive oil. And with the ram, you must give a grain offering of 2 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with olive oil. ¹³ Also, with each lamb give a grain offering of 1 kilogramme of fine flour mixed with olive oil. This will be a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. ¹⁴ The drink offering will be 2 litres^{¶¶}

[¶]27:18 *Joshua ... is very wise* Literally, “Take Joshua son of Nun. He is a man with a spirit in him.” This might mean that Joshua was very wise, or it might mean that God’s Spirit was with him.

[§]28:5 *1 kilogramme* Literally, “1/10 of an *ephah*”. Also in verses 13,20-21,29.

^{**}28:5 *1 litre* Literally, “1/4 *hin*”. Also in verse 14.

^{††}28:9 *2 kilogrammes* Literally, “2/10 of an *ephah*”. Also in verses 12,20-21,28.

^{‡‡}28:12 *3 kilogrammes* Literally, “3/10 of an *ephah*”. Also in verses 20-21,28.

^{¶¶}28:14 *2 litres* Literally, “1/2 *hin*”.

of wine with each bull, 1.5 litres^{§§} of wine with the ram, and 1 litre of wine with each lamb. That is the burnt offering that must be offered each month of the year. ¹⁵In addition to the regular daily burnt offering and drink offering, you must also give 1 male goat to the LORD. That goat will be a sin offering.

The Passover Offerings

¹⁶“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you must offer the Passover sacrifice to the LORD.

¹⁷The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins on the fifteenth day of that month. This festival lasts for seven days. The only bread you can eat is bread made without yeast. ¹⁸You must have a holy meeting on the first day of this festival. You will not do any work on that day.

¹⁹You will give a gift to the LORD, a burnt offering. This burnt offering will be 2 bulls, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁰With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 3 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with olive oil. With the ram, you must give 2 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with oil.

²¹And with each lamb, you must give 1 kilogramme of fine flour mixed with oil.

²²You must also give a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure. ²³You must give these offerings in addition to the morning burnt offerings that you give every day.

²⁴“In this way, each day for seven days, you must bring the food that is offered as a gift. The smell of these offerings will please the LORD. You must give these offerings in addition to the daily

burnt offering and the drink offering that goes with it.

²⁵“Then, on the seventh day of this festival, you will have another holy meeting. You will not do any work on that day.

The Festival of Harvest Offerings

²⁶“The first day of the Festival of Harvest is the day you bring the first of your new crops and give them as a grain offering to the LORD. At that time you must also call a holy meeting. You must not do any work on that day. ²⁷You must offer a burnt offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must offer 2 bulls, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁸With each bull, you must give 3 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with oil. With the ram, you must give 2 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with oil. ²⁹And with each lamb, you must give 1 kilogramme of fine flour mixed with oil. ³⁰You must also sacrifice a male goat to make you pure. ³¹You must offer these animals with the necessary drink offerings in addition to the daily burnt offerings with its grain offering. Be sure that there is nothing wrong with the animals you offer.

The Festival of Trumpets

29 “There will be a holy meeting on the first day of the seventh month. You will not do any work on that day. That is the day for blowing the trumpets.* ²You must offer a burnt offering. Its smell will please the LORD. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³With each

§§28:14 1.5 litres Literally, “1/3 hin”.

*29:1 *blowing the trumpets* Or “shouting”. This might mean this is a day for shouting and being happy.

bull, you must give a grain offering of 3 kilogrammes[†] of fine flour mixed with oil. With the ram, you must give 2 kilogrammes[‡] of fine flour mixed with olive oil. ⁴And with each lamb, you must give 1 kilogramme[§] of fine flour mixed with olive oil. ⁵Also offer a male goat as a sin offering to make you pure. ⁶These offerings are in addition to the other burnt offerings: the New Moon sacrifice and the daily burnt offering, both of which include their grain offerings and their drink offerings. These must be done according to the rules. They will be a sweet-smelling gift of food to the LORD.

The Day of Purification

⁷“There will be a holy meeting on the tenth day of the seventh month. During that day you must not eat any food,[§] and you must not do any work. ⁸You must offer a burnt offering. Its smell will please the LORD. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁹With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 3 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with olive oil. With the ram, you must give 2 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with oil. ¹⁰And with each lamb, you must give 1 kilogramme of fine flour mixed with oil. ¹¹You must offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the other sin offering for the Day of Purification. This will also be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and their drink offerings.

