

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

NUMBERS 6-10

Well, it's summertime - time for a road trip. And *long drives* include *large billboards*... lots of billboards. There are 32,162 billboards just in the state of Florida, *America's most*. Georgia ranks 17th with 12,360. The state of Delaware allows 379 billboards per highway mile - the greatest density of ad boards in America.

And apparently the key to advertising at 70 mph is **brevity**. There's the "**six words, six second rule**." The average billboard gets six seconds of a driver's attention; thus, it should contain six words at the most.

But God also had a billboard where He advertised His values! In the camp of Israel, God had a walking, talking human billboard that put His aspirations for us on display... We read of **the Nazirite** in Numbers 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 role and duties of the Levites. They were to assist the priests with the Tabernacle and its sacrifices. But the Levites 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 term "*Nazir*" means "to set apart." And 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 were lifelong Nazirites. Samson, Samuel, and John the Baptist were Nazirites from birth.

The Nazirite Vow consisted of three parts. 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're a sweet treat, a tasty delight, a symbol of joy. The fruit of the vine was synonymous with *physical pleasure*.

But the Nazirite said "*no*" to grapes, and wine, and the fruit of the vine. He lived for *spiritual satisfaction*.

Vow #2, 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 nappy. For a Nazirite everyday was a bad hair day.

Obviously, this man’s top priority wasn’t his physical, outward appearance. He was a person far more concerned with *internal integrity* than *external beauty*.

And the third vow, 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 associate with death. He reminded the nation that ultimately life is *eternal* not *temporal*.

1 John 2:16 sums up the world system that opposes God’s values - *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.” Notice the three traps in this web... What John calls *the world* is made up of *the lust of the flesh* or *the desire to feel great* - *the lust of the eyes* or *the desire to look great* - and *the pride of life* or *the desire to be great*. This is how a world without God operates. Everybody is trying to *feel great, look great, be great*.

Here’s the world’s system summed up in today’s advertising lingo... **Feel great!** “Obey Your Thirst!” or “If It Feels Good Do It.” And **Look great!** “What You See Is What You Get” or “Image is everything!” And **Be great!** “You Can Have It All” or “Have It Your Way...”

Yet the Nazirite vow was the antithesis to the ways of this world. The person under this vow was a walking billboard for God’s values. **Real joy** isn’t found in *physical* but *spiritual* sources. A **healthy identity** is based on *internal character* not *external beauty*. And **true ambition** isn’t for *temporal gain* but *eternal glory*.

You and I need to be spiritual Nazirites - **walking advertisements for God’s ways and will**. We need to demonstrate to the people around us that *real life is found in the spiritual, not the physical - the internal, not the external - and 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, that never fade 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 appropriate sacrifices he could start over fulfilling the length of his vow. But the days leading up to his violation were lost.

And when the vow was completed verse 13 describes what followed... The priest offered a burnt offering, sin offering, peace offering, grain offering, and drink offering - *it was quite a barbecue!* 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* is symbolic of his strength and honor. *The peace offering* spoke of fellowship with God. So when he laid down his strength under the peace offering, he was surrendering all his might, and all his honor in order to 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 now 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.”

Now, not only Levites and priests, but anyone could be specially devoted to God by fulfilling a Nazirite vow.

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:...”

Whenever the priest went behind the veil into God's presence there was some apprehension - *would God accept or reject his offering?* Well, the Lord gave to Moses

a blessing of reassurance that the High Priest, Aaron, could share with Israel upon his reappearance.

It expressed God's acceptance and heart for His people. *It brought a sigh of relief.* And **the Aaronic blessing** became a hallmark in Israel's history. For centuries, before and after sacred assemblies - at the close of the evening and morning sacrifice - during times of emergency - when the High Priest spoke to the people on behalf of God he uttered this blessing...

In fact, most Sundays at Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa my pastor, Chuck Smith, would close with a musical version of this priestly blessing... It sounded so cool...

