

# Numbers 5-8 • Establishing the Community of worship

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Just to remind you while you're turning there, the Book of Numbers covers those years that the nation of Israel spent in the wilderness from the time they came out of Egypt until the time they finally came into the land of promise. And they have been in the wilderness now, as in the area where we are dealing here, a little over a year. And the Lord has been giving them instructions on the Law and various things related to their upcoming move into the promised land, and there are several things that He wanted to work with them on in terms of understanding how interpersonal relationships are going to work and justice and they'd just come out of Egypt for 400 years.

You've got to know when you come out of a system, a cultural system that you've been in for 400 years as a people, you're going to come away with completely indoctrinated with that kind of a philosophy of this is how we do life. This is how marriage is handled. This is how child raising is dealt with. This is how our system of justice is to be done and so forth. Well, you know, so God basically had to start over from scratch with these people and say, all right, here's the Law.

Here's the, we have the ceremonial Law, and we've got the moral Law, and then you have these elements of how you deal with one another, and then He had to establish the priesthood, and explain how all that was going to go, and He had to give Moses all the instructions for the tent of meeting, or the tabernacle, if you will, which would be the center of their worship. And there was a lot to go through. And there's a lot of instruction, a lot of things to deal with. And there's still things to deal with.

In fact, we're not going to come to the border of the promised land for several chapters, and even then, we're not going to get in because of unbelief among the people. They're going to turn back and spend another 38 years eating dust and sand and spending that time in the wilderness. And the Book of Numbers covers that entire time so, this study will take us about 38 years. I just wanted to see if you were listening. Okay.

Let's go ahead and start reading here. In chapter 5, verse 1, it says,  
*"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> 'Command the people of Israel that*

*they put out of the camp everyone who is leprous or has a discharge (meaning some kind of a bodily discharge) and everyone who is (considered) unclean through contact with the dead.” (ESV)*

In other words, they were around a corpse, touched a corpse or whatever. You’ve got to figure people are dying during this time, getting old and dying and from other causes as well. And he says in verse 3, *“You shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell.”*

And you'll remember that their time out of the camp could be anywhere depending on what they were dealing with from just until sundown to a week or so, maybe seven days, depending on what was going on. But He says we need to follow along with these things, put these things, these people out of the camp. And it says in verse 4, *“And the people of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD said to Moses, so the people of Israel did.”*

All right, stop there for just a moment. Now, I think most of you are familiar with the requirements that we're talking about here in the Book of Numbers because we dealt with it in our study of the Book of Leviticus. If you guys, we went through all kinds of chapters on mold, mildew, running sores, leprous conditions. I mean, it was just a whole lot of fun, of just great information that we learned lots of things that we didn't even want to know. But these are the laws of purity that were laid out for Israel. And it was not for some mystical reason. It wasn't because of some superstitious reason.

Oh, you've got a running sore, get away from me. It wasn't even technically because of health reasons. It wasn't even to quarantine people. That wasn't what it was all about. The point of this prohibition that we hear spoken here and had a lot of info about in the Book of Leviticus, is all about the presence of God. It's all about God's presence. And here's the reason. God was in their midst. Magnified, glorified in their midst and what God is saying to the people is there must be a separation between a Holy God and a sinful people.

And you might say, well, now wait a minute, these people aren't sinful, they just have physical conditions. Yeah, but you see, you have to understand something. They were considered unclean. And remember how we told you about how in the Old Testament, we look at types and shadows, symbols, pictures that point to a greater reality? Uncleanness in the Old Testament is a picture of sin. Okay? So, whenever you read something about somebody being unclean, that would mean they can't come into the camp where God is in the midst of them, nor can

they go into worship the Lord in any kind of an unclean condition. But this wasn't to create some kind of a stigma for people who had physical infirmities.

This was a reminder to the people that there can be no sin where the Lord dwells, right? In fact, verse three is very important. Look with me again, we read it. This is the key. This is the key phrase of understanding this. The very end of that verse says, *"They may not defile their camp in the midst of which I dwell."* There it is right there. God is making the statement. Uncleanness, this picture of sin, communicates our condition. The condition of mankind. This is something people don't like to see. People don't like hearing about this at all.

It's probably one of the reasons why reading through the Old Testament is kind of distasteful, because it continually reminds us of the fact that we are unclean before a holy God. We are, get this guys, unacceptable. We're unacceptable before a holy God. And that's just the fact of the matter. And God is preparing His people to understand. Hear this very carefully. God is preparing His people to understand they have need of a Savior who will, one day, come into their midst and He will abolish this sacrificial system that had been established because He Himself will be the final and perfect sacrifice for sin.

And after that happens, people will now be, by faith in Him, made acceptable to God. Isn't it glorious, from a New Testament perspective, you and I as believers, we are acceptable to God. Not because we're good people, not because we're virtuous or meritorious or whatever you want to say. It's not because we've done good things. We are acceptable to God by virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ that now covers us and cleanses us from our sin. We're now acceptable. That's wonderful. We can come into God's presence whenever we want. We don't have to hear, stay away, you can't approach God. Right?