The Festival of Shelters

¹²“There will be a holy meeting on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.^{**} You must not do any work on that day. You must celebrate a special festival for the LORD for seven days. ¹³You must offer a burnt offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must offer 13 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁴With each bull, you must give a grain offering of 3 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with olive oil. With the ram, you must give 2 kilogrammes of fine flour mixed with oil. ¹⁵And with each lamb, you must give 1 kilogramme of fine flour mixed with oil. ¹⁶You must also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

¹⁷“On the second day of this festival, you must offer 12 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁸You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ¹⁹You must also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁰“On the third day of this festival, you must offer 11 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²¹You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ²²You must also give 1 goat

[†]29:3 3 kilogrammes Literally, “3/10 of an ephah”. Also in verses 9,14.

[‡]29:3 2 kilogrammes Literally, “2/10 of an ephah”. Also in verses 9,14.

[§]29:4 1 kilogramme Literally, “1/10 of an ephah”. Also in verses 10,15.

§29:7 you ... food Literally, “you will humble yourselves.”

**29:12 *fifteenth day of the seventh month* This is the Festival of Shelters. See Festival of Shelters in the Word List.

as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

²³“On the fourth day of this festival, you must offer 10 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁴You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ²⁵You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁶“On the fifth day of this festival, you must offer 9 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ²⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

²⁹“On the sixth day of this festival, you must offer 8 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³⁰You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ³¹You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

³²“On the seventh day of this festival, you must offer 7 bulls, 2 rams and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³³You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams and lambs. ³⁴You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

³⁵“The eighth day of this festival is a holy meeting for you. You must not do any work on that day. ³⁶You must offer

a burnt offering as a sweet-smelling gift to the LORD. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them.

³⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bull, ram and lambs. ³⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the daily burnt offering and its grain offering and drink offering.

³⁹“All these offerings you must present to the LORD at your regular festivals. They are in addition to any offerings that you give by choice or give as part of a promise you make. The offerings that you may choose to give or give as part of a promise can be burnt offerings or fellowship offerings together with their grain offerings and drink offerings.”

⁴⁰Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him.

Vows and Promises

30 Moses spoke with all the leaders of the Israelite tribes and told them about these commands from the LORD:

²“If a man makes a vow to the LORD or makes a promise with an oath, he must not break his promise. He must do everything he said he would do.

³“A young woman might still be living in her father’s house. She might make a vow to the LORD or promise something with an oath. ⁴If her father hears about the vow or promise and says nothing against it, the young woman must do what she promised. ⁵But if her father hears about it and does not agree for her to do it, she is free from her vow or any promise she made. Her father stopped her, so the LORD will forgive her.

⁶“A woman might make a vow, or she might make a promise with an oath without thinking enough about it. If she

then gets married, ⁷ and her husband hears about her vow or promise and says nothing against it, the woman must keep it. ⁸ But if the husband hears about her vow or promise and does not agree for her to do it, the wife does not have to keep her vow or the careless promise she made with an oath. If her husband is against it, this ends her duty to keep it. So the LORD will forgive her.

⁹ “But a woman who is a widow or divorced must keep any vow or promise she makes.

¹⁰ “A married woman living with her husband might make a vow or a promise with an oath. ¹¹ If her husband hears about it and says nothing against it, she must keep any vow or promise she made. She must do everything she said she would do. ¹² But if her husband hears about her vows or promises and refuses to let her keep them, she does not have to keep them. It doesn’t matter what she promised to do; if her husband is against it, this ends her duty to do it. And the LORD will forgive her.

¹³ When a married woman makes a vow or promises to do without something,^{††} her husband can allow her to keep her vows or promises, or he can stop her from keeping them. ¹⁴ If he hears about them and does not stop them, he is allowing her to keep them. She must then do everything she said she would do. By saying nothing against her vows or promises the husband agreed for her to keep them. ¹⁵ But if the husband says nothing when he hears about them, but then later stops her from keeping them, he is the one responsible for breaking her promises.”^{‡‡}

¹⁶ These are the commands the LORD gave to Moses. These are the commands about a man and his wife, and about a father and his daughter who is still young and living at home in her father’s house.

Israel Fights Back Against the Midianites

31 The LORD said to Moses, ² “Before you die, you must punish the Midianites for the troubles they caused^{¶¶} the people of Israel.”

