

Numbers, Chapters 7-10 / Final Preparations for the March to Canaan

Read Numbers 7:1-11 – *Tabernacle Consecrated; Altar Dedicated*

Background: We have studied how the priestly clan under Aaron were permitted to enter the tabernacle to present offerings on behalf of the people of Israel, and how the Levites were dedicated to the Lord's service as the servants of the priests. Numbers 3-4 describes the duties of the priests and Levites. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Merari, and Kohath. While on the march, the Gershonites carried the tabernacle curtains and hangings. The Merarites carried the tabernacle poles, frames, and bases. These two clans dismantled the tabernacle as Israel set out, and they set it up when Israel camped. The Kohathites carried the holy things of the tabernacle (after they had been carefully covered by the priests) on poles so that they did not touch the holy objects.

Chapter 7 shows how the other tribes supported them by giving them wagons and oxen to carry the tabernacle. They were brought as part of the consecration offerings brought on 12 days by the leaders of the 12 tribes to consecrate the altar. The order of their presentations (verses 12-78) is the same as the order of their march described in Chapter 2.

Read Numbers 7:89 – *God's Presence Rests Over the Mercy Seat*

The culmination of the 12-day ceremony: communion is established between the Lord and His prophet.

Read Numbers 9:1-4 – *A Second Passover is Celebrated Before the March*

The first Passover took place in Egypt just before the Israelites escaped. It was unique in that it occurred before the saving event of the exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea; all subsequent Passover celebrations recalled these momentous events, but inevitably many of the features of the first Passover were missing. So this Passover, celebrated a year later at Sinai, was the first of many that were retrospective commemorations of the first Passover in Egypt.

Notice that the traditional Jewish practice is to regard twilight as the end of one day and the beginning of another.

Read Numbers 9:15-23 – *The Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire*

This visible evidence of God's presence could be seen by all Israel. In the evening it was like the appearance of fire until morning and thus it gave continual testimony, day and night, to God's presence among his people. This passage is almost a hymn to the relationship between God and His people (so long as they remained in an obedient mood).

"At the command of the Lord they camped, and at the command of the Lord they set out." The people had to be ready for immediate departure on any day, and they had to follow the Lord every day until the cloud stopped, which required continual and complete obedience to God's guidance. Notice verse 23 "through Moses." Why is that clarified?

Read Numbers 10:11-13 – *The Tribes of Israel Set Out for Canaan*

Numbers 10:14-28 describes the order of the march, listing the names of the leaders of the tribes for a fourth time in Numbers. The order of the march is the same as given in Chapter Two.

<u>Dan</u>	<u>Ephraim</u>		<u>Reuben</u>		<u>Judah</u>	
<u>Asher</u>	<u>Manasseh</u>	<u>Kohathites</u>	<u>Simeon</u>	<u>Gershonites</u> & <u>Merarites</u>	<u>Issachar</u>	<u>Ark</u>
<u>Naphtali</u>	<u>Benjamin</u>		<u>Gad</u>		<u>Zebulun</u>	→

In front of all, went the Ark of the Covenant. Numbers 10:33

Read Numbers 10:33-36

A three days' journey. Because of the huge numbers of the people in the tribes of Israel, and because this was their first organized march, this first journey did not cover much territory.

Moses' prayer as they set out is used in the opening of Psalm 68, a psalm celebrating the triumphal march from Sinai to Jerusalem. Read Psalm 68:1