

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

NUMBERS 6-10

Genesis is the book of **origination**... It describes the beginning of the heavens and earth – the beginning of man - the beginning of sin – the beginning of Israel...

Exodus is the book of **salvation**. Israel fell into sin and bondage in Egypt, but God sent a deliver to set His people free. God has done the same for us...

Leviticus is the book of **dedication**... At Mount Sinai God taught His people to make sacrifice and offer up their worship. They were to be holy as God is holy.

Which brings us to Numbers, the book of **organization**... Now that the nation has been set free, and the people have dedicated themselves to God, now God wants His people to camp together, and march in harmony with each other.

Last week we saw where God told Moses to take a census, and account for each Israelite. He tells the tribes where to camp. He issues the order in which they're to march. He tells the Levities how to transport the Tabernacle.

God gets His people organized. As the old saying goes, **“Don't agonize, organize.”** God called the new nation an army - and a successful army knows how to coordinate its efforts. Authority, accountability, mobilization are keys.

And this is the pattern God desires for believers in Jesus... Once you're saved, and have dedicated yourself to worship God you need to come under the authority and organization of the church. You need to find your place in the camp.

Yet, too many Christians buck God's will at this point...

They want to be Lone Rangers for Jesus. They'd rather go their own way - set up their own camp - march to their own drummer. They fail to see that we can do more together than we can apart. All too often leading the church is like *herding cats*. People are finicky, fickle, free-wheeling, and have their own agenda. And the result is a weakened church. To be victorious we need to be organized.

Which brings us to chapter 6, "Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD..." Chapters 3-4 discussed the special duties of the Levites, but they were not the only Israelites that could be uniquely dedicated to God. Any Hebrew from any tribe could take the vow of a Nazirite. The word "*Nazir*" means "*to set apart*".

A Nazirite was a person who took a special vow to God. Sometimes the vow lasted a month – at other times a year – some people became lifelong Nazirites.

Such was the case with Samson – and probably Samuel and John the Baptist.

The vow of the Nazirite consisted of three commitments... Verse 3, "he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the

grapevine, from seed to skin.” In Bible times, grapes were known as “God’s candy”. They were sweet to the taste.

Wine was a symbol of joy. The fruit of the vine was synonymous with *physical pleasure*. But the Nazirite said no to grape juice. He lived for *spiritual satisfaction*.

Verse 5, “All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.”

The Nazirite gave up basic grooming. He was forbidden to trim his hair and beard. When you saw a Nazirite his hair was always knotty and knappy.

For a Nazirite everyday was a bad hair day.

Obviously the Nazirite wasn’t very concerned about his physical appearance. He was far more concerned with *internal beauty* than *external beauty*.

And the third component of his vow is in verse 6, “All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body.” Funerals and viewings were off-limits. “He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is on his head. All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.”

Even if the deceased was a close family member the Nazirite was not to be associated with death. He was a reminder that life is *eternal* not *temporal*.

1 John 2:16 sums up the world system that opposes the values of God – *call it the worldwide web...* “For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world.”

And notice the 3 temptations - the lust of the flesh; *the desire to feel great* - the lust of the eyes; *the desire to look great* - the pride of life; *the desire to be great*.

This is how a world without God operates... *feel great, look great, be great...*

Everyone wants to *feel great*, “Obey your thirst!” Everyone wants to *look great*, “Image is everything!” Everyone wants to *be great*, “Go on, be a Tiger!”

But the *vow of the Nazirite* was the antithesis to the *values of this world*.

The Nazirite was a walking billboard for the values of God. Real joy is not found in *physical*, but *spiritual* sources. A lasting identity is based on *internal beauty*, not *external*. And our ambition is not for *temporal gain*, but for *eternal glory*.

You and I need to be spiritual Nazirites – walking advertisements for the values of God. We need to demonstrate to the people around us that real life is found in *the spiritual, not physical – the internal, not external – the eternal, not temporal!*

Take joy from the Holy Spirit not distilled spirits. Develop an inner beauty not just an outward façade. And reach for goals that are forever, and fade not away.

