

## Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-20 (Ex. 24-Num. 16)

Following God speaking the Ten Commandments to the people as we read in Ex. 20, He gave Moses most of the rest of the law of Commandments, Statutes and Judgments. When Moses told the people these laws, they reaffirmed their willingness to abide by this law. (Read Ex. 24:3) Moses then wrote all the words that God had given him and then read them to the people and they again affirmed their willingness to keep the law. (Ex. 24:7)

God then called Moses to come up into Mt. Sinai telling him that He would give him tables of stone with the commandments written on them. Moses took Joshua with him and went up on the mountain. Once there, God gave him instructions on the construction of the tabernacle, the furniture, the special garments for the priests to wear when performing their priestly duties, compounding of the holy anointing oil and the perfume that was to be used in the tabernacle, and instructions on consecrating Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Moses and Joshua were on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights while God gave them these instructions.

Because they were gone so long the people got restless and fearful. (Read Ex. 32:1-6) God told Moses what was happening and sent him back down the mountain. Aaron blamed the people for what they and he had done. (Read Ex. 32:25-35; Ex. 33) The tabernacle spoken of here is not the tabernacle that was yet to be constructed, but rather a tent that Moses had apparently set up as a place of worship. Verse 14 is a little confusing. Dr. Bullinger says in a note in his Companion Bible concerning this verse: *"If this verse be punctuated as a question, then we can understand verse 15, "Shall My presence go with thee, and shall I lead thee into rest?" as much as to say, How can My presence go with thee after this rejection of Me?"* (Read Ex. 34:1-17) Ex. 35 through 40 deals with the actual construction of the tabernacle and all that goes with it. (Read Ex. 40:17) To give us an idea of what all was involved, Ex. 38 gives us the weight of the gold, silver and brass that was used in the construction. In pounds, they used 1936.23 pounds of gold, 6658.12 pounds of silver and 4689.62 pounds of brass. (Read Ex. 40:17) This gives us an idea of the time involved. They have now been at Mt. Sinai for about 9 months. The children of Israel have accomplished a great deal during this nine months. Finally the tabernacle is completed and they are about ready to move again. (Read Ex. 40:34-38)

Lev. 8 gives the account of the consecration of the Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. However, it didn't take too long before a couple of the sons of Aaron got the wrong idea of their place as priests. (Read Lev. 10:1-11)

Lev. 16 spells out the procedure for the offering of the sin offering for all the people, later to be known as the Day of Atonement. We have discussed this some already, but I think it would be a good idea to read the whole chapter as this is an important law that we see Christ fulfilling and we need to be sure we understand it. (Read Lev. 16)

Lev. 17:10-14 gives us some information that I feel we need to understand. (Read) The words "life" and "soul" are from the same Hebrew word, *"nephesh."* I believe a great misunderstanding has developed because we people are like Eve, we want to believe the lie the serpent told Eve, **"ye shall not surely die."** (Gen. 3:4) God had told Adam just the opposite when he warned him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen. 2:17 tells us, **"Thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."** Literally God said, "dying you shall die." So who do we believe, God or the serpent? What has happened through the centuries is that man has decided that he believes

the serpent and he justifies this by saying that a part of man, usually called the soul or the spirit, continues to live on after the body dies. No where in Scripture is this taught. Genesis 2:7 tells us, **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”** Again, the word “soul” is from the Hebrew *“nephesh.”* Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance defines *“nephesh”* as “a breathing creature, i.e. animal or (abstr.) vitality.” It is life itself, ones vitality, it is what animates us. *Nephesh* would apply to animals just as it does to humans. It is translated into a number of words the most numerous or which are “life” (119 times) and “soul” (423 times). This Scripture in Leviticus indicates to us that the two words are used interchangeably. Verse 11 says, **“For the life (nephesh) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls (nephesh): for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (nephesh).** So I believe we can say that soul = life and life = soul. The life is in the blood. When a person’s heart stops pumping the blood to circulate it through the body, or a person loses their blood, the body, or the person dies. The blood does not continue to live. Without blood, there is no life, no soul, no *nephesh*.