³ So Moses said to the people, “Choose some of your men to be soldiers. The LORD will use these men to do to the Midianites what they did to you. ⁴ Choose 1000 men from each of the tribes of Israel. ⁵ There will be a total of 12,000 soldiers from the tribes of Israel.”

⁶ Moses sent these 12,000 men to war. He sent Phinehas son of Eleazar with them as the priest. Phinehas took with him some things from the Holy Tent and the signal trumpets. ⁷ The Israelites fought the Midianites as the LORD had commanded. They killed all the Midianite men. ⁸ Among the people who they killed were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with a sword.

⁹ The Israelites took the Midianite women and children as prisoners. They also took all their sheep, cattle and other things. ¹⁰ Then they burned all their towns and villages. ¹¹ They took all the people and animals ¹² and brought them to Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the other Israelites. They brought all the things they took in war to the camp of Israel. The Israelites were camped on

^{††}30:13 *do without something* Literally, “humble herself”. Usually this means to make the body suffer in some way, such as by not eating food.

^{‡‡}30:15 *he ... her promises* Literally, “he carries her guilt”.

^{¶¶}31:2 *troubles they caused* See Num. 25:1-18.

the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River across from Jericho. ¹³Then Moses, Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the people went out of the camp to meet with the soldiers.

¹⁴Moses was very angry with the leaders of the army, the commanders^{§§} and the captains*, who came back from the war. ¹⁵Moses said to them, "Why did you let all the women live? ¹⁶These are the women who listened to Balaam and caused the people of Israel to turn away from the LORD that time at Peor. And so a terrible disease came to the LORD's people. ¹⁷Now, kill all the Midianite boys, and kill all the Midianite women who have had sex with a man. ¹⁸But keep for yourselves all the young girls who have never had sex with any man. ¹⁹And then, all you men who killed other people must stay outside the camp for seven days. You must stay outside the camp even if you just touched a dead body. On the third day, you and your prisoners must make yourselves pure. You must do the same thing again on the seventh day. ²⁰You must also purify all the clothes and anything made with leather, wool or wood."

²¹Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers, "These are the rules that the LORD gave to Moses for soldiers coming back from war. ²²⁻²³You must put gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin or lead into the fire and then sprinkle these things with the special water to make them pure. If something can be put in the fire, you must put it in the fire to purify it. If things cannot be put in the fire, you must still sprinkle them with the special water. ²⁴On the seventh day, you must wash all your clothes. Then you

will be pure. After that, you can come into camp."

²⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, ²⁶"You, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders should count all the prisoners, animals and everything the soldiers took in war. ²⁷Then divide these things between the soldiers who went to war and the rest of the Israelites. ²⁸From the soldiers who went to war, take for the LORD one from every 500 items. This includes people, cattle, donkeys and sheep. ²⁹Take that share from the soldiers' half of the things they took in war. Then give these things to Eleazar the priest. That part will belong to the LORD. ³⁰And then, from the people's half, take one thing for every 50 items. This includes people, cattle, donkeys, sheep or any other animal. Give that share to the Levites, because they take care of the LORD's Holy Tent."

³¹So Moses and Eleazar did what the LORD commanded Moses. ³²The soldiers had taken 675,000 sheep, ³³72,000 cattle, ³⁴61,000 donkeys ³⁵and 32,000 women. (These are only the women who had not had sex with any man.) ³⁶The soldiers who went to war got 337,500 sheep. ³⁷They gave 675 sheep to the LORD. ³⁸The soldiers got 36,000 cattle. They gave 72 cattle to the LORD. ³⁹The soldiers got 30,500 donkeys. They gave 61 donkeys to the LORD. ⁴⁰The soldiers got 16,000 women. They gave 32 women to the LORD. ⁴¹Moses gave all these gifts for the LORD to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD had commanded him.

⁴²Then Moses counted the people's half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers who had gone to war. ⁴³The people got 337,500

§§31:14 *commanders* Literally, "leaders of 1000 men".

*31:14 *captains* Literally, "leaders of 100 men".

sheep, ⁴⁴ 36,000 cattle, ⁴⁵ 30,500 donkeys ⁴⁶ and 16,000 women. ⁴⁷ Moses took one out of every 50 women and animals. He gave them to the Levites because they took care of the LORD's Holy Tent. Moses did this as the LORD had commanded.