We can approach Him, right? They couldn't under the Old Covenant, and that's the reminder that we're getting here in this passage of Scripture. But let me just contrast this. When you watch Jesus in the Gospel accounts, dealing with people who had these very issues, discharges bodily discharge. Remember the woman who had the hemorrhaging situation, there were leprous people, all kinds of other skin diseases. What did Jesus say to those people? Ooh, get away from me! Don't touch me, you're unclean! Did Jesus say that to people?

Never once. What did He do? He healed them, didn't He? In fact, He did what other people were unwilling to do. The other people did stay away. Jesus touched them. Nobody touched people with leprosy, and with these other bodily discharges or that sort of thing because it would make you unclean. Jesus touched them. He healed them. And what He was doing, He was showing by

healing people during His earthly ministry that the things that would make them unclean and unacceptable under the Law, those are the things that He was coming to change things that the Law couldn't accomplish.

You have to remember that the Law can't change anybody's condition or situation. If you had a situation that rendered you unclean, if you had a bodily discharge or a leprous condition, a skin eruption or any of these other things that would make you unclean, the Law couldn't change your condition. All it could do is pronounce you unacceptable. That's all it can do, right? And so, there's a limitation in the Law in the same way the Law can't do anything to change your sinful condition under the Law.

That's why we tell people who go to these, have these legalistic mindsets and they're trying to keep all these laws and food laws and keep days of the week and all these other things. We keep telling them, that's not going to make you acceptable to God, right, because the Law can't make you acceptable to God. All it can do is pronounce you as unacceptable. It pronounces you as sinful, and then what does it do? It sends you away. What do we see God telling Moses to do with these people with all these conditions?

Send them out of the camp. Get rid of them. And not forever. Again, some of them could come back into the camp after sundown. Some of them had to wait a few days before they could come back. Some of them had to wait until they were shown to be cured of their skin conditions. But they were sent away. Okay? And that's what the Law does, guys. That's why we don't follow the Law in the sense that people try to follow it legalistically. All the Law can do is pronounce you guilty and send you away from the presence of God.

What does Jesus do? He does what the Law cannot do. He embraces you. Do you remember when Jesus was confronted with that woman who was caught in the act of adultery? Apparently, anyway, she was caught in the act of adultery, and she was literally thrown at his feet. Now, the Law, the Law, demanded that she be stoned to death. That was a capital crime. And so, this woman is literally cast at Jesus' feet, and of course they're using it as a means to test Him. What do you say we should do with this woman? And so forth, you know. What did Jesus do to her?

Again, the Law would condemn her, and would send her away, because that's all the Law can do. But Jesus showed her mercy. And I know some people struggle with how Jesus responded. They'll say, well now wait a minute. Why did Jesus show her mercy? Wasn't He supposed to keep the Law? I mean, was Jesus in fact, violating the Law in a sense, since the Law demanded this woman

to be stoned for her sexual immorality and Jesus responded with showing mercy to this woman. So, was He in fact wrong in that situation? Well, you've got to remember something.

Jesus came to physically show people that He was able to do what the Law cannot do. The Law, remember this people, the Law cannot show mercy. It just can't. It just, it condemns. It kills. Jesus came to show the people of Israel that He is able to do what the Law cannot. And that is why you read through those first few chapters of the book of Hebrews, that book I love so much. And it repeatedly goes through, systematically telling you that Jesus is superior.

First to angels, then to Moses. The Law, why? Because He can do what the Law cannot do. He offers mercy and acceptance and grace. And it's wonderful. Let's keep going. Verses 5 through 10 are going to talk about some guidelines to kind of handle those situations where people wrong one another. Alright? In other words, sin against one another, and how it ought to be kind of taken care of.

Verse 5. It says, *"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>6</sup> 'Speak to the people of Israel, When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person realizes his guilt, <sup>7</sup> he shall confess his sin that he has committed. And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, ...'"* (And by the way, the word wrong here, your Bible may actually have the word trespass, if you have a different translation, you're reading here tonight. And the word trespass means a violation of a known rule. Okay? In other words, it means this person knew what they were doing. All right? And then it goes on to say) *adding* (after talking about restitution. It says adding) *a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong."*

All right, stop there for just a moment. First of all, I want you to notice in these verses that whatever wrong might have been committed here, it is referred to in verse 6, if you look in your Bible there, as, *"breaking faith with the LORD."* Now, remember, God is giving, through Moses, rules and guidelines for when people mess with other people. In other words, I wrong you, you wrong me.

Now, what it says here in verse 6 is that this person has broken faith with the Lord. Why? Why does it say that? Shouldn't it say he broke faith with his brother, or he broke faith with his sister, or she broke faith with her sister or something like that?

