EDIFIED EDITION

Numbers

A modern rendering of the Holy Scriptures

36	1,288	Old	4
chapters	verses	Testament	book of 66

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Numbered notes follow each chapter.

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Chapter 1

Numbers 1 records the first census of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, in the second year after the exodus. The LORD tells Moses and Aaron to count every man of twenty and over who is able to serve in Israel's army, tribe by tribe, with a leader from each tribe to help them. The totals for the twelve tribes come to 603,550 men. The Levites are not counted with the others, for the LORD sets them apart to carry and care for the tabernacle of the testimony and to camp around it, so that His anger does not fall on the community.

1 On the first day of the second month of the
second year after the Israelites left Egypt, the
LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the
wilderness of Sinai:

2 "Take a census of the whole community of the
Israelites by their clans and families,[1] listing the
names of every male one by one.

3 You and Aaron are to count all in Israel who are
twenty years old and over and able to serve in the
army, company by company.

4 And with you there is to be a man from each
tribe, each the head of his family.

5 These are the names of the men who are to assist
you: from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;

6 from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

7 from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab;

8 from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar;

9 from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon;

10 from the sons of Joseph: from Ephraim,
Elishama son of Ammihud, and from Manasseh,
Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;

11 from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni;

12 from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

13 from Asher, Pagiel son of Ochran;

14 from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel;

15 from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.

16 These were the ones chosen from the
community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes,
the heads of the thousands of Israel."

17 Moses and Aaron took these men who had been
named,

18 and on the first day of the second month they
called the whole community together. The people
registered their descent by clans and families, and
the names of those twenty years old and over
were listed one by one,

19 just as the LORD had instructed Moses. This
was how he took the count in the wilderness of
Sinai.

20 Of the descendants of Reuben, Israel's firstborn,
all the males twenty years old and over who were
able to serve in the army were listed by name one
by one, according to their clans and families.

21 Those counted from the tribe of Reuben
numbered 46,500.

22 Of the descendants of Simeon, all the males
twenty years old and over who were able to serve
in the army were counted and listed by name one
by one, according to their clans and families.

23 Those counted from the tribe of Simeon
numbered 59,300.

24 Of the descendants of Gad, all the men twenty
years old and over who were able to serve in the
army were listed by name, according to their clans
and families.

25 Those counted from the tribe of Gad numbered
45,650.

26 Of the descendants of Judah, all the men twenty
years old and over who were able to serve in the
army were listed by name, according to their clans
and families.

27 Those counted from the tribe of Judah numbered
74,600.

28 Of the descendants of Issachar, all the men
twenty years old and over who were able to serve
in the army were listed by name, according to
their clans and families.

29 Those counted from the tribe of Issachar
numbered 54,400.

30 Of the descendants of Zebulun, all the men
twenty years old and over who were able to serve
in the army were listed by name, according to
their clans and families.

31 Those counted from the tribe of Zebulun
numbered 57,400.

32 Of the sons of Joseph: of the descendants of
Ephraim, all the men twenty years old and over
who were able to serve in the army were listed by
name, according to their clans and families.

33 Those counted from the tribe of Ephraim
numbered 40,500.

34 Of the descendants of Manasseh, all the men twenty years old and over who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to their clans and families.

35 Those counted from the tribe of Manasseh numbered 32,200.

36 Of the descendants of Benjamin, all the men twenty years old and over who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to their clans and families.

37 Those counted from the tribe of Benjamin numbered 35,400.

38 Of the descendants of Dan, all the men twenty years old and over who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to their clans and families.

39 Those counted from the tribe of Dan numbered 62,700.

40 Of the descendants of Asher, all the men twenty years old and over who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to their clans and families.

41 Those counted from the tribe of Asher numbered 41,500.

42 Of the descendants of Naphtali, all the men twenty years old and over who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to their clans and families.

43 Those counted from the tribe of Naphtali numbered 53,400.

44 These were the men counted by Moses and Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel, each representing his family.

45 All the Israelites twenty years old and over who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted by their families,

46 and the total was 603,550.[2]

47 But the Levites were not counted along with them by their ancestral tribe.

48 For the LORD had said to Moses,

49 "Only the tribe of Levi you are not to count, and you are not to include them in the census of the Israelites.

50 Instead, appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, over all its furnishings and all that belongs to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, they are to look after it, and they are to camp around the tabernacle.

51 Whenever the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites are to set it up. Any outsider who comes near is to be put to death.

52 The Israelites are to camp each in his own camp and each by his own standard, company by company,

53 but the Levites are to camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath against the community of the Israelites. The Levites are to keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."

54 The Israelites did this; they did all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

1 Hebrew 'by their fathers' houses', the extended family under its head; so throughout Numbers.

2 The same total as the silver collected in Exodus 38:26. Some think the Hebrew word for 'thousand' (אֶלֶף, elef) may here mean a smaller unit, a clan or a troop, which would give a much smaller number.

Chapter 2

Numbers 2 sets out the order of Israel's camp. The tribes are to camp in four groups of three around the tent of meeting, each under its banner: Judah, Issachar and Zebulun on the east, Reuben, Simeon and Gad on the south, Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin on the west, and Dan, Asher and Naphtali on the north, with the Levites and the tent in the middle. Each group's leaders and numbers are given, and the groups are to set out in the same order, Judah first. The total is again 603,550, without the Levites, and the Israelites camp and march as the LORD commanded.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

2 "The Israelites are to camp each by his own standard, with the banners of their families; they are to camp facing the tent of meeting, at a distance all round it.

3 On the east side, towards the sunrise, the standard of the camp of Judah is to camp by its

companies. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab,

4 and his company, as counted, numbered 74,600.

5 Next to him the tribe of Issachar is to camp. The leader of the people of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar,

6 and his company, as counted, numbered 54,400.