⁴⁸ Then the leaders of the army, the commanders and the captains, came to Moses. ⁴⁹ They told Moses, "We, your servants, have counted our soldiers. Not one of them was lost in battle. ⁵⁰ So we are bringing the LORD's gift from every soldier. We are bringing things that are made of gold—armbands, bracelets, rings, earrings and necklaces. This gift to the LORD is to pay for our lives."

⁵¹ So Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted all these gold items from them. ⁵² The gold that the commanders and captains gave to the LORD weighed almost 200 kilogrammes.† ⁵³ The soldiers kept the rest of their share of the things they took in war. ⁵⁴ Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the commanders and the captains. Then they put that gold in the Meeting Tent. This present was a reminder for the LORD to remember his people Israel.

Tribes East of the Jordan River

32 The tribes of Reuben and Gad had many livestock. These people looked at the land near Jazer and Gilead. They saw that this land was good for their cattle. ² So the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad came to Moses. They spoke to Moses, Eleazar the priest and the leaders of the people. ³⁻⁴ They said, "We, your servants, have many cattle. And the land that the LORD let the people of Israel capture is good land for cattle. This land includes the area

around Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah,‡ Nebo and Beon. ⁵ If it pleases you, we would like this land to be given to us. Don't make us cross to the other side of the Jordan River."

⁶ Moses told the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad, "Will you let your brothers go and fight while you settle here? ⁷ Why are you trying to discourage the Israelites? You will make them not want to cross the river and take the land that the LORD has given to them! ⁸ Your fathers did the same thing to me. In Kadesh Barnea I sent spies to look at the land. ⁹ These men went as far as Eshcol Valley. They saw the land, and they discouraged the Israelites. These men made the Israelites not want to go into the land that the LORD had given to them. ¹⁰ The LORD became very angry with the people. He made this promise: ¹¹ 'None of the people who came from Egypt and are 20 years old or older will be allowed to see this land. I made a promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I promised to give this land to these people, but they did not really follow me. ¹² Only Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun really followed the LORD!'

¹³ "The LORD was very angry with the Israelites, so he made them stay in the desert for 40 years. He made them stay there until all the people who had sinned against the LORD were dead. ¹⁴ And now you are doing the same thing that your fathers did. You sinful people, do you want the LORD to be even more angry with his people? ¹⁵ If you stop following the Lord, he will make Israel stay even longer in the desert. Then you will destroy all these people!"

†31:52 **200 kilogrammes** Literally, "16,750 shekels".

‡32:3-4 **Sibmah** Or "Sebam".

¹⁶ But the people from the tribes of Reuben and Gad came up to Moses and said, “We will build cities for our children and pens for our animals here. ¹⁷ Then our children will be safe behind the city walls, protected from the other people who live in this land. But we will gladly go first into battle, ahead of the other Israelites. We will bring them to their land. ¹⁸ We will not come back home until everyone in Israel has taken his part of the land. ¹⁹ We will not take any of the land west of the Jordan River. No, our part of the land is east of the Jordan River.”

²⁰ So Moses told them, “If you do what you just said, this land will belong to you. Your soldiers must go first into battle in front of the LORD’s Holy Box. ²¹ Your soldiers must be the first to cross the Jordan River in front of the LORD’s presence until he forces the enemy to leave. ²² After the LORD helps us all take the land, you can go back home. You will have done your duty for the LORD and for the rest of Israel. And the LORD will let you have this land. ²³ But if you don’t do these things, you will be sinning against the LORD. And know for sure that you will be punished for your sin. ²⁴ Build cities for your children and pens for your sheep and goats. But then, you must do what you promised.”

²⁵ Then the people from the tribes of Gad and Reuben said to Moses, “We are your servants. You are our master, so we will do what you say. ²⁶ Our wives, children and all our animals will stay in the cities of Gilead. ²⁷ But we, your servants, will cross the Jordan River. We will march before the LORD into battle, as our master says.”

²⁸ So Moses gave instructions about them to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and all the leaders of the tribes of Israel. ²⁹ Moses said to them, “The peo-

ple of Gad and Reuben will cross the Jordan River. They will march before the LORD into battle. They will help you take the land. And you will give the land of Gilead as their part of the country. ³⁰ But if they do not cross the river with you ready to fight, they will not be given any land on this side. They will get only a share of the land of Canaan with the rest of you.”

³¹ The people of Gad and Reuben answered, “We promise to do what the LORD commanded. ³² We will cross the Jordan River and march before the LORD into the land of Canaan. And our part of the country is the land east of the Jordan River.”