I mean, why are we talking about breaking faith with the Lord when it's between people? Well, that's a very interesting question. The answer is that ultimately, all sin has to be seen as being committed against the Lord, and

against our relationship with the Lord. When I do something to violate my relationship with you, I am ultimately, ultimately, violating my relationship with God because the Bible says, first of all, love the Lord your God, right? And then love your neighbor as yourself, which is a commandment no less great than the first. To love the Lord your God.

So, when I don't love you, I am just as equally violating the commandment of God as it relates to what He has commanded me to do. All right? Now, you might remember, and I can give you some examples of this. You might remember that when David took another man's wife, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

You'll remember that after a period of denial that he went through for a period of months. Finally, the prophet Nathan confronted him with this sinful behavior. Do you remember what he said? Let me put this on the screen for you so you can see it from 2 Samuel 12, the first part of verse 13, it says,

**2 Samuel 12: 13(a) (ESV)**

*David said to Nathan, "I've sinned against the LORD."*

*David said to Nathan, "I've sinned against the LORD."*

Now that's an interesting statement in light of the fact that he committed adultery with another man's wife and then made arrangements for that man to be put in the hotspot of the warfare so that he would be killed in battle and kind of eliminated from the equation. So really, technically speaking, David committed adultery with another man's wife and then arranged to have him put away, killed. And yet, what does David say here? He says, I've sinned against the Lord. What does David understand that you and I might not get? Do you remember now David's prayer of repentance, which is quite well known from the Psalms? It's recorded for us in the 51st Psalm. Let me show you his statement here. He says to the Lord,

**Psalm 51:4 (ESV)**

*Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...*

*Against you, you only, have I sinned (he said) and done what is evil in your sight...*

Now, that's an interesting statement, too. Does that mean that he didn't sin against Bathsheba? Does that mean that he didn't sin against her husband Uriah

by having him put into a difficult place during battle so that he might be killed? Does that mean he didn't sin against the people of Israel whom he had been crowned king over? Not at all. It doesn't mean that at all. It just means that ultimately, ultimately, we have offended a righteous God okay. You have to understand something.

Sins against people are real and true and genuine but when I sin against you, I am a sinner sinning against a sinner. When you sin against me you are a sinner sinning against a sinner. When we sin against God we are sinning against a holy, righteous and pure God who is the only one we will ultimately ever stand before as it relates to our sins. If they're not put away under the person in the, of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. In which case we'll never stand before God for our sin, because He already did.

The point is, He is the ultimate judge. He is the ultimate Supreme Court and David understood that, and he said, Lord, it's against you and you only that I have sinned. And so, I want you to notice here as we're looking at these verses. When God is giving Moses direction, He gives him a very simple progression to take to kind of follow, I guess, if there is a sinful behavior between brothers or sisters or something like that. And if you look at those verses again, He basically tells them once they realize their guilt, and that's saying something there. Sometimes people have a hard time coming to that realization.

They are to confess their sin to the individual who they violated, and then secondly, they are to make restitution. And that simply means they're to pay the person back, which is a good payback, for the wrong that they've committed, adding 20 percent to whatever cost might have been incurred in this situation and that could be very many things. And this is so important. The reason that God is giving them guidelines for how to treat one another and how to deal with these kinds of interpersonal issues is because they're coming into a land that is said to be flowing with milk and honey.

And yet, if their community is full of unforgiveness, and anger, and bitterness, and a lack of restoration, that land flowing with milk and honey is going to be a nightmare to live in. They can take what God gave them, which is a wonderful land, and they can make it awful by simply having no forgiveness among them, no restoration that takes place when wrongs are committed against one another. But you know what? The nation of Israel or the land of Israel would not be the problem, would it? Even though it would be a nightmare to live in.

That wouldn't be the problem. The problem would be the people, wouldn't it? Because they weren't resolving their issues, they weren't dealing in forgiveness,

they weren't making restitution, and so on. It's the same thing with like, marriage. I think about marriage, there's a lot of people who are like, I'm just totally against the idea of marriage. Marriage is a nightmare. No, marriage is not a nightmare. People are a nightmare. Right? It's what you bring into it that makes it either good or bad. It's like when the nation of Israel came into the land, if they were going to just sit there and fight against one another and bicker and never resolve their issues, they're going to make the land that God said was flowing with milk and honey into a desert.

Into a place nobody wants to come to. Why? Because the people are constantly at war and we do the same thing in marriage. And people think that the problem is marriage. The problem is not marriage. The problem is people. And if we would learn how to resolve our issues, and if we would learn to be able to confess our sins one to another when we do something or say something wrong, if I would turn to my wife and just humble myself enough to say, honey I am so sorry, I'm an idiot, would you forgive me? We're already on the road to restoration. And now marriage can be the thing God intended it to be.

It can be that institution of milk and honey, flowing with milk and honey. It, you know, marriage, just like Israel, the land of Israel was meant to be a blessing. We make it something less when we simply violate these sorts of things. And then this idea, I've got to just talk for a moment about this idea of restoration, because I, excuse me, restitution restoration is part of it. But restitution is an element that I think is just such a cool idea. You know, we covered this in Leviticus, He talked about restitution and what that basically means is if somebody did something against you, sinned against you in a way that cost you.