But what if a Nazirite takes the bus home from work one day and some guy drops dead of a heart attack right next to him,

and causes him to break his vow?

Verse 9 tells us what he should do, “And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.” After shaving his head and offering sacrifices the man could start over fulfilling the length of his vow. But he lost the days leading up to his violation.

When the Nazirite’s vow was completed verse 13 describes what followed...

The priest offered a burnt offering, a sin offering, a peace offering, a grain offering, and a drink offering - five Levitical sacrifices. It was quite a barbeque.

Verse 18, “Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.”

This is beautiful imagery...

A man’s hair was symbolic of his strength and honor. *The peace offering* spoke of fellowship with God. When he lays down his strength under the peace offering, he’s saying that

all his strength and honor comes from His fellowship with God.

“And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair, and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering.

After that the Nazirite may drink wine.” His vow has been completed.

"This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

Verse 22, “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:"

The Lord gives to Moses a blessing that Aaron, the High Priest, should speak over the people... And this blessing becomes a hallmark in the history of Israel.

For centuries afterwards, before and after every sacred assembly - at the close of the evening and morning sacrifice - during times of national emergency – each time the High Priest addresses God’s people he will use this blessing.

In fact, every Sunday morning at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa Pastor Chuck closes his service with a musical version of this priestly blessing... It sounds cool.

Here's the priestly blessing that lasted for centuries, "The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

God always wants His people reminded that His intentions toward us are to bless, and to keep, and to be gracious. When God looks down on us He lifts up His countenance... In other words, *He smiles*. Hey, when God watches you there is a smile on His face, not a frown. He takes joy in you. He desires to give you His peace. God wants us to rest assured that He is a *blessor* not a *bouncer*.

Verse 27, "So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." When my kids were born I put my name on them. They all became *Adams*.

And that means something... Adams don't quit. Adams don't lie. Adams don't use foul language. Adams show respect. Adams fear God. Adams love Jesus. And because my kids are an Adams they know dad will never abandon them.

When I put my name on my kids I gave them a guiding framework to live by...

But I also gave them another name... *Zach, Natalie, Nick, Mack*. This means though they're an Adams, they're also individuals who have to make their own choices, and live their own lives, and plot their own course. And as they make those choices I trust they're being guided by the values true of an Adams.

When God puts His name on His people He places us under

His authority, assures us of His love, and provides us common values... *Christian values.*

But His name doesn't stifle our individuality. Though we're Christians we still have choices to make. We're called by God to plot our own course and find our own place. But we do so without violating what it means to be a Christian.

God puts His name on Israel, and His name became her greatest blessing.

Chapter 7, "Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle, that he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; so he anointed them and sanctified them.

Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who were the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, made an offering.

And they brought their offering before the LORD, 6 covered carts and 12 oxen, a cart for every 2 of the leaders, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, to every man according to his service."

So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites.

Two carts and 4 oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; and 4 carts and 8 oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was

the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.”

Last week I said there would be a test! I hope you remember the responsibilities assigned to each of the three Levitical branches...

Gershon carried the **fabric** – the tabernacle curtains, coverings, and screens.

Merari carried the **frame** – the boards, bars, pillars, sockets, pegs, and cords.

Kohath carried the **furniture** – the Ark, two tables, menorah, laver, and altar.

Kohath moved the furniture - Gershon the fabrics - and Merari the frame.

Apparently, God allowed the fabric and frame to be transported on a cart, but not the furniture. Remember what happened when David put the Ark on a cart...

It hit a rock, started to slide off, and when Uzzah reached out his hand to brace it, he was struck dead. He touched the holy Ark. It was carried on poles, not a cart.

Each piece of furniture was constructed with rings at its four corners. Gold-plated poles slid through the rings, and the priests picked up the tabernacle furniture by two poles. The tabernacle furniture was transported on foot.

Here's the application for us... The ox and carts represented the technology of the day. And notice God used technology to accomplish His work... *to a point!*

Load the fabric and frame on a cart – save some effort and

energy... but the furniture – the holiest objects – were not to be trusted to technology. The “**holy things**” needed a human touch. God wanted them shouldered by holy men.