So here's the priestly blessing, "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." **And these are the same intentions God has toward you!**

He wants to bless your life, and keep you in the center of His will. As a child of God prosperity and security are your lot in life... To make His face shine upon you is to share His glory. God wants you to absorb and radiate His goodness... He promises to be gracious to you, not exacting and harsh... And He will lift up His countenance upon you. That means He'll smile when He thinks of you. God takes joy in us! He sees us, and it puts a smile on His face, not a frown...

God wants you to experience the same peace He enjoys. The priestly blessing reminded Israel and His people today that **God is a blesser, 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. Kathy washed four jerseys that all read "**Adams.**" *And we tried to live in a way where that name meant something... Adams don't quit, Adams don't lie, Adams don't use foul language, Adams show respect, Adams fear God, and Adams love Jesus.* And because my children have the name **Adams** they know their dad will never abandon them.

But I also gave my kids another name, **their own name**. This means though they're an *Adams*, they're also individuals who make their own choices, live their own lives, plot their own course. I trust that the Adams name guides them, but their destiny is their choice.

So when God puts His name on His people the same dynamic occurs. We're under His authority, assured of His love, possessor of common values, **Christian values**. But His name doesn't stifle our individuality. We still make choices. We plot our course and find our place. And hopefully, we do so without violating what it means to be a *Christian*... *So when God put His name on Israel it became her greatest blessing, as it*

is ours.

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, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two 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 four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service...” Remember the family of Gershon carried the **fabric** of the Tabernacle, *the curtains, coverings, and screens*. “And four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the hand of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.” The Merarites carried the **framework** of the Tabernacle, *the boards, pillars, sockets, pegs, and cords*... But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs was the service of the holy things, which they carried on their shoulders.” And since Kohath moved the **furniture** - *the Ark of the Covenant, the menorah, the two tables, the bronze laver, the altar*, and since the furniture was transported on poles, the Kohathites didn't need a cart or an ox.

Remember when King David put the Ark on an oxen driven cart, it hit a rock, and started to slide off. That's when “*Uzzah the priest*” reached out to brace the Ark, and was struck dead! Uzzah had violated God's law in Numbers. Each piece of the Tabernacle furniture had rings at its four corners. Gold-plated poles slid through the rings, and the priests were to pick up the furniture by poles and transport it on foot. *But Uzzah had not been pole-lytically correct - he made a deadly mistake.*

And here's the application for us... Ox-drawn carts represented the technology of the day. And God uses technology... *to a point!* Save some effort and energy by loading the *fabrics and framing* on a cart - but the *furniture* - the holiest objects - were not to be left to technology. *Things can slip!* “**Holy things**” need human oversight. God wanted them shouldered by holy men.

This is why watching church on the internet is no substitute for being here... Or an email prayer list can never replace a real prayer meeting... Or blogs are not the same as in-person Bible Studies... Worship in cyberspace isn't like worship in a holy place...

Satellite feeds don't feed the need for fellowship with Christians.

Churches should utilize the latest technology... carts and oxen. *Lots of things* can be done online. But don't download "*holy things*" to oxen. God wants the "*holy things*" done *pole-lytically correct* in the way He wills.

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 twelve days a leader from a different Israeli tribe offered an identical offering to God. *It was a Hebrew version of the Twelve days of Christmas!*

"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 one hundred-thirty shekels, and one silver bowl of seventy 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 ten 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: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab." And for the next eleven days each tribe brings the exact same offering.

And I know why... Ever notice at Christmas how there's always somebody who tries to out-give everybody else. We can even turn our gift-giving into a contest, *an ego trip*... God didn't want that to happen to Israel, so He had everyone bring the same gifts.

And this may be one reason God instituted the tithe. Make a million bucks, or live at poverty level, it doesn't matter. God asks the same percentage from us all. Across the board it's 10%, 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."

Remember, the Ark was a miniaturized model of God's throne room in heaven. It was over the Ark that God's glory rested in tangible, visible form. From the mercy seat God spoke to Moses in an audible voice.

Today, Jesus is our mercy seat. Just as God met Moses at the mercy seat, He now speaks to us through His Son, Jesus. Several NT passages refer to Jesus as our "*propitiation*." It means "*a place of mercy*." Jesus is now the place we go to receive

mercy and know God.