³³ So Moses gave that land to the people of Gad, to the people of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, Joseph’s son. Their land included the kingdom of Sihon the Amorite and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan and all the cities around that area.

³⁴ The people of Gad rebuilt the cities of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, ³⁵ Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, ³⁶ Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran. They rebuilt cities with strong walls and pens for their animals.

³⁷ The people of Reuben rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, ³⁸ Nebo, Baal Meon and Sibmah. They used the names of the cities that they rebuilt. But they changed the names of Nebo and Baal Meon.

³⁹ People from Makir’s family group went to Gilead. (Makir was Manasseh’s son.) They defeated the city. They defeated the Amorites who lived there. ⁴⁰ So Moses gave Gilead to Makir from the tribe of Manasseh, and his family settled there. ⁴¹ Jair, from the family of Manasseh, defeated the small towns there. Then he called them Towns of Jair. ⁴² Nobah defeated Kenath and the

small towns near it. Then he called that place by his own name.

Israel's Journey From Egypt

33 Here is a list of the places where the Israelites camped after they left Egypt. They were organized in groups like an army and were led by Moses and Aaron. ²Following the LORD's command, Moses kept a record of each place they stayed before moving on to the next place. These are all the places they went:

³On the fifteenth day of the first month, they left Rameses. That morning after Passover, the Israelites marched out of Egypt with their arms raised in victory. All the people of Egypt saw them. ⁴The Egyptians were burying all the people the LORD killed. They were burying all their firstborn sons. The LORD had shown his judgement against the gods of Egypt.

⁵The Israelites left Rameses and travelled to Succoth. ⁶From Succoth they travelled to Etham. They camped there at the edge of the desert. ⁷They left Etham and went to Pi Hahiroth. This was near Baal Zephon. They camped near Migdol.

⁸They left Pi Hahiroth and walked through the middle of the sea. They went towards the desert. Then they travelled for three days through the desert of Etham. The people camped at Marah.

⁹They left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

¹⁰They left Elim and camped near the Red Sea.^f

¹¹They left the Red Sea and camped in the western Sinai Desert.[§]

¹²They left there and camped at Dophkah.

¹³They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

¹⁴They left Alush and camped at Rephidim. There was no water for the people to drink at that place.

¹⁵They left Rephidim and camped in the desert of Sinai.

¹⁶They left the desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁷They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

¹⁸They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

¹⁹They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

²⁰They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

²¹They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

²²They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

²³They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

²⁴They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

²⁵They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

²⁶They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

²⁷They left Tahath and camped at Terah.

²⁸They left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

²⁹They left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

³⁰They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

³¹They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

^f33:10 *Red Sea* Or "Reed Sea", but see 1 Kgs 9:26.

[§]33:11 *western Sinai Desert* Literally, "desert of Sin".

³²They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

³³They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

³⁴They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

³⁵They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

³⁶They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the desert of Zin.

³⁷They left Kadesh and camped at Hor. This was the mountain at the border of the country of Edom.

³⁸Aaron the priest obeyed the LORD and went up Mount Hor. Aaron died at that place on the first day of the fifth month. That was the fortieth year after the Israelites had left Egypt. ³⁹Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor.

⁴⁰Arad was a town in the Negev, in the land of Canaan. The Canaanite king in that place heard that the Israelites were coming.

⁴¹The Israelites left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

⁴²They left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

⁴³They left Punon and camped at Oboth.

⁴⁴They left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim. This was at the border of the country of Moab.

⁴⁵They left Iye Abarim and camped at Dibon Gad.

⁴⁶They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

⁴⁷They left Almon Diblathaim and camped on the mountains of Abarim near Nebo.

⁴⁸They left the mountains of Abarim and camped in the plains of Moab. This was near the Jordan

River across from Jericho. ⁴⁹Their camp went from Beth Jeshimoth to Acacia Field.

⁵⁰There, the LORD said to Moses, ⁵¹“Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: You will cross the Jordan River. You will go into the land of Canaan. ⁵²You will take the land from the people you find there. You must destroy all their carved statues and idols. You must destroy all their places of worship. ⁵³You will take the land and you will settle there, because I am giving this land to you. It will belong to your family groups. ⁵⁴Each of your family groups will get part of the land. You will throw lots to decide which family group gets each part of the country. Large family groups will get large parts of the land. Small family groups will get small parts of the land. The lots will show which family group gets which part of the land. Each tribe will get its part of the land.