This is why listening to a sermon on the internet is no substitute for coming to church... Or an email prayer list can never replace a real prayer meeting... Blogs are not the same as Bible Studies. *Worship in cyberspace* is not like *worshipping in the holy place*. Satellite feeds don't feed the need for real Christian fellowship.

Churches should utilize the latest technology. If tithing records, and newsletters, and email announcements can be made *online... then fine!* But don't download the “**holy things**” on a cart pulled by oxen. God wants them handled by humans.

Verse 10, “**Now the leaders offered the dedication offering for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar.**”

For the LORD said to Moses, “**They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar.**” And for the next 12 days this is what occurred. Each day a leader from a different tribe offered an identical offering to the Lord.

It was a Hebrew version of the Twelve days of Christmas...

Verse 12, “**And the one who offered his offering on the first day was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah. His offering was one silver platter, the weight of which was 130 shekels, and one silver bowl of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; one gold pan of 10**”

shekels, full of incense; one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; one kid of the goats as a sin offering; and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: 2 oxen, 5 rams, 5 male goats, and 5 male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.” And for the next 11 days each tribe brings an identical offering.

Read through the rest of the chapter and each tribe brings the same gift.

Here’s what happens with some families at Christmas time. Everybody tries to out give the next guy. It becomes a contest over who can give the best gifts.

It’s amazing that even gift giving can become an ego trip.

This is not what God wanted to have happen in His family – which is why each of the tribes brought an identical gift. This also may be one reason God instituted a tithe. Whether you make a million bucks a year or live at the poverty level God asks the same percentage from each of us - nobody out gives the other.

Verse 89, “Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting to speak with Him, he heard the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the Testimony, from between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.” We discussed how the Ark was a small scale model of God’s throne in heaven. And it was over the Ark that God’s presence rested in tangible, visible form. And it was before the Ark that God spoke to Moses in an audible voice.

Today, Jesus has become our mercy seat. Just as God met

Moses at the mercy seat, God now speaks to us in the person of His Son, Jesus.

Several New Testament passages refers to Jesus as our “propitiation” – a word that means “*a place of mercy.*” Jesus is now the place we can find God’s mercy.

Chapter 8, “And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “Speak to Aaron, and say to him, ‘When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.’” The Menorah was one lamp with seven branches and bowls.

“And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Remember, the Menorah, or the seven-branched lampstand, was the only light allowed in the Tabernacle.

But the light was useless unless it was positioned so it could shine.

In Revelation 1:20 we find another seven-branch lampstand - but this lamp stand it’s symbolic of the Church. You and I are lights in this dark world.

In Matthew 5:16 Jesus instructs us, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” God wants our lives to shine brightly with His love and truth and compassion, but at times we need to be repositioned so we can shine where the light is needed most.

Our High Priest, Jesus, is in charge of positioning and repositioning the light.

Jesus moves us into a new job at work - or crosses our path with new friends - or rearranges our schedule so we’re in

different places at different times. This is the High Priest's way of repositioning our lamp so it will shine the brightest.

Verse 4 comments on the construction of the lamp stand...
“Now this workmanship of the lampstand was hammered gold; from its shaft to its flowers it was hammered work. According to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.” “*Hammered gold*” meant the Menorah was fashioned from one solid plate of gold. It was hammered into shape - not pieced together.

And this speaks of God's truth – the light of God. His truth is consistent.

Study the Bible and you'll discover, though it's made up of 66 different books, written by 40-plus authors, from a wide range of backgrounds, and cultures, and vocations - the Bible forms a unified system of thought and theology. Search the Bible from cover to cover and you'll not find a single contradiction. The biblical content is so interrelated you'll quickly conclude it has but just one author.

God's truth is a hammered out whole – not different ideas pieced together.

In the latter half of chapter 8 the Levites are dedicated for service.

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: “Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them ceremonially. Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and let them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.”