The belief that the “spirit” then continues to live is a little more difficult to understand, but is basically the same thing. The word “spirit” is usually from the Hebrew *“ruwach”* in the Old Testament and from its Greek counterpart in the New Testament, “pneuma.” Strong’s defines *ruwach* as “wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation. The definition of *pneuma* is similar. So when God breathed the breath of life, or the spirit, into Adam, he became a living life. The spirit was not a part of Adam, but rather an exterior force, if you will, that when breathed into Adam caused him to be a living life. We know today that the primary function of the blood is to transport this “wind,” i.e. oxygen, throughout the body. When that oxygen supply is cut off, for whatever reason, the body dies. The “spirit” or breath of life was never a physical part of man, thus it does not continue to live as a part of man when man dies.

There are two points that I want to make from this. First, when man dies, he ceases to exist in any form except in the mind or memory of God. The serpent lied, God did not. We are talking about this life. Most of the Bible authors refer to death as sleeping, something they all fully anticipated that we would awake from.

The second thing is that it is in the blood of Christ that we have life, immortal or true life after awaking from death, mortal death. The life is still in the blood, but that of Christ, not ours, i.e. our next life is in the life of Christ, the fact that He overcame mortal death and now lives immortally. His life is the atonement, or covering for our lives. If we are in Christ in this life, death is not necessarily something to fear. None of us want to die, nor do we want our loved ones to die, but understanding what death really is and knowing that a greater and better *nephesh* awaits following the promised resurrection, the sting of death is not so great.

On the first day of the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt, while still at Mt. Sinai, God instructed Moses to number all of the males from twenty years old and upward. (Num. 1:1-3) The total number of men twenty years old and upward was 603, 550. (Num. 1:46) This did not include the Levites as God told Moses not to number them as their duty was to put up and take down the tabernacle as they moved.

Numbers 2 records the order of march and of encampment that the Israelites were to adhere to as they traveled. Because this order of encampment is used in future Scriptures as a description of the

Kingdom of Israel, it is important that we look at it here so that we have in our mind for future study. The Levites were to camp around the tabernacle. On the east side of the tabernacle, there were to be three tribes, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun with Judah being the dominant tribe. Verse 3 speaks of the standard of Judah which presumably was set up as a guide for these three tribes to camp around. These standards, or flags had animals depicted on them that identified the tribe. In the case of Judah, going back to Gen. 49, I think we can safely assume their standard would bear the likeness of a lion.

On the south side of the tabernacle, the dominant tribe was to be the tribe of Reuben with a standard bearing the likeness of a man. On each side of Reuben were the tribes of Simeon and Gad respectively.

On the west side of the tabernacle, the dominant tribe was to be the tribe of Ephraim which had the standard with the calf, or bullock on it. Numbers does not tell us what was depicted on these standards, we have to go to other Scriptures like Gen. 49 to find these. On each side of Ephraim were the tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin.

On the north side of the tabernacle we find the tribe of Dan as the dominant tribe. His standard at the time was probably either a serpent or a horse. Later we find that changed to a flying eagle. I have not found in Scripture the reason for this change. On each side of the tribe of Dan were the tribes of Asher and Naphtali.

When they moved, they moved in the same order with the Levites in the lead with the Ark of the Covenant followed by the tribe of Judah, etc.

In Num. 3 God first had Moses number all of the males of the tribe of Levi from one month old and upward. The total number was 22,000. God then had Moses number all the males one month and up who were firstborn in their families in all the rest of the tribes. This total came to 22,273. Since God had laid claim to all of the firstborn of Israel, both of man and animals, after the killing of all the firstborn of Egypt, God claimed all of these 22,273 firstborn of Israel. However, He made a trade and took all of the males of the tribe of Levi in lieu of the firstborn of the rest of Israel. (Read Num. 3:44-51)

God then spelled out the duties, concerning the tabernacle, of the males, thirty years old and upward, of the tribe of Levi, by their families in Num. 4.