Might have been stealing an animal that belonged to you or taking something that belonged to you that had some kind of a monetary value or whatever the case might be. Basically, if you would say, okay, there's 500 dollars in damages because of this sinful action that took place between these two individuals. Restitution means that when the person who is guilty fesses up to it, they confess their wrong to the individual, but rather than going and spending time in jail and paying their debt to society, they pay their debt to the person who they violated.

I like that idea. I think that's better than this idea of paying our debt to society. What do you owe to society? You owe this person. I love that concept. So, it means you would pay them back 500 dollars, which is the value of whatever you did against them, and then you would add 20 percent to that value as a kind of a further sort of a deal. But I'm sure that that would go a long way toward



healing and restoring that relationship. But what if an individual who's been wronged no longer is alive, or no longer is living in the area? Keep reading. This is what they deal with next.

Verse 8. *“But if the man has no next of kin (or close relative in the area) to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for wrong shall go to the LORD for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for him.”*

So, restitution is to be made to the individual who's been wronged. If not possible, it's to go to their closest relative. If there's no relative in the area, the payment shall go to the Lord.

And the details are in verse 9. It says, *“And every contribution, all the holy donations of the people of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be his. <sup>10</sup> Each one shall keep his holy donations: whatever anyone gives to the priest shall be his.”*

So, any restitution that cannot be paid to an individual because they're no longer alive or have no relative, is made to the Lord and that is given to the priest. Alright? Okay. Now, we come to verse 11 and we come to a challenging, difficult passage concerning how to deal with suspicions of infidelity in marriage within the context of marriage. And I'm going to read this whole section and I'm going to tell you right now, that as we read this, this is going to sound really weird to American ears living in 2017. And you're going to listen to this. You're going to go, what in the world? All right? But just bear with me and we'll talk about some of the dynamics of this.

Verse 11, *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel, If any man's wife goes and breaks faith with him,”* Meaning, she is unfaithful, she has adultery with another man.

*“<sup>13</sup> if a man lies with her sexually, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she is undetected though she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her, since she was not taken in the act, (or literally caught in the act) <sup>14</sup> and if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife who has defiled herself, or if the spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife, though she has not defiled herself,”* In other words, she is not guilty of any infidelity.

*“<sup>15</sup> then the man shall bring his wife to the priest and bring the offering required of her, a tenth of an ephah of barley flour. He shall pour no oil on it*

*and put no frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance, bringing iniquity to remembrance. <sup>16</sup> “And the priest shall bring her near and set her before the LORD. <sup>17</sup> And the priest shall take holy water in an earthenware vessel and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put it into the water. <sup>18</sup> And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD and unbind the hair of the woman's head and place in her hands the grain offering of remembrance, which is the grain offering of jealousy. And in his hand the priest shall have the water of bitterness that brings the curse.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, ‘If no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse. <sup>20</sup> But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself, and some man other than your husband has lain with you, <sup>21</sup> then’ (let the priest make the woman take the oath of the curse, and say to the woman) ‘the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh fall away and your body swell.*

*<sup>22</sup> May this water that brings the curse pass into your bowels and make your womb swell and your thigh fall away.’ And the woman shall say, ‘Amen, Amen.’ <sup>23</sup> “Then the priest shall write these curses in a book and wash them off into the water of bitterness. <sup>24</sup> And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain. <sup>25</sup> And the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand and shall wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar.*

*<sup>26</sup> And the priest shall take a handful of the grain offering, as its memorial portion, and burn it on the altar, and afterward shall make the woman drink the water. <sup>27</sup> And when he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and has broken faith with her husband, the water that brings the curse shall enter into her and cause bitter pain, and her womb shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away, and the woman shall become a curse among her people.*

*<sup>28</sup> But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, (in other words she committed no infidelity) then she shall be free and shall (in other words she shall suffer no ill effects, and shall) conceive children. <sup>29</sup> “This is the law in cases of jealousy, when a wife, though under her husband's authority, goes astray and defiles herself,*

*<sup>30</sup> or when the spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife. Then he shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall carry out for her all this law. <sup>31</sup> The man shall be free from iniquity, but the woman shall bear her iniquity.”*

Yeah, and all of us are sitting here saying, yeah, I'm glad I don't live under the Law. Right? Now, it may not sound like it to you and I, but this ritual that is described in these verses here of this chapter, whether or not infidelity had taken place, was actually a ritual that was created to protect women. You have to understand that in the culture in which the Israelites had come out, which was Egyptian culture, adultery and infidelity was widespread, and for many people it was probably considered to be just part of life. But it was a challenging problem.