Remember a child has no body hair other than what's on his head. Thus, the idea of shaving your body, and ridding yourself of adult hair, was a symbolic way of returning to a youthful innocence - recovering a child-likeness and purity.

And this is what happens whenever we start over, and rededicate ourselves to the Lord. It's good to shave spiritually from time to time – to start over again and again. We shave when we ask God for a fresh feeling of His forgiveness – when we recover the purity of a child – when we renew our repentance and humility.

Get a shave, and sprinkle yourself with the water of God's Word.

Verse 8, “Then let them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull as a sin offering. And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel.

So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites; and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD, like a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the LORD. Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls, and you shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them like a wave offering to the LORD.”

Notice the Levites were the first group of people to do **the wave...**

“Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. After that the Levites shall go in to service the tabernacle of meeting. So you shall cleanse them and offer them, like a wave offering.

For they are wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel;” Go back to the picture of the wave. *Only fans do the wave.* You’ve got to be a fanatic to do the wave. This is why the Levites were presented as a wave offering... it was because they were fanatical about God. They were “**wholly given**” to God.

I hope the same can be said for us. Do we love God with all our strength?

“I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel. For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to Myself. I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel,” The Levites assisted Aaron in his priestly duties.

They were a gift “to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary.”

Verse 20, “Thus Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites; according to all that

the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the children of Israel did to them.

And the Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented them, like a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. After that the Levites went in to do their work in the tabernacle of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.” The tribe of Levi was formally ordained – or officially dedicated - to their ministry in the service of the Tabernacle.

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "This is what pertains to the Levites: From 25 years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and at the age of 50 years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more.” In Numbers 4:3 the age parameters for the Levites was 30 to 50 years old. Here the beginning age is 25. Apparently, the Levites served a 5 year apprenticeship before they ministered on their own.

And notice the mandatory retirement age – *50 years old*. After that... “They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of meeting, to attend to needs, but they themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties.” After age 50 a Levite was limited to a mentoring role. His job was to pass the baton - help the younger guys learn the ropes.

Life is not just a race, but a relay race. And the winner of a relay is the team with the best exchange. A *successful pass* is

as vital as *blinding speed*. If you're an older Christian, here's the question - *what are you doing to pass the baton?*

Chapter 9, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: "Let the children of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. On the 14th day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time. According to all its rites and ceremonies you shall keep it." This is the Hebrews second Passover.

The first Passover took place in Egypt. The blood of a lamb was applied to the doorpost and thresholds of each house. Death *passed over* where the blood was applied. The 2nd Passover commemorated the first - *a celebration of deliverance*.

"So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover.

And they kept the Passover on the 14th day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did." And the Jews have kept Passover for the last 3450 years.

Verse 6, "Now there were certain men who were defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. And those men said to him, "We became defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?" Obviously, their defilement was not their fault.

“And Moses said to them, “Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you.” I love Moses’ humility. He’s not sure what God’s will might be - so rather than fake it, or assume, or guess... he seeks the Lord.

We’d avoid a lot of trouble if we followed his example.

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘If anyone of you or your posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or is far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover.’” The Passover was such a significant celebration God refused to exclude a person on a technicality.

“On the 14th day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.” Eat the bitter herbs or horseradish, and it causes you to tear up. It was a reminder of the harsh, Egyptian bondage.

“They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones.”

The New Testament calls Jesus our Passover, and like the lamb in Moses’ day not one of His bones was broken. At a Roman crucifixion it was common practice to break the victim’s legs. This caused him to suffocate, and hastened his death.

But when the soldier came to Jesus He saw that Jesus was already dead. And John 19:36 tells us “they did not break His legs” - thus, fulfilling this prophecy.

“According to all the ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. But the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and

ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin.

And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the LORD's Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land."

Passover was one size fits all – as is Jesus! He's for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Verse 15, "Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire." This was the glory cloud.

The Hebrews called it the *Shekinah* glory. The word "*Shekinah*" means "*that which dwells.*" The Bible says God's glory fills the universe, but the glory that dwells with man was the Shekinah glory – the cloud that hovered over the tabernacle. This was the visible, tangible manifestation of God on earth.