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.” The Menorah was the only light in the Tabernacle. Yet it was useless unless it was properly positioned to shine.

In Revelation 1:20 we find another seven-branched lamp stand called *the Church*. We’re the light of the world. But in Matthew 5:16 Jesus says, “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, but at times we need to be repositioned so we can shine where the light is needed most. And our High Priest, Jesus, is in charge of rearranging us to shine brightest.

This is why He moves us to a new job - or crosses our path with old friends - or alters our schedule and breaks our routine. This is our High Priest’s way of repositioning our lamp so it will shine more brightly.

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 beaten or hammered from one piece, not assembled in parts. For this is how God works in us. He hammers and beats us into shape so we can be a light to a very dark world.

In the latter half of Chapter 8 the Levites are dedicated to 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.” A child has zero body hair except on his head. So the idea of shaving and ridding yourself of adult hair, is symbolic of returning to a youthful innocence - of recovering a child-like humility. This is the point of our rededicating ourselves to God.

It’s good to get a spiritual shave from time to time. To ask God for a new beginning. Lord, give me a fresh feeling of forgiveness - a renewed calling on my life.

The rest of Chapter 8 describes the dedication of the Levites. Sacrifices are offered;

then the people lay their hands on the Levites, verse 13, “You shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them like a wave offering to the LORD.” This means the Levites are the first people in history to do **the wave!**

Verse 14, “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 photo of the wave. Only “fans” do the wave. And this is why the Levites are presented as a wave offering. They were fanatical about the service of God - “*wholly given*” to God. I hope the same can be said of us. *Do we love God with all our strength?*

Remember when God saved the firstborn of Israel from the death plague that broke Egypt’s back, God said the firstborn belonged to Him. Now though, God has swapped the firstborn for the tribe of Levi, who will assist Aaron and sons in their priestly and sacrificial duties. The Levites are a gift, verse 19, “to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel.”

Verse 23, “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “This is what pertains to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more.” Recall Numbers 4:3 the Levites started their ministry at age 30. Here it’s 25. They must’ve served a five year apprenticeship before being on their own... Mandatory retirement was still fifty, but..

After 50... verse 26, “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.” This is what James and I, the old geezers on staff, do. We *do no work*. We just come in and tell Andrew and Matt, and the younger guys what to do. After age 50 a Levite was limited to a mentoring role. His job was to pass the baton, and help the younger guys learn the ropes.

For life is not just a race, but a relay race. And the winner of a relay is the team with the best exchange. That means a *successful pass* is as vital as *blinding speed*. So, for Christians over fifty, here’s the question, *what are you doing to pass the baton? Perhaps you can help support and get involved with the new CBI!*

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 fourteenth 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 was in Egypt. The blood of a lamb was applied to the doorpost and thresholds of each house. Death *passed over* where blood was applied. The Second Passover commemorated the first, *a celebration of deliverance*. And Jews have kept Passover for the last 3,450 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?"** They wanted to keep the Passover, but they'd accidentally touched a corpse and were now ceremonially defiled.

"And Moses said to them, "Stand still..." So often we get fidgety, impatient. **"Stand still"** and wait... **that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."** And I love Moses' humility. Here, a man of God is not sure what God's will really is - so rather than fake it, or assume, or guess... **he seeks God**. We too would avoid a lot of trouble if we followed Moses' 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. On the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs." God wanted all His people to eat the bitter herbs and fiery hot horseradish - shed a few tears and relive the bitterness of Egyptian slavery.

Verse 12, **"They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break one of its bones."** At Passover the lamb that was sacrificed and had its blood spread on the door, was eaten as the main course. But not one of its bones was to be broken, and for a very crucial reason...

The NT refers to Jesus as **"our Passover,"** and like the lamb He wasn't left until morning; nor one of His bones broken... Often the victim of crucifixion was left on the cross for days until He died. But because of the special Sabbath the next day, Jesus had to be buried immediately... And sometimes a victim's death was hastened by the breaking of his legs so he could no longer hike himself up to breath. He would die of suffocation. But that was not needed with Jesus, since the soldier found Him already dead. Thus, John 19:36 tells us, **"they did not break His legs"** and **He was not left until morning** - fulfilling both prophecies in verse 12.