7 Then the tribe of Zebulun. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon,

8 and his company, as counted, numbered 57,400.

9 All those counted in the camp of Judah, by their companies, numbered 186,400. They are to set out first.

10 On the south side is to be the standard of the camp of Reuben by its companies. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur,

11 and his company, as counted, numbered 46,500.

12 Next to him the tribe of Simeon is to camp. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai,

13 and his company, as counted, numbered 59,300.

14 Then the tribe of Gad. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Reuel,[1]

15 and his company, as counted, numbered 45,650.

16 All those counted in the camp of Reuben, by their companies, numbered 151,450. They are to set out second.

17 Next the tent of meeting is to move off, with the Levites' camp, in the centre of the other camps. They are to march in the same order as they camp, each tribe in its place under its standard.

18 On the west side is to be the standard of the camp of Ephraim by its companies. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud,

19 and his company, as counted, numbered 40,500.

20 Next to him is to be the tribe of Manasseh. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur,

21 and his company, as counted, numbered 32,200.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni,

23 and his company, as counted, numbered 35,400.

24 All those counted in the camp of Ephraim, by their companies, numbered 108,100. They are to set out third.

25 On the north side is to be the standard of the camp of Dan by its companies. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai,

26 and his company, as counted, numbered 62,700.

27 Next to him the tribe of Asher is to camp. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Ochran,

28 and his company, as counted, numbered 41,500.

29 Then the tribe of Naphtali. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan,

30 and his company, as counted, numbered 53,400.

31 All those counted in the camp of Dan numbered 157,600. They are to set out last, by their standards."

32 These are the Israelites as counted by their families. All those counted in the camps, by their companies, numbered 603,550.

33 But the Levites were not counted among the Israelites, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

34 So the Israelites did all that the LORD had commanded Moses: they camped by their standards in this way, and they set out in this way, each by his clan and his family.

1 So most Hebrew manuscripts; some, with the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Latin, read 'Deuel', as in 1:14.

Chapter 3

Numbers 3 gives the place of the Levites. After naming Aaron's sons, the priests, and recalling the death of Nadab and Abihu, the LORD tells Moses to present the tribe of Levi to Aaron to serve him and to care for the tabernacle, for He has taken the Levites in place of every firstborn in Israel, who became His when He struck down the firstborn of Egypt. The Levites are counted from a month old: the clans of Gershon, Kohath and Merari, each with its camp beside the tabernacle and its own charge, while Moses and Aaron camp before the entrance. Their total is 22,000; the firstborn of Israel number 22,273, so the 273 extra are redeemed at five shekels each, and the money is given to Aaron and his sons.

1 These are the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

2 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab
the firstborn, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.
3 These are the names of Aaron's sons, the
anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as
priests.
4 Nadab and Abihu, however, died in the LORD's
presence in the wilderness of Sinai, when they
brought strange fire before Him, and they left no
sons; so it was Eleazar and Ithamar who served as
priests while their father Aaron lived.[1]
5 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
6 "Bring forward the tribe of Levi and present
them to Aaron the priest to be his helpers.
7 They are to carry out duties for him and for the
whole community in front of the tent of meeting,
doing the work of the tabernacle.
8 They are to take care of all the furnishings of the
tent of meeting and carry out duties for the
Israelites, doing the work of the tabernacle.
9 You are to give the Levites to Aaron and his sons;
out of all the Israelites they are wholly given to
him.
10 And you are to appoint Aaron and his sons to
keep their priesthood; any outsider who comes
near is to be put to death."
11 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
12 "See, I Myself have taken the Levites from
among the Israelites in place of every firstborn
who opens the womb among the Israelites. The
Levites are Mine,
13 for every firstborn is Mine. On the day I struck
down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, I
consecrated for Myself every firstborn in Israel, of
people and of animals; they are to be Mine. I am
the LORD."
14 The LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of
Sinai and said,
15 "Count the Levites by their families and clans;
count every male a month old and over."
16 So Moses counted them at the word of the
LORD, as he was commanded.
17 These were the sons of Levi by name: Gershon,
Kohath and Merari.
18 These are the names of the sons of Gershon by
their clans: Libni and Shimei.
19 The sons of Kohath by their clans: Amram, Izhar,
Hebron and Uzziel.
20 The sons of Merari by their clans: Mahli and
Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites by their
families.
21 From Gershon came the clan of the Libnites and
the clan of the Shimeites; these were the clans of
the Gershonites.
22 Those counted, all the males a month old and
over, numbered 7,500.
23 The clans of the Gershonites were to camp
behind the tabernacle, on the west,
24 and the leader of the family of the Gershonites
was Eliasaph son of Lael.
25 In the tent of meeting the Gershonites were in
charge of the tabernacle and the tent, its
covering, the screen for the entrance of the tent of
meeting,
26 the hangings of the courtyard, the screen for the
entrance of the courtyard that surrounds the
tabernacle and the altar, and its cords, with all the
work connected with them.
27 From Kohath came the clan of the Amramites,
the clan of the Izharites, the clan of the
Hebronites and the clan of the Uzzielites; these
were the clans of the Kohathites.
28 The number of all the males a month old and
over was 8,600.[2] They were in charge of the
sanctuary.
29 The clans of the Kohathites were to camp on the
south side of the tabernacle,
30 and the leader of the family of the Kohathite
clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel.
31 They were in charge of the ark, the table, the
lampstand, the altars, the utensils of the
sanctuary used in the service, and the screen,
with all the work connected with them.
32 The chief leader of the Levites was Eleazar son
of Aaron the priest, who had oversight of those in
charge of the sanctuary.
33 From Merari came the clan of the Mahlites and
the clan of the Mushites; these were the clans of
Merari.
34 Those counted, all the males a month old and
over, numbered 6,200.
35 The leader of the family of the clans of Merari
was Zuriel son of Abihail. They were to camp on
the north side of the tabernacle.
36 The sons of Merari were appointed to take
charge of the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its

pillars, its bases and all its fittings, with all the work connected with them,

37 and the pillars of the courtyard all round, with their bases, their pegs and their cords.

