

Exposition of the Book of Numbers

Sunset Bible Church Adult Sunday School 2021

Week 7: A New Generation (Numbers 28-30)

“For the Lord had said of them, “They shall die in the wilderness.” Not one of them was left, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.” – Numbers 27:65

Outline of the Class/Book

- Week 7: Offerings and Holy Days (28-30)
- Week 8: Preparation to Enter the Promised Land (31-33)
- Week 9: Cities and Boundaries (34-36); Conclusion

Opening Discussion:

- What did you notice or observe as you read that you had not noticed before? What stood out to you?
- How do these chapters describe God? What can we learn about God in these chapters? How is He portrayed?
- What questions do you still have about the text? What didn't make sense?

A New Generation (26:1-36:13)

Offerings and Holy Days in the New Land (28:1-29:40): YHWH gave Moses the following instructions on offerings. The following offerings are mostly “fully consumed offerings” for the purpose of worship. There are other sacrifices described elsewhere on the holy days (see, for example, Leviticus 23) but this section of text is only concerned with those that belong wholly to YHWH.¹ Although these sacrifices may seem tedious to us, they represent Israel's participation with God's ordering of Creation.² The cycles of offerings into days, months, and years being observed recognize YHWH as the one who ordered the universe and Israel as living in accordance with God's order and design.

- **Daily Offerings (28:1-8):** As a regular offering, the Israelites are to offer, as a burnt offering, two male lambs (one year old without blemish), one in the morning and one at twilight. Also offered are a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, mixed with a quarter of a hin of beaten oil, and a quarter of a hin of a drink offering (“strong drink,” probably indicating beer made from barley, but there isn't a consensus among OT scholar and there are other possibilities). This is all offered as a “pleasing aroma, a food offering for YHWH.”
 - **Hin and Ephah:** A “hin” is about 1.5 gallons. An “ephah” is about 6.1 gallons.
 - **New Testament Parallel:** The offerings in this section are paralleled and echoed in the New Testament in Romans 12:1: “Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” The holiness of the sacrifice is that it is

¹ Timothy R. Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, 1st Edition. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993). 561

² Dennis T. Olson, *Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996). 171

“unblemished” and the acceptableness is signified by it being an “aroma pleasing to God.”

- **Sabbath Offerings (28:9-10):** The offerings on the Sabbath day are the same except two tenths of an ephah for the grain offering (instead of one). These offerings should be understood as being cumulative; the offerings on special days is in addition to the daily offering.³ On the Sabbath, then, the offering is effectively doubled. This is true of all other offerings below.
 - The Sabbath, according to Cole, served three purposes:
 - Imitation of God’s resting from creation,
 - Remembrance of the covenant between God and Israel,
 - Recalling the foundation of Israel in the Exodus.⁴
- **Monthly Offerings (28:11-15):** At the beginning of every month, two bulls, one ram, and seven male year-old lambs, three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, for each bull, two tenths for the ram, and one tenth for each lamb. The drink offerings are a half of a hin of wine for each bull, a third for the ram, and a quarter for each lamb. Also offering is a male goat for a sin offering.
- **Passover Offerings (28:16-25):** On the fourteenth day of the first month is Passover and the following day is a feast. For seven days, unleavened bread will be eaten. The first day and last days are to holy convocations and no ordinary work is to be done. The food offering is to be two bulls, one ram, and seven male year-old lambs. The grain offerings offered with the animals is the same as the monthly offerings. Additionally, one male goat is offered as a sin offering.
- **Offerings for the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) (28:26-31):** On the day of firstfruits, Israel is to have a holy convocation (no ordinary work). They are to offer two bulls, one ram, seven year-old male lambs with grain offerings and drink offerings. Also offered is a male goat for a sin offering.
- **Offerings for the Feast of Trumpets (29:1-6):** On the first day of the seventh month, Israel is to have a holy convocation (no ordinary work). On this day, they are to blow the trumpets and offer a burnt offering of one bull (note the difference), one ram, seven year-old male lambs, and corresponding grain offerings. Also offered are a sin offering and a drink offering.
- **Offerings for the Day of Atonement (29:7-11):** On the tenth day of the seventh month, Israel is to have a holy convocation (no work) and afflict (or deny) themselves. The offerings offered are as above.
 - **Afflict/deny:** The idea here is of humbling or denying oneself (as in fasting).
- **Offerings for the Feast of Booths (29:12-38):** On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, they are to have a holy convocation (no work) and keep a feast for seven days. The animals offered are thirteen bulls, two rams, fourteen year-old male lambs with grain offerings (same ratio as above) and drink offerings. Again, a male goat is also offered for a sin offering. On the second day of the feast, twelve bulls are offered (everything else is the same), and so on, each day of the feast, one less bull is offered,

³ Dennis R. Cole, *Numbers: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, Tenn: Holman Reference, 2000). 470

⁴ Ibid. 474

until seven are offered on the seventh day. On the eighth day, we are back to a more regular pattern (one bull, one ram, seven lambs).

- **Why descending bulls?** The decline of “bulls” serves double symbolism. Starting at 13 and descending to 7 brings about seven bulls on the seventh day and brings about a total of 70 bulls for the seven days.
- **Conclusion (29:39-40):** These offerings are in addition to vow and freewill offerings. Moses told the people everything YHWH had commanded.
- **Notes:**
 - These sacrifices add up to a total of: 113 bulls, 32 rams, 1086 lambs, more than 2,000 lbs. of flour, more than 1,000 bottles of oil and wine.⁵

Vows (30:1-16): Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes, giving YHWH’s commands on vows.

- **Men and Vows (30:1-2):** If a man vows a vow to YHWH, or swears an oath to bind himself by pledge, he must keep his word. He must do according to all that proceeds from his mouth.
- **Women and Vows (30:3-16):** The rules for women’s vows are different than men’s in light of the patriarchal society Israel lived in.
 - **Vows made by a woman while living in her father’s house:** If a woman vows a vow while she is still living in her father’s house, the vow stands if her father hears of the vow and says nothing. If he opposes her when he hears of it, the vow does not stand and she incurs no guilt for not keeping the vow.
 - **Vows made by an engaged woman:** If a woman is marrying and makes a vow and her fiancé hears of it and says nothing, then her vow stands. But if he opposes her, it voids her vow.
 - **Vows made by a widow or divorced woman:** Vows made by a widow or divorced woman stand and are not voidable.
 - **Vows made by a married woman:** If a woman makes a vow and her husband hears of it and does nothing, the vow stands. If he opposes it, If he voids her vow the day he has heard of it, the vow is voided and she incurs no guilt. If the husband opposes the vow after he has heard of it (meaning not right away), then he bears her iniquity for breaking the vow.
- These laws are a protection of a woman’s integrity and an affirmation of the importance of truthfulness in vows.
- Hannah as an example

Final Discussion (if times allows): What is (y)our relationship to these chapters? What can be applied to your individual context, our context as an American church, and/or our context as the Church? What can you learn from these chapters about how to live in a way that is pleasing and honoring to God?

Reading Numbers Together:

- Week of 8/29: Numbers 31-33
- Week of 9/5: Numbers 34-36

⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979). Pg. 197