And remember also, as you think about these verses, that during this time in history, and particularly during this time of biblical history, women ranked just above a man's property. And that meant that if a husband even suspected that his wife might be guilty of being unfaithful to him, regardless of whether he had proof or not, a man was perfectly free back in those days to deal with that woman as he saw fit. And this passage is actually placing limitations on a man who is having those kinds of concerns about his wife.

Secondly, this ritual provided also, a means of knowing for sure whether or not the man's suspicions were founded and resolving that unknown element within the relationship because basically, what God was saying is you don't know for sure she's saying no, but you don't believe her. And I know, and if you go through this whole ritual and understand that there was a lot of work that had to be done to make this thing even come to pass. I mean, a man bringing his wife to the priest, having this grain offering set aside, and then he had to make this public announcement and so forth.

That was enough of a deterrent probably but what God was saying here is, I will solve this thing one way or the other. And if there's been infidelity, you will know. And if there has not been infidelity, you will also know because I am going to superintend this process. And if the woman is not guilty of this crime, she will drink this like any other glass of water, albeit probably tasting a bit rotten, and nothing is going to happen related to any kind of physical negative response. You've got to remember, if a man suspected his wife of being unfaithful and she denied that wrongdoing, there was nothing she could do.

There was no recourse for the woman to somehow convince this man that she was innocent. This ritual at least provided a means of that vindication for the

woman which she hadn't. And again, a man would be under the law of pagan cultures. He could put her to death if he wanted to. He could put her away at the easiest and put her to death at the most, and this forced a jealous man to consider all that he had to go through to see if his jealous suspicions were in fact true. Let me and while we're talking about it, let me just say something for just a moment about jealousy. Let me just make a statement here.

Jealousy is a work of the flesh. Simple as that. I'm not going to get into all the psychological reasons behind jealousy. I'm sure there are many, and at the end of the day it all doesn't matter because it flat out is a work of the flesh which destroys relationships. Jealousy destroys relationships. Any relationship that exists must be built, if it's going to be a healthy one anyway, has to be built on mutual trust. And when jealousy is present, it completely destroys that trust. Instead, there's nothing there but suspicion. And people, suspicion squeezes the life out of a relationship.

It squeezes the love out of a relationship, ultimately. And the constant suspicion, there's no room for genuine love. And if I were writing the Bible, it's a good thing I didn't. If I were writing the Bible, I'd probably put an addendum at the end of this chapter. I mean, the chapter ends and it kind of almost sounds like a guy who puts his wife through this nonsense if she's innocent, kind of gets off Scot free, and she goes through this potential public humiliation and has to go through this whole thing and drink this water and only to find out that nothing happens and so forth.

And he ends up kind of just, oh, well, interesting. All right, let's go home honey. What's for dinner sort of a thing. I don't know. I probably would have a little addendum here at the end. Something saying, if a woman is found innocent, she shall be given a two by four and beat her husband like a pinata for about 30 minutes straight or something like that because it just kind of seems a little bit unfair, and I'm not going to try to explain that away. Numbers chapter 6 gives us some details on those who took a special vow of consecration that was known as the Nazirite vow. Now, before we read these verses, don't confuse Nazirite with Nazarene.

They sound very similar, but Jesus was considered a Nazarene simply because He grew up in the region of Nazareth in Galilee. And a Nazirite vow is something completely different. The Hebrew word for Nazirite is Nazir and it means to separate. It literally refers to one who is consecrated or devoted. And the vow of the Nazirite was a voluntary thing. It wasn't something anybody ever had to do. You never had to be, unless God called somebody and there were some interesting and very unusual situations where people were called to a

Nazirite life from birth and so forth. Samuel being an example, Samson being an example and so forth.

They were Nazirites for life, but this was a voluntary vow. The Mishnah says that the Nazirite vow could last as long as 100 days, but the typical length was somewhere around 30 days. And it was a situation that involved three basic provisions. Number one, the Nazirite during that time of their vow, was not allowed to eat or drink anything of the grapevine or anything that was fermented in any way. Secondly, he would not cut his hair during the time of his vow. And thirdly, he may not go near a dead body to be defiled during that Nazirite vow and this passage actually tells us what will happen to that person if they do go by a dead body.

By the way, just so you know, the Nazirite vow, we talked about types and shadows. The Nazirite vow is a picture of a life consecrated under Christ. A life that is literally given over to the Lord. And that is something to be what all of us who are in Christ are to be living out every day of our lives. Where we are just saying, Jesus, I am yours. I belong to you. I offer myself as a living sacrifice. I am yours. The Nazirite vow is a picture of that. In the Old Testament, it was a temporary sort of an extraordinary expression of consecration. I mean, the whole nation of Israel, don't get me wrong, was supposed to be consecrated to God. This was an extraordinary expression of that. Verse 1, it says,

*“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When either a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, <sup>3</sup> he shall separate himself from wine and strong drink. He shall drink no vinegar made from wine (I don't know who would want to) or strong drink and shall not drink any juice of grapes or eat grapes, fresh or dried. (All, that would be a raisin, right?) <sup>4</sup> All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.*