⁵⁵“You must force these other people to leave the country. If you let them stay in your country, they will bring many troubles to you. They will be like a needle** in your eye and a thorn in your side. They will bring many troubles to the country where you will be living. ⁵⁶Then I will punish you in the same way I had planned to punish them!”

The Borders of Canaan

34 The LORD said to Moses, ²“Speak to the Israelites and tell them this: You will soon enter the land of Canaan. I am giving you that land to be your very own. These will be its borders: ³On the south, you will get part of the desert of Zin near Edom. Your southern border will start at the south end of the Dead Sea. ⁴It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will go through the town of

**33:55 *needle* A thin barb or thorn from a plant.

Zin to Kadesh Barnea and then to Hazar Addar, and then it will pass through Azmon. ⁵From Azmon the border will go to the Brook of Egypt,^{††} and it will end at the Sea.^{‡‡}

⁶“Your western border will be the Sea.

⁷“Your northern border will begin at the Sea and go to Mount Hor. ⁸From Mount Hor it will go to Lebo Hamath and then to Zedad. ⁹Then that border will go to Ziphron, and it will end at Hazar Enan. This will be your northern border.

¹⁰“Your eastern border will begin at Enan and go to Shepham. ¹¹From Shepham the border will go east of Ain to Riblah. The border will continue along the hills by Lake Galilee.^{¶¶} ¹²Then the border will continue along the Jordan River. It will end at the Dead Sea. These are the borders around your country.”

¹³So Moses gave this command to the Israelites: “That is the land that you will get. You will throw lots to divide the land among the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh, as the LORD commanded. ¹⁴The tribes of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh have already taken their land. ¹⁵These two and a half tribes took the land near Jericho—they took the land east of the Jordan River.”

¹⁶Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁷“These are the men who will help you divide the land: Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun ¹⁸and the leaders of all the tribes. There will be one leader from each tribe. These men will divide the land. ¹⁹These are the names of the leaders:

from the tribe of Judah—Caleb son of Jephunneh;

²⁰from the tribe of Simeon—Shemuel son of Ammihud;

²¹from the tribe of Benjamin—Elidad son of Kislou;

²²from the tribe of Dan—Bukki son of Jogli;

²³from the descendants of Joseph; from the tribe of Manasseh—Hanniel son of Ephod;

²⁴from the tribe of Ephraim—Kemuel son of Shiptan;

²⁵from the tribe of Zebulun—Elizaphan son of Parnach;

²⁶from the tribe of Issachar—Paltiel son of Azzan;

²⁷from the tribe of Asher—Ahihud son of Shelomi;

²⁸from the tribe of Naphtali—Pedahel son of Ammihud.”

²⁹The LORD chose these men to divide the land of Canaan among the Israelites.

The Levites' Towns

35 The LORD spoke to Moses in the plain of Moab by the Jordan River across from Jericho. He said, ²“Tell the Israelites that they should give some of the towns in their part of the land to the Levites. The Israelites should give these towns and the pastures around them to the Levites. ³The Levites will be able to live in them. And all the cattle and other animals that belong to the Levites will be able to eat from the pastures around these towns. ⁴The pastureland you give to the Levites will go out 450 metres^{§§} from the walls of the towns. ⁵The outer border of this pastureland around the town will be 900

^{††}34:5 *Brook of Egypt* That is, the stream called “Wadi El-Arish”.

^{‡‡}34:5 *Sea* That is, the Mediterranean Sea. Also in verses 6,7.

^{¶¶}34:11 *Lake Galilee* Literally, “Kinnereth Lake”.

^{§§}35:4 *450 metres* Literally, “1000 cubits”.

metres* on each side, north, east, south and west. The town will be in the centre of this area. ⁶Six of those towns will be cities of safety. If a person accidentally kills someone, that person can run to those cities for safety. In addition to those six cities, you will also give 42 more towns to the Levites. ⁷So you will give a total of 48 towns to the Levites. You will also give them the land around those towns. ⁸The large tribes of Israel will get large pieces of land. The small tribes of Israel will get small pieces of land. So the large tribes will give more towns and the small tribes will give fewer towns to the Levites.”