The point though, is that if you missed Passover because you were out of town or ceremonially unfit; just keep the feast the following month - **the 14th day of the second**

month! *God is pretty easy to work with!*

Verse 14, “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, **like Jesus...** for Jews and strangers.

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.” On Day One of the Tabernacle's operation a cloud appeared.

The Hebrews called this the **Shekinah glory**. The word means “that which dwells.” The Bible says God's glory fills the universe, but it dwelt with man in the form of a 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 will serve as Israel's navigation for the next forty years.

And the next verses tell us it didn't matter if the cloud lingered in one place for many days, or few days, or just overnight; the camp of Israel followed the cloud.

Verse 18, “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 here of God's guidance. When the cloud moved they moved. When the cloud stayed they stayed. And this is how I want to live...

Oh, at times *we need to weigh the facts, examine the situation, consult a counselor...* but here's the bottomline... ***is God on the move or staying put?*** If God is moving why lag behind? If the glory cloud is staying it's a mistake for me to forge ahead. I've got to be willing to go or stay. 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 specific sound *to break camp, to call an assembly, to begin a new month, to offer a sacrifice, to get ready for battle, to summon the leaders, to celebrate a feast...*

So “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.”

The harmony of both trumpets called the people and the leaders. A single trumpet summoned the leaders.

Now “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 whole camp, numbering 2-3 million Hebrews, broke at the sound of these silver trumpets. A different blast of the trump signaled different events.

And we too are listening for a trumpet that will signal for us to break camp. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says 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 voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God.” Jesus will call us home with a silver trumpet of His own! We'll have *a blast in heaven*, but it'll start with *a blast on earth!*

These silver trumpets were used for the first time in verse 11, “Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony.” And as the cloud departed so did 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 now moving north. “So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.” This was an exciting day. After 400 years in bondage, and an additional year in preparation, they're now on the move. The Hebrew nation is headed home to the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Verse 14 tells us the tribe of Judah broke camp first, trailed by the other two eastern tribes, Issachar and Zebulun. The Levitical families of Gershon and Merari moved out behind them transporting the Tabernacle *fabrics* and *frame*. Afterwards Reuben, Simeon, and Gad broke camp and joined the march. They were followed by the Kohathites, who carried the furniture.

Note verse 21, “The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.” Since the

Gershonites and Merarites left first, by the time the Kohathites had arrived at the next campsite the tent and its structure had already been erected. The furniture was ready to be moved in.

Next the western tribes broke camp: Ephraim, Manasseh, 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.**” There’s nothing wrong with pulling up the rear... At times you put your best, most vigilant troops in the back to protect against an 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,**” Here, Moses’ father-in-law is called “**Reuel.**” In Exodus 18 he’s named “**Jethro**”... *probably the same guy.* “**Reuel**” was his name. “**Jethro**” a title of respect and authority.

Hobab is Moses’ brother-in-law, Zipporah’s brother, and Moses wants to hire him as a guide. Hobab was a Midianite from the area. He knew the desert. He could help locate water and shelter. A bedouin shepherd would be a valuable asset on a wilderness journey.

Interestingly, Moses follows God, but he also wants to hire a scout. God sets the direction, but Hobab can help with some details. I think you’ll find with any venture for God there’s always *God’s part* and *our part*. We follow God, but we also scout out some situations.

In verse 29 Moses asks 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.**” Hobab is invited on an adventure with God’s people. Moses is offering him a front row seat on a miracle journey, *but.*

“**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. 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.'**” If Hobab scouts for Israel, he’ll share in her blessings. *Whether or not Hobab signed on we’re never told...*

“**So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.**” Notice, the Ark of the Covenant always led the march. God’s presence always led the way. Israel followed the glory 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 journey has now begun. Israel is on the march! But here's the title for next week: *“How To Turn A Two Week Journey Into A Forty Year Death March.”*