38 Those who were to camp in front of the tabernacle, on the east, in front of the tent of meeting towards the sunrise, were Moses and Aaron and his sons. They were in charge of the sanctuary on behalf of the Israelites; any outsider who came near was to be put to death.

39 All the Levites counted, whom Moses and Aaron[3] counted at the command of the LORD by their clans, all the males a month old and over, numbered 22,000.

40 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn males of the Israelites a month old and over, and take the number of their names.

41 And take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, in place of all the firstborn of the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in place of all the firstborn of the livestock of the Israelites."

42 So Moses counted all the firstborn of the Israelites, as the LORD commanded him.

43 All the firstborn males a month old and over, listed by name, numbered 22,273.

44 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

45 "Take the Levites in place of all the firstborn of the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in place of their livestock. The Levites are to be Mine. I am the LORD.

46 To redeem the 273 firstborn of the Israelites who outnumber the Levites,

47 you are to take five shekels for each one, by the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel,

48 and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are in excess."

49 So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above the ones redeemed by the Levites;

50 from the firstborn of the Israelites he took the money, 1,365 shekels by the sanctuary shekel.

51 And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons at the word of the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

1 Leviticus 10:1–2.

2 Some Greek manuscripts read 8,300, which agrees with the total of 22,000 in verse 39.

3 In the Hebrew 'and Aaron' is marked with dots above the letters, the scribes' sign of a doubtful word.

Chapter 4

Numbers 4 sets out the work of the three Levite clans when Israel moves camp. The Kohathites between thirty and fifty years old are to carry the most holy things, but only after Aaron and his sons have wrapped each one, the ark in the veil, fine leather and blue cloth, the table, the lampstand, the altars and the utensils in their coverings, for if the Kohathites touch or even look at the holy things they will die. The Gershonites are to carry the curtains and coverings of the tabernacle and the hangings of the courtyard, and the Merarites its frames, bars, pillars and bases, both under Ithamar. Moses and Aaron count the men of each clan fit for this service, 8,580 in all.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

2 "Take a census of the Kohathites among the Levites by their clans and families,

3 all from thirty years old up to fifty who come to serve in the work of the tent of meeting.

4 This is the work of the Kohathites in the tent of meeting: the most holy things.

5 When it is time to break camp, Aaron and his sons are to go in, lower the screening veil and wrap the ark of the testimony in it.

6 They are to put over it a covering of fine leather, spread over that a cloth all of blue, and put its poles in place.

7 Over the table of the Presence they are to spread a cloth of blue and put on it the plates, the dishes, the bowls and the jugs for the drink offering; the regular bread is also to be on it.

8 They are to spread over them a cloth of scarlet, cover it with a covering of fine leather and put its poles in place.

9 They are to take a cloth of blue and cover the lampstand for the light, with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its trays and all the vessels for its oil with which it is tended.

10 They are to put it and all its utensils in a covering of fine leather and put it on a carrying

frame.

11 Over the gold altar they are to spread a cloth of blue, cover it with a covering of fine leather and put its poles in place.

12 They are to take all the utensils of the service with which they minister in the sanctuary, put them in a cloth of blue, cover them with a covering of fine leather and put them on a carrying frame.

13 They are to clear the ashes from the altar and spread a purple cloth over it.

14 They are to put on it all its utensils with which they minister at it, the fire pans, the forks, the shovels and the basins, all the utensils of the altar, spread over it a covering of fine leather and put its poles in place.

15 When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, the Kohathites are to come and carry them; but they must not touch the holy things, or they will die. These are the things in the tent of meeting that the Kohathites are to carry.

16 Eleazar son of Aaron the priest is to have charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant incense, the regular grain offering and the anointing oil, with oversight of the whole tabernacle and all that is in it, the sanctuary and its furnishings."

17 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

18 "Do not let the tribe of the clans of the Kohathites be cut off from among the Levites.

19 Deal with them in this way, so that they may live and not die when they come near the most holy things: Aaron and his sons are to go in and assign each of them his task and his load.

20 But the Kohathites are not to go in to look at the holy things even for a moment,[1] or they will die."

21 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

22 "Take a census of the Gershonites also, by their families and clans.

23 Count all from thirty years old up to fifty who come to do duty in the work of the tent of meeting.

24 This is the work of the clans of the Gershonites, in serving and in carrying:

25 their load is the tabernacle's curtains, the tent of meeting with its covering and the fine leather over it, the screen at the doorway of the tent of meeting,

26 the hangings of the courtyard and the screen for the entrance of the gate of the courtyard that surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, their cords and all the equipment for their service. They are to do all that needs to be done with them.

27 All the work of the Gershonites, all their carrying and all their service, is to be at the command of Aaron and his sons, and you are to assign them all they are to carry as their charge.

28 This is the work of the clans of the Gershonites in the tent of meeting, and their duties are to be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

29 As for the Merarites, you are to count them by their clans and families.

30 Count all from thirty years old up to fifty who come to do duty in the work of the tent of meeting.

31 This is what they are charged to carry, as all their service in the tent of meeting: the frames of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars and its bases,

32 and the pillars of the courtyard all round, with their bases, pegs and cords, all their equipment and all their service. You are to assign by name the items each is charged to carry.

33 This is the work of the clans of the Merarites, all their service in the tent of meeting, under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest."