Once the tabernacle was set up, a cloud descended on it. (Read Num. 9:15-23) We discussed the communication system that God established with the Israelites in which they were to use trumpets that God instructed Moses to make out of silver. (Read Num. 10:1-10)

Finally, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the second year after leaving Egypt, the cloud lifted off of the tabernacle and the people began to move again. Moses prevailed on Hobab, his brother-in-law to travel with them and be their guide as they traveled. Their first journey lasted 3 days.

The people still had the manna to eat, but apparently no longer had the quail that they had earlier. As usual, when things appeared a little bit bad, they went complaining to Moses. When Moses brought their complaints before God, God was angered by their lack of faith and He kindled a fire among them. Many of them died because of the fire. When they complained to Moses about the fire, Moses went to God with their complaints again and God quenched the fire. Then they began to complain because they had no flesh to eat. When Moses went to God with this complaint, God said he would give them enough flesh to eat that it would come out their nostrils. Sure enough, He brought the quail on them again so that there was quail 2 cubits high from a day's journey from the tabernacle on one side of the camp to a day's journey on the other side of the camp. When the people saw this, in their greed

they gathered far more than they could eat. This again angered the LORD and he brought a great plague on them in which a great many died.

Num. 12 relates an incident that seemingly has caused a misunderstanding that overshadows the lesson that not only Aaron and his sister Miriam had to learn but that we need to learn as well. Verse one states that Moses was married to an Ethiopian woman and that Aaron and Miriam spoke against Moses because of this. Thinking of Ethiopia then as it is today, this has led many to assume that he was married to a Negro woman, something that has created both a misunderstanding and a controversy among many Christians. Back in lesson #III-11 we discussed this situation. Following is a portion of that discussion as we discussed Jethro, Moses' father-in-law: "There is sometimes confusion as just who this priest of Midian is. We find him usually being called "Jethro" which means "pre-eminence." He is also called Jether which means the same thing. Here he is called "Reuel" which means "friend with God." He apparently was a chieftain who also carried out priestly duties. "Midian" was a son of Abraham by his wife Keturah. Jethro was an ancestor of Midian. The land of Midian was east and south of the Jordan River in what we now know as Arabia. We're told in Gal. 4:25 that Mt. Sinai was in Arabia, not in the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula as is commonly taught today. Arabia was in what was called at that time the land of Cush. Thus in Numbers 12:1, Moses' wife Zipporah is referred to as an Ethiopian woman. Ethiopia was another name for the land of Cush at that time. So Jethro was a descendant of Abraham through Abraham's wife Keturah and was obviously a Godly man." Moses' wife Zipporah then was not an Israelite, but was a descendant of Abraham.

It appears to me that Moses' wife was not the real problem with Aaron and Miriam, but rather that Aaron and Miriam wanted more authority. (Read Numbers 12) It appears to me that God thought the problem was Aaron's and Miriam's jealousy of Moses as well and the lesson that He taught them should have made that quite plain.

As we have just read in Num. 12, the Israelites have traveled to the wilderness of Paran. Quoting from my Bible dictionary, "A wilderness (of Paran) situated in the east central region of the Sinai peninsula....with the Arabah and the Gulf of Aqabah as its eastern border." This puts them directly south of and near the border of the land of Canaan which is their destination. However, things take a very different turn at this point. Num. 13 tells us that Moses sent 12 spies, one man from each of the tribes except for Levi, to spy out the land. (Read Num. 13:17-25) The three men, the children of Anak, listed in verse 22 then became a major stumbling block to the children of Israel. (Read Num. 13:26-33) In lesson #III-3, we discussed where these giants possibly came from. Discussing Gen. 6:1-4 (read), we said the following: "The previous chapter brought us the genealogy up to Noah. Now, these verses take us back in history. In the Hebrew text, the word "men" in verse 1 is singular with an emphatic article, i.e. "the man." This would refer to Adam with the "them" meaning Adam and Eve. There is controversy as to what is meant by "the sons of God." Some feel this is just descendents of Adam while others believe it refers to angels. There are some other scriptures that might support the theory that it refers to angels. Let's look at this theory and then you can

