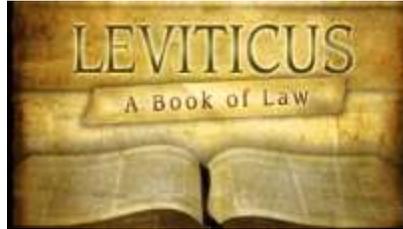


THROUGH THE BIBLE
October 4, 2017

A Review of What We Did Last Week
Lesson 4 in the Workbook / Leviticus



Page 26 – The Order of the Sacrifices

The Sin Offering	Sinner understood an animal was a substitute
The Guilt Offering	Offering brought cleansing of the conscience
The Burnt Offering	Sinner made a total surrender to God
The Grain Offering	Acknowledge the goodness of God / sacrifice of praise
The Fellowship Offering	Symbolized peace between God and his people

Page 27 – The Day of Atonement

What was the purpose of the Day of Atonement and what was its significance?

Chapter 16 describes the *Day of Atonement*

It was the day Israel was made clean as a nation.

It was read in the synagogue on *Yom Kippur*.

The High Priest would make atonement for his own sin through the blood of a goat.

Then a second goat (the scapegoat) was sent away alive into the desert.

This goat bore the sins of the Israelites and removed the sin and guilt from their presence.

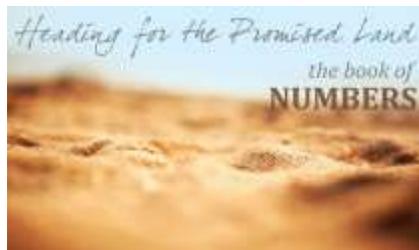
Personal Reflection

How does Christ's sacrifice on the cross provide atonement for sin?

Does God still expect holiness from his people today?

How do we balance our rituals with legalistic practices?

NUMBERS



Two titles are associated with the book of Numbers –

Numbers comes from the Vulgate (Latin) and the Septuagint (Greek).

A second title, *In the Wilderness*, comes from the Masoretic Text (Hebrew / Aramaic).

In this translation, the titles come from the opening word or key words in the first sentence.

There were three writers who influenced the final version of Numbers –

J writer Numbers 11:4-15 11:18-24a 11:31-35 Numbers 22:22-35

E writer Numbers 11:16-17a 11:24b-30 Numbers 22-24

P writer Numbers 1-10:10 Numbers 26-36

Number 1-25 contains stories of rebellion.

Disobedience is prevalent in Numbers and so is discipline / punishment from God.

Numbers 1-10 is the establishment of the wilderness camp.

The purpose of the instructions is to prepare the people for God to dwell in the tabernacle.

The tabernacle will always be at the center of the Israelite camp.

From there we hear about the tragic wilderness journey of the first generation.

Numbers 11 People complain about the lack of meat

Numbers 13-14 People refuse to risk their lives to conquer Canaan

Numbers 16-17, 20-21, and 25 People rebel against God and Moses

Numbers 18-19 Provide guidelines for priests on approaching God

Numbers 26-36 focuses on the second generation and is a story of hope.

Rebellion gives way to solutions. The promise of land once again takes center stage.

The stories also examine the external threats to Israel (Numbers 1-10 has an internal focus).

In Numbers it is the goal of the people to leave the wilderness and enter the Promised Land.

It is a rich resource for us to have a theological reflection on community.

The wilderness represents Israel's birth as a nation.

It is a place of testing.

It is a place where people wander around for a whole generation.

It is a place outside of civilization.

It stands on the edge of a new creation.

This book of the Bible derives its name from the two censuses taken in Numbers 1 and 26.

In Genesis 17:8 God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants.

In Leviticus the predominant theme was that God is holy and God demands holiness.

God gave the people ceremonial laws and all the accompanying regulations.

The people assumed that as long as they obeyed these laws they would be blessed.

In Numbers the people are preparing to enter (and possess) the Promised Land.

God is still faithful and God still demands faithfulness.

The people of Israel – not so much!

Repeatedly God punishes his chosen people and their enemies because of their disobedience. Even Moses will be the recipient of God's wrath.

Chapters 1-4 describe the outward formation of the camp

Chapter 5 describes the inward condition of the camp

Chapter 6 describes the provision for those desiring to consecrate themselves to God

Numbers 6:22-27 is read on one of our festival days – *Name of Jesus* – January 1

Chapters 7-10:10 includes offerings and more provisions

Each chapter builds in anticipation of complete compliance and obedience to God.