*<sup>5</sup> “All the days of his vow of separation, no razor shall touch his head. Until the time is completed for which he separates himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. He shall let the locks of hair of his head grow long. (however long they can get in 30 days to 100 days) <sup>6</sup> “All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. <sup>7</sup> Not even for his father or for his mother, for brother or sister, if they die, shall he make himself unclean, because his separation to God is on his head. (In other words, the sign of it is on his head through his uncut hair)*

<sup>8</sup> *All the days of his separation he is holy to the LORD.* <sup>9</sup> *“And if any man dies very suddenly beside him (now it's going to explain what happens if he finds himself in the presence of a dead body) and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing; (which is the seventh day) on the seventh day he shall shave it.* <sup>10</sup> *On the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two pigeons to the priest to the entrance of the tent of meeting,* <sup>11</sup> *and the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by reason of the dead body...”*

Interesting, it says he sinned by reason of the dead body. And that means if somebody just dropped dead in his presence and he touched this body, his Nazirite vow is nullified at that point. He is to go and announce this to the priest. He's to go through a period of cleansing. After seven days he's to cut his hair and then he has to start all over again, even if he's only like two days into it. Right? But it, notice it says here, he has sinned by reason of the dead body. Which reminds us that even unintentional sins, under the Law, are just as binding as any other sin.

And it says here in the middle of verse 11, *“...he shall consecrate his head that same day.* <sup>12</sup> *and separate himself to the LORD for the days of his separation and bring a male lamb a year old for a guilt offering. But the previous period shall be void, (in other words he's starting over again) because his separation was defiled.* <sup>13</sup> *“And this is the law for the Nazirite, when the time of his separation has been completed: (Now it's going to explain how his time comes to an end when he has successfully gone through his time of doing this Nazirite vow) he shall be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting,* <sup>14</sup> *and he shall bring his gift to the LORD, one male lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering, and one ewe lamb a year old without blemish as a sin offering, and one ram without blemish as a peace offering,* <sup>15</sup> *and a basket of unleavened bread, loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and their grain offering and their drink offerings.* <sup>16</sup> *And the priest shall bring them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering,*

<sup>17</sup> *and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread. The priest shall offer also its grain offering and its drink offering.* <sup>18</sup> *And the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.* <sup>19</sup> *And the priest shall take the shoulder of the ram, when it is boiled, and one unleavened loaf out of the basket and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them on the hands of the Nazirite, after he has shaved the hair of his consecration,*

*<sup>20</sup> and the priest shall wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. They are a holy portion for the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed. (meaning to the priest) And after that the Nazirite may (once again) drink wine. <sup>21</sup> “This is the law of the Nazirite. But if he vows an offering to the LORD above his Nazirite vow, as he can afford, in exact accordance with the vow that he takes, then he shall do in addition to the law of the Nazirite.”*

So, you come to the end of just this extraordinary expression of consecration to the Lord, right? That is a picture for us of our lives in Christ minus all of the legalistic stuff, which I'm very happy about. Chapter 6 ends with this beautiful prayer of blessing that God commands the priests to speak over the people. It goes like this. I love this, very beautiful.

*<sup>22</sup> “The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup> “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them, <sup>4</sup> The LORD bless you and keep you; <sup>25</sup> the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; <sup>26</sup> the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. <sup>27</sup> “So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them.””*

Some of you who may have had a background in a more liturgical-type church setting you may remember seeing the minister, whatever you called him in that setting, actually pronounce this over the people at the end of the service. It was often done at the very end. I remember it as a child, being raised in a very formal kind of, sort of, mainline denominational church that involved at least some aspect of liturgy, not as much as others, but I remember hearing this being said. It's a very cool thing to pronounce.

Numbers chapter 7. *“On the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle and had anointed and consecrated it with all its furnishings and had anointed and consecrated the altar with all its utensils, <sup>2</sup> the chiefs of Israel, heads of their fathers' houses, who were the chiefs of the tribes, who were over those who were listed, approached <sup>3</sup> and brought their offerings before the LORD, six wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for every two of the chiefs, and for each one an ox. They brought them before the tabernacle.*

*<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, <sup>5</sup> “Accept these from them, that they may be used in the service of the tent of meeting, and give them to the Levites, to each man according to his service.” (Remember, the Levites were given to Aaron and his sons to serve them) <sup>6</sup> So Moses took the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. <sup>7</sup> Two wagons and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service. <sup>8</sup> And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons*

*of Merari, according to their service, under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.”*

And by the way, last week we talked about what those services were for those individual groups. It says, *“<sup>9</sup> But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the service of the holy things that had to be carried on the shoulder.”*

So, you see what the wagons are for? Remember the Levites were the ones who basically, they were the roadies for the nation of Israel. They packed up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting and they carried it along and then set it up again when they reached their new destination. So, these were the guys who had to, you know there was too much to carry physically for some of these folks, so they were given wagons and oxen to pull them to handle all this stuff.