"So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the

cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped.”

The cloud by day, and the fire by night guided Israel for the next 40 years.

“Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey.

So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey. So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey. Whether it was two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey.

At the command of the LORD they remained encamped, and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.” I love the simplicity of God’s guidance... When the cloud moved they moved. When the cloud stayed they stayed.

This is how I want to live my life...

I’m sure we need to weigh the facts, and examine the situation, and consult the experts and counselors – but here’s the bottom line... *is God moving or staying?*

If God is on the move why would we want to lag behind? But

if the glory cloud is staying put it's a mistake to forge ahead. You've got to be willing to pick up and take off. And you've got to be willing to hunker down and wait it out.

Don't make it harder than it is... *the way to follow God is to just follow God.*

Chapter 10, "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the assembly and for directing the movement of the camps."

These trumpets were like bugles. There was a sound to break camp, and call an assembly, and prepare for battle, and summon leaders, and initiate a feast...

"When they blow both of them, all the assembly shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you."

Both trumpets summoned the people. A single trumpet called the leaders.

"When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys." The camp broke at the sound of the trumpet.

And we also are listening for a trumpet that will signal for us to break camp.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 tells us when Jesus comes to rapture His church – when it's time to break camp and join our Savior

in the clouds – that moment will be preceded with the shout of an archangel and the trumpet of God.

Jesus will call us home with a silver trumpet of His own.

We'll have *a blast in heaven*, and it'll start with *a blast on earth*.

“And when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.”

When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies.

Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God." A different blast signaled different events.

The silver trumpets are used for the first time in verse 11, “Now it came to pass on the 20th day of the second month, in the 2nd year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.” As the cloud departs so does Israel.

“And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran.” They're moving north.

“So they started out for the first time according to the

command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.” This is an exciting day. After 400 years in bondage, and an additional year in preparation, they’re finally on the move. The Hebrew nation is headed home to the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verse 14 tells us that Judah broke camp first, followed by Issachar and Zebulun. Then the sons of Gershon and Merari moved out behind the three eastern tribes. They were transporting the tabernacle *fabrics* and *frames*.

Afterwards Reuben, Simeon, and Gad broke camp and joined the march. They were followed by the Kohathites, who carried the tabernacle furniture.

Notice verse 21 tells us, **“The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.”** In other words, by the time the Kohathites arrived with the furniture the tabernacle’s frame and tent had already been erected. The furniture was ready to move in.

Next the western tribes broke camp – Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

Finally in verse 25 the northern tribes joined the march – Dan, Asher, Naphtali. And noticed what these last three tribes are called in verse 25, **“the rear guard”**.

And there’s nothing wrong in pulling up the rear... Sometimes you put your best and most vigilant troops in the rear to protect your army from ambush.

Verse 28, **“Thus was the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their**

journey. Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law," Moses' father-in-law is called "Reuel". In Exodus 18 he's called "Jethro"... probably two names for the same guy.

Hobab was Moses' brother-in-law, and he employs him as a guide for Israel.

He was a Midianite so he was from the region. He could find his way in the wilderness. A beduoin shepherd might be a valuable asset in the desert.

It's interesting, Moses is following God, but he's also hiring a scout. God will set the direction, but Hobab might be able to help out with some details. I think you'll find that with any venture for God there's always God's part and our part.

We follow God, but we also scout out the situation.

Moses says to Hobab, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel." And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives." Hobab wanted to return to Midian.

"So Moses said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes." Hobab could be a scout.

"And it shall be, if you go with us - indeed it shall be - that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you." Moses makes a deal. If Hobab goes with Israel, Moses will share the wealth! Hobab will share in the blessings.

"So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a

journey of 3 days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the 3 days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.” Notice, the Ark always led the march. God’s presence – the Shekinah glory – always led the way... They followed the cloud.

“And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp. So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: "Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You." And when it rested, he said: "Return, O LORD, to the many thousands of Israel."

The title for next week... *How to turn a 2 week trip into 40 year death march.*