In Numbers 10:11 the people set out for the Promised Land.

Three days into the journey they begin to grumble.

In Exodus it only took three days after the parting of the Red Sea for them to complain.

Hmm ... a pattern!

In Chapter 11 God responds to their complaints

God has been providing manna this whole time but this becomes part of their complaint –

We remember what we ate in Egypt – fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, garlic

We never see anything but this manna.

Numbers 11:24-30 was read on Pentecost Sunday.

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 will be read on September 30, 2018.

The story draws attention not only to the complaints of the people but of Moses.

His burdens are too great and he questions whether God is really with him.

God will respond by distributing some of Moses' spirit among 70 elders.

God ensures Moses that he will not have to bear his burdens alone anymore.

Moses is caught in a triangle between God and Israel.

After all, Moses was not the one who conceived them or promised to give them land.

God does not respond to Moses' actual request but to the substance of his complaint.

In Chapter 12 Miriam and Aaron question the authority of Moses.

Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?

God rebukes them verbally and strikes Miriam with leprosy.

The people have a responsibility to obey his commands and to support those in authority.

In Chapters 13 and 14 Israel is ready to enter Canaan.

Differences of opinion –

Joshua and Caleb are confident and believe God will be faithful in securing a victory.

The others who went out to spy on the land have a different opinion about what they saw.

They looked at the Canaanites and were overwhelmed by their size

They thought it would be better to turn around and return to Egypt – to slavery / bondage

Their grumbling led to open rebellion

They wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb and refused to fight for the land

God has had it! God is ready to destroy them all!
All God asks is that they trust him and remain faithful to him.
But the attitude of the Israelites is disturbing. They lack trust in the power of God.
Moses again intercedes on behalf of the people.

* God relents from his anger and forgives them but God still punishes them.
He condemns them to wander in the wilderness for forty years.
A whole generation will never enter the Promised Land but their children will.

The people repent and try to enter the Promised Land despite God's decree.
And they are defeated.

In Numbers 15:30-31 God declares he will not tolerate deliberate, defiant sin.

In Chapter 16 we read of another rebellion.
The leaders rise up against Moses and Aaron.
God again punishes those who oppose his chosen leaders.

In Chapter 17-19 God confirms his choice of priests and outlines their duties.
God shows once and for all which tribe is in charge of the priesthood.
God wants to squelch any further grumbling and quarreling.
In Chapter 18 the duties and offerings of the priests are outlined.

In Chapter 20 the Israelites have now returned to Kadesh-Barnea.
The Promised Land lies before them once more.
It is a new generation facing a new opportunity.
But they begin to complain and want to return to Egypt (learned from their parents).

Despite their grumbling and complaining, God provides water from a rock to satisfy their thirst.
This time it is Moses who errs.
God commands Moses to speak to the rock but Moses strikes the rock twice.
Moses is not exempt from punishment and God forbids him to enter Canaan.

Chapter 21 recounts Israel's first victory over the Canaanite king.
Numbers 21:4-9 is read on the 4th Sunday in Lent.
God gives them complete victory but they are still impatient and grumble against God.
God punishes them once more (this time) with venomous snakes.
Though many die, God is faithful and sends a way for the people to heal.
Moses is told to put a bronze serpent on a pole.
If those who were bitten would look to the pole, they would live.
An act of faith is required on the part of the Israelites.

In Chapter 26 a second census is taken and marks a transition point.
The Israelites are ready to march in and possess the Promised Land.
They are at the beginning again.
Joshua is chosen to lead the Israelites into Canaan (27:12-23)

Through this entire ordeal, God has proven himself faithful to his promise.
Israel has been grumbling and rebelling and suffering the punishment of God.
God demands faithfulness. He still seals his promise.
God still intends to give them the land he promised to their ancestors.

Lack of faith leads to grumbling which (in turn) results in rebellion and disobedience.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflective Points

Wilderness experiences

Making room for the Lord

Grumbling leads to rebellion and rebellion leads to disobedience

Moses caught in a triangle

Questioning authority

Assignment

Lesson 5 in the Workbook

Read Deuteronomy (or the portions outlined in the workbook)

Prayer