34 Moses and Aaron and the leaders of the community counted the Kohathites by their clans and families,

35 all from thirty years old up to fifty who came to serve in the work of the tent of meeting,

36 and those counted by their clans numbered 2,750.

37 This was the count of the Kohathite clans, all who served at the tent of meeting, made by Moses and Aaron as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

38 Those counted of the Gershonites by their clans and families,

39 all from thirty years old up to fifty who came to serve in the work of the tent of meeting,

40 numbered by their clans and families 2,630.

41 These were those counted of the clans of the Gershonites, all who served in the tent of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the command of the LORD.

42 Those counted of the clans of the Merarites by their clans and families,

43 all from thirty years old up to fifty who came to serve in the work of the tent of meeting,

44 numbered by their clans 3,200.

45 These were those counted of the clans of the Merarites, whom Moses and Aaron counted at the command of the LORD through Moses.

46 All the Levites whom Moses and Aaron and the leaders of Israel counted, by their clans and families,

47 all from thirty years old up to fifty who came to do the work of serving and the work of carrying in the tent of meeting,

48 numbered 8,580.

49 At the command of the LORD through Moses they were appointed, each to his task of serving or carrying; so they were counted, as the LORD commanded Moses.

1 Hebrew ‘as a swallowing’, as long as it takes to swallow.

Chapter 5

Numbers 5 gives three laws for keeping the camp pure, since the LORD dwells in its midst. Anyone with a skin disease or a discharge, or unclean through contact with the dead, is to be sent outside the camp. Anyone who wrongs another, and so is unfaithful to the LORD, is to confess, repay in full with a fifth added and bring a ram of atonement; if there is no relative to receive it, it goes to the priest. And when a husband suspects his wife of unfaithfulness but has no witness, he is to bring her to the priest with an offering of jealousy; she swears an oath and drinks the bitter water that brings a curse, which will do her no harm if she is innocent but bring the curse on her if she is guilty.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Command the Israelites to send out of the camp anyone who has a skin disease or a discharge, or who is unclean through contact with a dead body.

3 Send away male and female alike; send them outside the camp, so that they do not defile their camp, in the midst of which I dwell.”

4 The Israelites did so and sent them outside the camp; as the LORD had told Moses, so the Israelites did.

5 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

6 “Say to the Israelites: When a man or a woman commits any of the sins people commit against one another, and so breaks faith with the LORD, and that person is guilty,

7 they are to confess the sin they have committed. The guilty one is to make full restitution for the wrong, add a fifth to it and give it to the one who was wronged.

8 But if that person has no relative to whom restitution can be made, the restitution for the wrong is to go to the LORD, for the priest, in addition to the ram of atonement with which atonement is made for him.

9 Every contribution of all the holy gifts that the Israelites bring to the priest is to be his.

10 Each person’s holy gifts are his own, but whatever anyone gives to the priest is to be the priest’s.”

11 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

12 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: If any man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him,

13 so that a man lies with her, and it is hidden from her husband’s eyes and kept secret, and she has defiled herself, but there is no witness against her and she was not caught in the act,

14 and a spirit of jealousy comes over him and he is jealous of his wife, whether she has defiled herself or not,

15 then the man is to bring his wife to the priest. He is also to bring the offering required for her, a tenth of an ephah of barley flour. He is not to pour oil on it or put frankincense on it, for it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering of remembrance that brings wrongdoing to mind.

16 The priest is to bring her near and set her before the LORD.

17 He is to take holy water in a clay jar and put into the water some of the dust from the floor of the tabernacle.

18 Then the priest is to set the woman before the LORD, loosen the hair of her head and put in her hands the grain offering of remembrance, the

grain offering of jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter water that brings the curse.

19 The priest is to put her under oath and say to the woman, ‘If no man has lain with you, and you have not gone astray into uncleanness while under your husband’s authority, be free from this bitter water that brings the curse.

20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s authority and have defiled yourself, and a man other than your husband has lain with you’

21 (here the priest is to put the woman under the oath of the curse and say to her), ‘may the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, by making your thigh waste away and your belly swell.[1]

22 May this water that brings the curse go into your body and make your belly swell and your thigh waste away.’ And the woman is to say, ‘Amen, amen.’[2]

23 The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and wash them off into the bitter water.

24 He is to make the woman drink the bitter water that brings the curse, and the water that brings the curse will go into her and cause bitter suffering.

25 The priest is to take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand, wave the grain offering before the LORD and bring it to the altar.

26 He is to take a handful of the grain offering as its memorial portion and burn it on the altar, and afterwards make the woman drink the water.

27 When he has made her drink the water, then, if she has defiled herself and broken faith with her husband, the water that brings the curse will go into her and cause bitter suffering; her belly will swell and her thigh waste away, and the woman will become a curse among her people.

28 But if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will be free and will be able to conceive children.

29 This is the law of jealousy, when a wife goes astray while under her husband’s authority and defiles herself,

30 or when a spirit of jealousy comes over a man and he is jealous of his wife. He is to set the woman before the LORD, and the priest is to carry out for her all this law.

31 The man will be free from guilt, but the woman will bear her guilt.”

1 Perhaps a miscarriage or barrenness (‘thigh’ may stand for the womb); compare verse 28.

2 Hebrew: אָמֵן (amen), ‘so be it’, from the root of ‘firm, sure’.

Chapter 6

Numbers 6 gives the law of the Nazirite and the priests’ blessing. Any man or woman may make the special vow of a Nazirite, to be set apart to the LORD for a time: he is to drink no wine and eat nothing from the vine, let no razor touch his head, and never go near a dead body, not even of his father or mother. If someone dies suddenly beside him, he is to shave his head, bring offerings and begin his days again. When the time of his vow is complete, he brings burnt, sin and peace offerings at the tent of meeting, shaves his hair and burns it on the fire under the peace offering. Then the LORD gives Aaron and his sons the words with which to bless Israel: “May the LORD bless you and keep you…”, so putting His name on His people.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite,[1] to be set apart to the LORD,

3 he is to keep away from wine and strong drink. He is not to drink vinegar made from wine or strong drink, or drink any grape juice, or eat grapes, fresh or dried.