make your own determination. The phrase, “son or sons of God” is used elsewhere to refer to Adam (Luke 3:38 though the word “son” has been added by the translator); to one who is “in Christ” having the “new nature” (Rom. 8:14; I John 3:1); or to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Ps. 89:6; Dan. 3:25). In each of these three cases, the “son of God” is created directly by God, not born of, or created by man. Logically then, we need to assume that these “sons of God” in Gen. 6:2 are directly created beings by God, not born of man.

Again in verse three, the word “man” has the emphatic article in the Hebrew text which again would refer to Adam. This being the case, the 120 years would refer to the remaining life span that Adam had.

Verse 4 tells us that giants were the progeny of these marriages between the “sons of God” and the daughters of men. The word giant comes from the Hebrew word, *nephilim*, which means “fallen ones.” Keep in mind that Moses is writing this with the benefit of later history as well, so when he says in verse 4, “**and also after that,**” he is first talking about the days of Noah, and then he says that the same thing happened after those days. In Numbers 13 & 14, we find the story of the spies that were sent by Moses into the land of Canaan, who when they returned, told of the giants that were in the land. Numbers 13:33 says “**And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.**” Again the word “giant” is from the Hebrew *nephilim*. So this “coming into the daughters of men by the sons of God” apparently happened a second time prior to the children of Israel coming into the land of Canaan, in fact it could have been before Abraham came to the land of Canaan the first time.

In the book of Jude, Jude is reminding his readers of judgments God has carried out in the past, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, and in verse 6 he includes, “**And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.**” “First estate” is from the Greek, *arche*, meaning beginning, principality. So this tells us there was for sure a group of angels who left their proper domain. The apostle Peter tells us in I Peter 3:19-20, speaking of the Holy Spirit, “**By which also he (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls were saved by water.**” Then in II Peter 2:4, speaking of the sureness of God’s judgment, he says, “**For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (tartarus) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.**” This confirms what Jude says. It would be reasonably logical to put these verses together with the events of Genesis 6 and Numbers 13 to conclude that they are all talking about the same thing. There are many who believe that the reason for the flood was to destroy these nephilims and also the reason that God commanded the Israelites to destroy all of the Canaanites. That the Israelites did not do their job completely is evidenced by the fact that there were still giants of the descendents of Anak in David’s time.”

Read Num. 14:1-10. God then threatened to destroy the people because after all that He had done with and for them at this point, they still did not have the faith to do as He told them to do. Moses interceded to God for the people and God pardoned them, but there was still a price to pay for their unbelief. (Read Num. 14:22-45) Since the Feast of Passover commemorated the night they left Egypt and the Feast of weeks commemorated the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, I think we can assume that what would have been the launching of the taking of Canaan to be at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. But now that launching has been aborted and the Israelites are condemned to spend a total of 40 years wandering in the wilderness until all of that generation has died off.

There seems always to be those who want authority without realizing or accepting the responsibility that goes with it. We have already seen that Moses has been plagued by some who thought this way including his own brother and sister. Numbers 16 records another attempt by some who wanted Moses' authority not realizing or accepting that his authority came directly from God. Korah, a Levite, conspired with Dathan and Abiram, descendants of Reuben to put together a group of about 250 men to challenge Moses' authority. We need to understand that Moses was one of the most humble men of Scripture and always felt he was not up to the job God had given him, so when these men approached him questioning his authority, it caused considerable stress on him. (Read Num. 16:4-50)

It is easy for us to say, "you would think that the people would have known better by this time." Yet, we need to check our own faith and put ourselves in the place of these Israelites and really question ourselves as to what we would have done. JRL