But it says to the sons of Kohath, which is a, basically a group of the Levites, they were commanded to carry certain elements of the furniture of the tabernacle on poles, and it could not be put on a cart, right? It was not to be carried on a cart. It was to be carried on the shoulders of the priests. That was the prescribed way. They didn't receive a new cart in this case.

It says in verse 10, *“And the chiefs offered offerings for the dedication of the altar on the day it was anointed; and the chiefs offered their offering before the altar.”* <sup>11</sup> *And the LORD said to Moses, “They shall offer their offerings, one chief each day, for the dedication of the altar.”* <sup>12</sup> *He who offered his offering the first day, (and so it's going to go through these, through the twelve tribes of Israel. First) was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah.”* We'll read what he offered and then the rest of the ones, we won't go through those because it's just a lot of redundant stuff.

*“<sup>13</sup> And his offering was one silver plate whose weight was 130 shekels, one silver basin of 70 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; <sup>14</sup> one golden dish of 10 shekels, full of incense; <sup>15</sup> one bull from the herd, one ram, one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; <sup>16</sup> one male goat for a sin offering; <sup>17</sup> and for the sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old. This was the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”* And this is the tribe of Judah, right?

Next, verse 18 says, *“On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, the chief of Issachar, (so from the tribe of Issachar) made an offering (and verses 19 through 23 describe it. Verse 24, skip down) <sup>24</sup> On the third day Eliab the son of*



*Helon, the chief of the people of Zebulun: (made) <sup>25</sup> his offering .... (It's all listed there, knock yourself out. Go down to verse 30) <sup>30</sup> On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, the chief of the people of Reuben: (made) <sup>31</sup> his offering... ” And it's all right there. Verse 36. “Shelumiel the son of (that guy)... the chief of the people of Simeon: ... ” They had, they were the tribe of long, difficult names.*

There's his offering verse 42. *“On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, the chief of the people of Gad: (made) <sup>43</sup> his offering ... (verse 48) <sup>48</sup> On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, the chief of the people of Ephraim: ”* Now we're dealing with the sons of Joseph. His offering was da, da da.

Verse 54. *“On the eighth day Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, (yeah) the chief of the people of Manasseh: (made) his offering... ”* Verse 60. *“On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, the chief of the people of Benjamin: (made) <sup>61</sup> his offering... ”*

Verse 66. *“On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of (that guy) Ammishaddai, (not bad) the chief of the people of Dan: (brought) <sup>67</sup> his offering .... (then) <sup>72</sup> On the eleventh day (kind of like the twelve days of Christmas, isn't it?) Pagiel the son of Ochran, the chief of the people of Asher: (and then) <sup>78</sup> On the twelfth day (verse 78) Ahira the son of Enan, the chief of the people of Naphtali: ... ”*  
Brought his stuff, his offering.

And if you look in verse 84, it tells us here in summary that, *“This was the dedication offering for the altar on the day when it was anointed, from the chiefs of Israel: twelve silver plates, twelve silver basins, twelve golden dishes,*

*<sup>85</sup> each silver plate weighing 130 shekels and each basin 70, all the silver of the vessels 2,400 shekels (that's about 60 pounds, by the way) according to the shekel of the sanctuary, ... ”* And then it goes on to describe the rest of the things that were offered.

Skip down to verse 89. *“And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him. ”*

We're going to do chapter 8 here very quickly. *“Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Speak to Aaron and say to him, When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand. ” <sup>3</sup> And Aaron did so: he set up its lamps in front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. ”*

Now we saw how the lamp stand was built. We went through a long description of that made in an earlier book, and now the lamps are themselves set up on the lamp stand.

It says, *“<sup>4</sup> And this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold. From its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern that the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.”*

Now, the rest of chapter 8 has to do with the cleansing and the dedication of the Levites. Back in Leviticus, you'll remember those of you that were with us, we went through the de dedication of the Aaronic priests, meaning Aaron and his sons. We call them the Aaronic priests, and their cleansing and dedication was given to us there in Leviticus. Now we're dealing with the dedication of the Levites, the rest of the Levites referring to the rest of the tribe of Levi, which were set apart to serve Aaron and his sons.

Verse 5 says, *“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>6</sup> “Take the Levites from among the people of Israel and cleanse them. <sup>7</sup> Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification upon them, and let them go with a razor over all their body, and wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. <sup>8</sup> Then let them take a bull from the herd and its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another bull from the herd for a sin offering.*

*<sup>9</sup> And you shall bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the whole congregation of the people of Israel.”* So, everybody's involved in this kind of this ordination ceremony.

And it says in verse 10. *“When you bring the Levites before the LORD, the people of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites, <sup>11</sup> and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the people of Israel, that they may do the service of the LORD.*

*<sup>12</sup> Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and you shall offer the one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering to the LORD to make atonement for the Levites. <sup>13</sup> And you shall set the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and shall offer them as a wave offering to the LORD. <sup>14</sup> “Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the people of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. <sup>5</sup> And after that the Levites shall go in to serve at the tent of meeting, when you have cleansed them and offered them as a wave offering.”* So, the Levites are set apart in their service to the Lord.