4 All the days of his separation he is to eat nothing that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or the skins.

5 All the days of his vow of separation no razor is to touch his head. Until the time for which he is set apart to the LORD is completed, he is to be holy; he is to let the hair of his head grow long.

6 All the days that he is set apart to the LORD he is not to go near a dead body.

7 Not even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, if they die, is he to make himself unclean, for the consecration to his God is on his head.

8 For as long as he is set apart, he belongs to the LORD as holy.

9 If someone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, he is to shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he is to shave it.

10 The next day, the eighth, he is to bring the priest two turtledoves or two young pigeons at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

11 The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned by being near the dead. He is to consecrate his head again that same day.

12 He is to set himself apart to the LORD for the days of his separation again and bring a male lamb a year old as a guilt offering. The earlier days will not count, because his separation was defiled.

13 Here is the law for the Nazirite once his time of separation is over: he is to be brought to the doorway of the tent of meeting,

14 and he is to present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb a year old without defect as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb a year old without defect as a sin offering, one ram without defect as a peace offering,

15 together with a basket of bread made without yeast, both cakes of fine flour kneaded with oil and wafers brushed with oil, and the grain and drink offerings that go with them.

16 The priest is to present them before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering.

17 He is to offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread, and the priest is to offer its grain offering and its drink offering.

18 Then the Nazirite is to shave his consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting, take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.[2]

19 The priest is to take the shoulder of the ram when it has been boiled, one unleavened cake from the basket and one unleavened wafer, and put them in the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated head.

20 The priest is to wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; they are holy and belong to the priest, together with the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.

21 This is the law of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD for his separation, besides whatever else he can afford. In keeping with the vow he makes, so he must do, according to the law of his separation."

22 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons and say: This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

24 'May the LORD bless you and watch over you;

25 may the LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;

26 may the LORD lift up His face to you and give you peace.'[3]

27 So they will put My name on the Israelites, and I will bless them."

1 Hebrew: נָזִיר (nazir), 'one set apart', 'consecrated'. Samson and Samuel were Nazirites from birth (Judges 13:5; 1 Samuel 1:11); compare Luke 1:15 and Acts 21:23–26.

2 Compare Paul's vow in Acts 18:18.

3 Hebrew: שָׁלוֹם (shalom), peace and every kind of well-being. To 'lift up the face' to someone is to look on him with favour (Psalm 4:6).

Chapter 7

Numbers 7 tells of the gifts the leaders of Israel bring when the tabernacle has been set up and anointed. First they bring six covered carts and twelve oxen, which Moses gives to the Gershonites and Merarites for carrying their loads, but not to the Kohathites, who carry the holy things on their shoulders. Then, for the dedication of the altar, the leader of each tribe brings his offering on a day of his own over twelve days: a silver plate and a silver basin full of flour mixed with oil, a gold dish full of incense, and animals for the burnt, sin and peace offerings. The gifts are the same for every tribe, and the totals are given at the end. When Moses goes into the tent of meeting, he hears the voice speaking to him from above the place of atonement, between the two cherubim.

1 On the day Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it with all its furnishings, and he anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils.

2 Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their families, who were the leaders of the tribes and in charge of those who had been counted, brought offerings.

3 What they brought before the LORD was six covered carts and twelve oxen, one cart for each pair of leaders and an ox from each leader, and they presented them in front of the tabernacle.

4 The LORD said to Moses,

5 "Accept these from them, so that they may be used in the work of the tent of meeting, and give them to the Levites, to each as his work requires."

6 Moses accepted the carts and oxen and handed them over to the Levites.

7 Two carts and four oxen he gave to the Gershonites, as their work required,

8 and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the Merarites, as their work required, under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

9 But to the Kohathites he gave none, because they were in charge of the holy things, which they had to carry on their shoulders.

10 The leaders also brought offerings for the dedication[1] of the altar on the day it was anointed, and the leaders presented their offering in front of the altar.

11 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Let them present their offerings for the dedication of the altar one leader each day."

12 The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah.

13 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;[2]

14 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

15 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

16 one male goat as a sin offering;

17 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, made his offering.

19 As his offering he presented one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

20 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

21 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

22 one male goat as a sin offering;

23 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Nethanel son of Zuar.

24 On the third day it was the leader of the people of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon.

25 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

26 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

27 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

28 one male goat as a sin offering;

29 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Eliab son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day it was the leader of the people of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur.

31 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

32 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

33 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

34 one male goat as a sin offering;

35 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Elizur son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day it was the leader of the people of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

37 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of

them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

38 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

39 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

40 one male goat as a sin offering;

41 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day it was the leader of the people of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel.

43 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

44 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

45 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

46 one male goat as a sin offering;

47 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Eliasaph son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day it was the leader of the people of Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud.

49 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

50 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

51 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

52 one male goat as a sin offering;

53 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Elishama son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day it was the leader of the people of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

55 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

56 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

57 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

58 one male goat as a sin offering;

59 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day it was the leader of the people of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni.

61 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

62 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

63 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

64 one male goat as a sin offering;

65 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Abidan son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day it was the leader of the people of Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

67 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

68 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

69 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

70 one male goat as a sin offering;

71 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day it was the leader of the people of Asher, Pagiel son of Ochran.

73 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

74 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

75 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

76 one male goat as a sin offering;

77 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Pagiel son of Ochran.