⁹Then the LORD said to Moses, ¹⁰“Tell the people this: You will cross the Jordan River and go into the land of Canaan. ¹¹You must choose towns to be cities of safety. Then any person who accidentally kills someone can run to one of those cities for safety. ¹²There the person will be safe from the dead person’s relative who has the duty of punishing the killer. The killer must be protected from death until there can be a public trial. ¹³There will be six cities of safety. ¹⁴Three of them will be east of the Jordan River and three of them will be in the land of Canaan, west of the Jordan River. ¹⁵These cities will be places of safety for citizens of Israel and for immigrants who live among you. Any of these people will be able to run to one of these cities if they accidentally kill someone.

¹⁶“If you use anything made of iron to kill someone, you are a murderer, and you must die. ¹⁷If you use a rock large enough to kill someone and you kill an-

other person, you are a murderer, and you must die. ¹⁸If you use a piece of wood large enough to kill someone and you kill another person, you are a murderer, and you must die. ¹⁹A member of the dead person’s family† can chase you and kill you as soon as he finds you.

²⁰⁻²¹“You might hit someone with your hand or push someone or throw something at them and kill them. If you did that from hate, you are a murderer, and you must be killed. A member of the dead person’s family can chase you and kill you as soon as he finds you.

²²“You might accidentally kill someone, maybe by pushing them or by throwing something and accidentally hitting them. ²³Perhaps you threw a rock that was large enough to kill, but it hit someone you didn’t see and killed them. You didn’t plan to kill anyone. You didn’t hate the person you killed—it was only an accident. ²⁴If that happens, the community must decide what to do. The court must decide if a member of the dead person’s family can kill you. ²⁵If the community decides to protect you from the dead person’s family, the community must take you back to your city of safety. You must stay there until the high priest‡ dies.

²⁶⁻²⁷“You must never go outside the limits of your city of safety. If you do and if a member of the dead person’s family catches you and kills you, that family member will not be guilty of murder. ²⁸Whoever accidentally killed someone must stay in their city of safety until the high priest dies. After the high priest dies, that person can go back to their

*35:5 *900 metres* Literally, “2000 cubits”.

†35:19 *member of the dead person’s family* Literally, “the blood avenger”. Also in verses 20-21,24,26-27.

‡35:25 *high priest* Literally, “the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil”.

own land. ²⁹These rules will be the law forever in all the towns of your people.

³⁰“A killer should be put to death as a murderer only if there are witnesses. No one can be put to death if there is only one witness.

³¹“A murderer must be put to death. Don’t take money to change the punishment. That murderer must be killed.

³²“If a person killed someone and then ran to one of the cities of safety, don’t take money to let that person go home. That person must stay in that city until the high priest dies.

³³“Don’t let your land be polluted with innocent blood. If a person murders someone, the only payment for that crime is that the murderer must be killed! There is no other way to purify the land from that crime. ³⁴I am the LORD. I will be living in your country with you Israelites, so don’t make it unclean with the blood of innocent people.”

The Land of Zelophehad’s Daughters

36 Manasseh was Joseph’s son. Makir was Manasseh’s son. Gilead was Makir’s son. The leaders of Gilead’s family went to talk to Moses and the leaders of the tribes of Israel. ²They said, “Sir, the LORD commanded you to divide the land among the people of Israel by throwing lots. And sir, the LORD commanded you to give the land of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. ³But if a man from one of the other tribes marries one of Zelophehad’s daughters, that land will leave our family. The people of that

other tribe get the land. So we lose the land that we got by throwing lots.

⁴In the year of Jubilee, all the land is returned to the tribe that really owns it. At that time the land that belongs to Zelophehad’s daughters will be taken from us. Our tribe will lose that land forever.”

⁵Moses gave this command from the LORD to the Israelites: “The men from this tribe of Joseph’s people are right. ⁶This is the LORD’s command to Zelophehad’s daughters: If you want to marry someone, you must marry someone from your own tribe. ⁷In this way land will not be passed from tribe to tribe among the Israelites. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to their own ancestors and tribe. ⁸And if a woman gets her father’s land, she must marry someone from her own tribe. That way everyone will keep the land that belonged to their ancestors. ⁹So the land must not be passed from tribe to tribe among the Israelites. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to their own ancestors.”

¹⁰So Zelophehad’s daughters obeyed the LORD’s command to Moses. ¹¹Zelophehad’s daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah—married their cousins on their father’s side of the family. ¹²Their husbands were from Manasseh’s family groups, so their land remained within their father’s family group and tribe.

¹³So these are the laws and commands that the LORD gave to the Israelites through Moses in the plain of Moab by the Jordan River across from Jericho.