The next 4 verses, the Lord explains their special status. *“<sup>16</sup> For they are wholly given to me from among the people of Israel. Instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the people of Israel, I have taken them (The Levites) for myself. (And then he explains what he means by that) <sup>17</sup> For all the firstborn among the people of Israel are mine, both of man and of beast. (He’s reminding them) On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them (meaning the firstborn males) for myself, <sup>18</sup> and I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel.”* In other words, in exchange.

*“<sup>19</sup> And I have given the Levites as a gift (Isn't that interesting, the wording? I've given them as a gift) to Aaron and his sons from among the people of Israel, to do the service for the people of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the people of Israel, that there may be no plague among the people of Israel when the people of Israel come near the sanctuary.*

*<sup>20</sup> Thus did Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the people of Israel to the Levites. (In other words, everything they'd been told to do) According to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, the people of Israel did to them. <sup>21</sup> And the Levites purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes, and Aaron offered them as a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. <sup>22</sup> And after that the Levites went in to do their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them. <sup>23</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,*

*<sup>24</sup> “This applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall come to do duty in the service of the tent of meeting. <sup>25</sup> And from the age of fifty years they shall withdraw from the duty of the service and serve no more.*

*<sup>26</sup> They minister to their brothers in the tent of meeting by keeping guard, but they shall do no service. (Wow, early retirement) Thus shall you do to the Levites in assigning their duties.”*

We'll stop there. You know, it's interesting, but the whole priestly thing has some very interesting pictures for us in the body of Christ today. First of all, you know that as believers, we're all priests. You know that, right? We, the Bible says very clearly in the New Testament that when you come to Christ, you are made a priest before the Lord, and we offer not physical sacrifices of animals, we offer spiritual sacrifices.

What is that spiritual sacrifice primarily? It's us. That's what Paul says in Romans. Offer yourselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual act of worship. (Romans 12:1)

Okay, cool. So, in that sense, we're all priests. Okay? Offering spiritual sacrifices. But then you see, the only, remember, the only priest that offered, that actually offered the sacrifices were the Aaronic priests, were Aaron and his sons. The rest of the priests were kind of grunt men, for lack of a better term. They just kind of did duty, but they were supported by the offerings of the people. When the people came and gave their offerings, the Levites were supplied, their needs were supplied by those offerings.

That's why God didn't give the Levites any land when they came into the promised land. All the other tribes got land, the Levites, yep, didn't get any land. Doesn't mean they didn't have land to grow things on, they did, but it didn't belong to them. Because the Lord was their portion, was their inheritance, right? The land was not their inheritance. The Lord was their inheritance. I've always seen the Levites as kind of an interesting picture of people, and it's weird to say it, like myself, who are in full-time ministry who are supported by the church. Because that process of the body of believers supporting those who do service in the ministry is actually even a biblical picture in the New Testament.

Paul makes reference. In the New Testament, to those who do the work of the Gospel, receiving their living from the Gospel. And he even says, don't, you know, muzzle the ox while he's treading out the grain, and goes on to say, it's not just oxen that God is concerned about. There's a principle from the Old Testament, Levitical line, that carries into the New Testament for those who serve the Lord full time, ah that's a dumb way to put it. We all serve the Lord full time. But for those whose work is such in preaching and teaching and ministering to the body so that they don't have to work an outside job, they are supported by the body.

And that's the way the Levites were treated because their duties were like full-time duties. There was nothing else they had to do. They had to, they were there to take care of the tabernacle later on the temple, when that was finally built, because that was what they were given to do, God said, they're not going to have time for anything else, so you guys take care of them. You take care of them. And what was going to be their support was when the people brought their offerings.

Not all of the, only in a full burnt offering was the whole animal burned up. Most of the time, only part of the animal was burned on the altar, and then the

rest of the food, the meat, went to the priest, and that was his sustenance, and his family could eat of it. All of the people in his household that were of his family and so forth, even though it was a holy portion. So, you see some really interesting kind of connections between these pictures of the Old Testament and how things are done and talked about even in the New as well with these various positions.

But ultimately in the New Testament, we're all priests of some kind. We all offer spiritual sacrifices according to the Aaronic priest, which is a picture, of course, first and foremost of Jesus. Aaron is a picture of Jesus. He's a type of Jesus because Aaron is the one who went into the Holy of Holies and poured out the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat of God. Jesus took His own blood into the very heaven of heavens and poured out his own blood upon the mercy seat of the throne of God and paid for the sins of all mankind.

So, in that sense, Jesus fulfills the work of the Aaronic priest or Aaron the priest, in his high priestly duties. That's why we refer to Jesus as our high priest. But in this, by the same token, now you have all been made priests. We all have been made priests to offer spiritual sacrifices, pleasing to God.