78 On the twelfth day it was the leader of the people of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan.

79 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver basin of seventy shekels, by the sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering;

80 one gold dish of ten shekels, full of incense;

81 a young bull, a ram and a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering;

82 one male goat as a sin offering;

83 and for the peace offering, two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five year-old male lambs. Such was the gift of Ahira son of Enan.

84 This was the dedication offering for the altar from the leaders of Israel, on the day it was anointed: twelve silver plates, twelve silver basins and twelve gold dishes,

85 each silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and each basin seventy, all the silver of the vessels 2,400 shekels by the sanctuary shekel;

86 the twelve gold dishes full of incense, ten shekels each by the sanctuary shekel, all the gold of the dishes a hundred and twenty shekels.

87 All the cattle for the burnt offering were twelve bulls, with twelve rams and twelve male lambs a year old, and their grain offering; and twelve male goats for the sin offering.

88 All the cattle for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four bulls, with sixty rams, sixty male goats and sixty male lambs a year old. This was the dedication offering for the altar after it was anointed.

89 Whenever Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he would hear the voice addressing him from above the place of atonement on the ark of the testimony, between the two cherubim. So He spoke with him.[3]

1 Hebrew: חֲנֻכָּה (chanukkah), ‘dedication’; the same word gives the name of the later festival (John 10:22).

2 About 1.5 kilograms and 800 grams.

3 As the LORD had promised in Exodus 25:22.

Chapter 8

Numbers 8 tells how the lamps are set up and the Levites are set apart. Aaron arranges the seven lamps to light the area in front of the lampstand, which was hammered from gold after the pattern shown to Moses. Then the Levites are purified: they are sprinkled with the water of cleansing, shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes, and the Israelites lay their hands on them; Aaron presents them before the LORD as a wave offering from the people, and the Levites lay their hands on two bulls offered for atonement. They belong to the LORD in place of Israel’s firstborn and are given to Aaron to serve at the tent of meeting, so that no plague strikes Israel. They are to serve from twenty-five to fifty years old, and after that may only assist their brothers.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Speak to Aaron and tell him: When you set up the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light in front of the lampstand.”

3 Aaron did so; he set up its lamps to face forward from the lampstand, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

4 This is how the lampstand was made: it was 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.

5 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

6 “Take the Levites from among the Israelites and make them clean.

7 This is what you are to do to them to cleanse them: sprinkle the water of purification[1] on them, and let them shave their whole bodies with a razor and wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

8 Then let them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you are to take a second young bull for a sin offering.

9 You are to bring the Levites to the front of the tent of meeting and assemble the whole community of the Israelites.

10 When you bring the Levites before the LORD, the Israelites are to lay their hands on the Levites,

11 and Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may do the work of the LORD.

12 Then the Levites are to lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, and you are to offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites.

13 You are to have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons and present them as a wave offering to the LORD.

14 So you are to set the Levites apart from among the Israelites, and the Levites will be Mine.

15 After that the Levites may come to serve at the tent of meeting, once you have cleansed them and presented them as a wave offering.

16 For they are wholly given to Me from among the Israelites; I have taken them for Myself in place of all who first open the womb, the firstborn of all the Israelites.

17 For every firstborn among the Israelites is Mine, both of people and of animals. On the day I struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt I consecrated them for Myself,

18 and I have taken the Levites in place of every firstborn among the Israelites.

19 I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the Israelites, to do the work of the Israelites at the tent of meeting and to make atonement for the Israelites, so that no plague may strike the Israelites when the Israelites come near the sanctuary."

20 Moses and Aaron and the whole community of the Israelites did this with the Levites; the Israelites did with them just as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites.

21 The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes, and Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the LORD and made atonement for them to cleanse them.

22 After that the Levites went in to do their work at the tent of meeting under Aaron and his sons. As the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did with them.

23 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

24 "This applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and over they are to come to take their part in the work of the tent of meeting,[2]

25 and from the age of fifty they are to withdraw from the work and serve no longer.

26 They may assist their brothers at the tent of meeting in keeping watch, but they are not to do the work. This is how you are to deal with the Levites in their duties."

1 Hebrew 'water of sin', water that removes sin's defilement; compare the water of chapter 19.
2 In 4:3 the age is thirty, for the heavier work of carrying.

Chapter 9

Numbers 9 tells of the first anniversary of the Passover and of the cloud that guides Israel. The LORD tells the Israelites to keep the Passover at its appointed time in the wilderness of Sinai, and they do. Some men who are unclean through contact with a dead body ask why they should be shut out, and the LORD provides that anyone unclean or far away on a journey may keep it a month later; but anyone who is clean and at home and does not keep it will be cut off. Then the chapter describes the cloud over the tabernacle, like fire by night: whenever it lifts, Israel sets out, and wherever it settles, they camp, whether for a night, two days, a month or longer, at the LORD's command.

1 In the first month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. He said,

2 "Let the Israelites keep the Passover at its appointed time.

3 On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you are to keep it at its appointed time; you are to keep it according to all its statutes and all its rules."

4 So Moses told the Israelites to keep the Passover,

5 and they kept it in the wilderness of Sinai, at twilight on the fourteenth of the first month. The Israelites did exactly as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 But there were some men who were unclean because of a dead body, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day. They came before Moses and Aaron that same day,

7 and those men said to him, "We are unclean because of a dead body. Why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering at its appointed time with the rest of the Israelites?"

8 Moses said to them, “Wait, and I will hear what
the LORD commands concerning you.”

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and said,

10 “Say to the Israelites: If any of you or your
descendants is unclean because of a dead body, or
is away on a long journey,[1] he may still keep the
LORD’s Passover.

11 They are to keep it in the second month, on the
fourteenth day, at twilight. They are to eat it with
unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

12 They are to leave none of it until morning and
break none of its bones;[2] they are to keep it
according to all the statute of the Passover.

13 But if a man who is clean and not on a journey
fails to keep the Passover, that person will be cut
off from his people, because he did not present the
LORD’s offering at its appointed time; that man
will bear his sin.

14 If a foreigner living among you wants to keep
the LORD’s Passover, he is to keep it according to
the statute of the Passover and its rule. You are to
have one statute, both for the foreigner and for
the one born in the land.”

15 On the day the tabernacle was set up, the cloud
covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony,
and from evening until morning it was over the
tabernacle, looking like fire.

16 That is how it always was: by day the cloud
covered it, and by night it looked like fire.

17 Whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent,
the Israelites would set out, and in the place
where the cloud settled, there the Israelites would
camp.

18 At the command of the LORD the Israelites set
out, and at the command of the LORD they
camped. As long as the cloud stayed over the
tabernacle, they remained in camp.

19 Even when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle
many days, the Israelites kept the LORD’s charge
and did not set out.

20 Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle
only a few days; at the command of the LORD they
camped, and at the command of the LORD they
set out.

21 Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening
until morning, and when the cloud lifted in the
morning they set out; or it stayed a day and a
night, and when the cloud lifted they set out.

22 Whether it was two days, or a month, or longer
that the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, resting
on it, the Israelites remained in camp and did not
set out; but when it lifted, they set out.

23 At the command of the LORD they camped, and
at the command of the LORD they set out. They
kept the LORD’s charge, at the command of the
LORD through Moses.

1 In the Hebrew a dot is written over one letter of ‘long’, the scribes’ sign of a doubtful reading.

2 Compare John 19:36 and Exodus 12:46.

Chapter 10

Numbers 10 tells how Israel leaves Sinai. The LORD tells Moses to make two silver trumpets to call the community together and to sound the signal for breaking camp, as well as for going to war and for festivals and offerings, as a reminder before God. On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year the cloud lifts from the tabernacle, and the tribes set out for the wilderness of Paran in the order the LORD has given, Judah first. Moses urges his brother-in-law Hobab to come with them and be their eyes in the wilderness. The ark of the covenant goes before them three days’ journey to find them a place to rest, and when it sets out, Moses says, “Rise up, O LORD, and let Your enemies be scattered.”

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Make two trumpets of silver; make them of
hammered work. You are to use them for
summoning the community and for breaking
camp.

3 When both are blown, the whole community is to
gather before you at the entrance of the tent of
meeting.

4 If only one is blown, the leaders, the heads of the
thousands of Israel, are to gather before you.

5 When you sound a blast, the camps on the east
side are to set out.

6 When you sound a second blast, the camps on the
south side are to set out. A blast is to be sounded
for each setting out.

7 But when the assembly is to be gathered, you are to blow, but not sound the blast.[1]

8 The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a statute for ever for you throughout your generations.

9 When you go to war in your land against an enemy who oppresses you, you are to sound a blast on the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God and saved from your enemies.

10 And on your days of rejoicing, at your appointed festivals and at the beginning of your months, you are to blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over your sacrifices of peace offerings; they will be a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

11 On the twentieth of the second month, in the second year, the cloud rose up from above the tabernacle of the testimony,

12 and the Israelites set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai, and the cloud settled in the wilderness of Paran.

13 They set out for the first time at the command of the LORD through Moses.

14 The standard of the camp of the people of Judah set out first, company by company, with Nahshon son of Amminadab over its company.

15 Over the company of the tribe of the people of Issachar was Nethanel son of Zuar,

16 and Eliab son of Helon was at the head of the tribe of Zebulun's company.

17 Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonites and the Merarites, who carried the tabernacle, set out.

18 The standard of the camp of Reuben set out, company by company, with Elizur son of Shedeur over its company.

19 Over the company of the tribe of the people of Simeon was Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai,

20 and Eliasaph son of Deuel was at the head of the tribe of Gad's company.

21 Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things, and the tabernacle was set up before they arrived.

22 The standard of the camp of the people of Ephraim set out, company by company, with Elishama son of Ammihud over its company.

23 Over the company of the tribe of the people of Manasseh was Gamaliel son of Pedahzur,

24 and Abidan son of Gideoni was at the head of the tribe of Benjamin's company.

25 Then the standard of the camp of the people of Dan, the rearguard of all the camps, set out, company by company, with Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai over its company.

26 Over the company of the tribe of the people of Asher was Pagiel son of Ochran,

27 and Ahira son of Enan was at the head of the tribe of Naphtali's company.

28 This was the order of march of the Israelites, company by company, when they set out.

29 Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law,[2] "We are on our way to the place the LORD said He would give us. Come with us and we will be good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel."

30 But he said to him, "I will not go; I will go back to my own land and my own people."

31 Moses said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes.

32 If you come with us, whatever good the LORD does for us, we will do for you."

33 So they set out from the mountain of the LORD and travelled for three days, with the ark of the covenant of the LORD going before them for the three days to seek out a resting place for them.

34 By day the cloud of the LORD was above them whenever they moved on from the camp.

35 Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say,[3] "Rise up, O LORD, and let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You."

36 And when it came to rest, he would say, "Return, O LORD, to the countless thousands of Israel."

1 Perhaps a long steady note to call the people, and short notes or a shout for marching (תְּרוּעָה, teru'ah).

2 Or 'Moses' brother-in-law': Hebrew חֹתֵן (choten) may refer to Hobab or to Reuel (Exodus 2:18; Judges 4:11).

3 In the Hebrew, verses 35–36 are set off by special marks, perhaps as an old song (compare Psalm 68:1).

Chapter 11

Numbers 11 tells of the first complaints on the journey from Sinai. When the people grumble, fire from the LORD burns at the edge of the camp until Moses prays, and the place is called Taberah. Then the mixed crowd among them begins to crave meat, and the Israelites weep for the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic of Egypt, tired of the manna. Moses, crushed by the weight of the people, asks the LORD to kill him rather than leave him to carry them alone. The LORD takes some of the Spirit that is on Moses and puts it on seventy elders, who prophesy; when Eldad and Medad prophesy in the camp, Moses wishes that all the LORD's people were prophets. The LORD then sends a wind that brings quail in heaps around the camp, but while the meat is still between their teeth He strikes the people with a plague, and the place is called Kibroth-hattaavah, "graves of craving".

1 Now the people began to complain bitterly in the
hearing of the LORD. When the LORD heard it His
anger burned, and fire from the LORD blazed up
among them and consumed the outer edge of the
camp.

2 The people cried out to Moses; Moses prayed to
the LORD, and the fire died down.

3 So that place was called Taberah,[1] because the
fire of the LORD had blazed up among them.

4 The mixed crowd among them gave way to
craving, and the Israelites too began weeping
again, saying, "If only we had meat to eat!

5 We remember the fish we ate for nothing in
Egypt, and the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks,
the onions and the garlic.

6 But now our appetite is gone; there is nothing at
all, nothing to look at but this manna."

7 The manna was like coriander seed, and it looked
like bdellium.[2]

8 The people would go about gathering it, and
grind it with millstones or pound it in a mortar;
then they boiled it in a pot and made cakes of it,
and it tasted like something baked with rich oil.

9 When the dew fell on the camp at night, the
manna fell with it.

10 Moses heard the people weeping, family by
family, each at the entrance of his tent. The
LORD's anger blazed hotly, and Moses too was
displeased.

11 Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You treated
Your servant so badly? Why have I not found
favour in Your eyes, that You lay the burden of all
this people on me?

12 Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to
them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them at
your breast, as a nurse carries a baby,' to the land
You swore to their fathers?

13 Where am I to get meat to give all this people?
For they keep weeping in front of me and saying,
'Give us meat to eat.'

14 I cannot carry all this people by myself; the
weight is too heavy for me.

15 If this is how You are going to treat me, then kill
me now, I beg You, if I have found favour in Your
eyes, and do not let me see my own ruin."

16 The LORD said to Moses, "Gather for Me
seventy men from the elders of Israel, men you
know to be elders and officers of the people. Bring
them to the tent of meeting, and let them take
their stand there with you.

17 I will come down and speak with you there, and
I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put
it on them. They will bear the burden of the
people with you, so that you do not have to bear it
alone.

18 And say to the people: Consecrate yourselves for
tomorrow, and you will eat meat. You have wept in
the LORD's hearing, saying, 'If only we had meat
to eat! We were better off in Egypt.' So the LORD
will give you meat, and you will eat.

19 You will eat it not for one day, or two, or five, or
ten, or twenty,

20 but for a whole month, until it comes out of your
nostrils and you are sick of it, because you have
rejected the LORD who is among you and wept
before Him, saying, 'Why did we ever come out of
Egypt?'"

21 But Moses said, "The people I am among
number six hundred thousand on foot, and You
say, 'I will give them meat, and they will eat for a
whole month'!

22 If all the flocks and herds were slaughtered for
them, would it be enough for them? If all the fish
of the sea were caught for them, would it be
enough?"

23 The LORD answered Moses, “Is the LORD’s arm
too short?[3] Now you will see whether My word
comes true for you or not.”

24 So Moses went out and told the people the
LORD’s words. He gathered seventy of the elders
of the people and stationed them around the tent.

25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and
spoke to him. He took some of the Spirit that was
on him and put it on the seventy elders, and when
the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied; but
they did not do so again.

26 Two men, however, had stayed behind in the
camp, one named Eldad and the other Medad.
They were among those listed, but they had not
gone out to the tent, and the Spirit rested on
them, and they prophesied in the camp.

27 A young man ran to Moses with the news.
“Eldad and Medad,” he said, “are prophesying in
the camp!”

28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’
assistant since his youth,[4] spoke up and said, “My
lord Moses, stop them!”

29 But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous on my
behalf? If only all the LORD’s people were
prophets, and the LORD would put His Spirit on
them!”[5]

30 Then Moses and the elders of Israel went back
to the camp.

31 A wind went out from the LORD and swept quail
in from the sea. It let them fall all around the
camp, about a day’s journey on this side and a
day’s journey on that, and about two cubits[6] deep
on the ground.

32 All that day and all night and all the next day the
people were up gathering the quail; the one who
gathered least gathered ten homers.[7] They spread
them out for themselves all around the camp.

33 But while the meat was still between their teeth,
before it was even chewed, the LORD’s anger
burned against the people, and the LORD struck
the people with a very severe plague.

34 So that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah,[8]
because there they buried the people who had
craved.

35 The people moved on from Kibroth-hattaavah to
Hazeroth, and there they remained.

1 Taberah means ‘burning’.

2 Hebrew בְּדֹלַח (bedolach), probably a pale, clear resin; compare Genesis 2:12 and Exodus 16:31.

3 Hebrew ‘Is the LORD’s hand short?’, that is, is His power limited? Compare Isaiah 50:2; 59:1.

4 Or ‘one of Moses’ chosen men’.

5 Compare Joel 2:28–29 and Acts 2:16–18.

6 About 90 centimetres (3 feet); perhaps they flew that high above the ground.

7 A homer was perhaps about 220 litres (6 bushels).

8 Kibroth-hattaavah means ‘graves of craving’. Compare Psalm 78:26–31 and 1 Corinthians 10:6.

Chapter 12

Numbers 12 tells how Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses. They find fault with him over the Cushite woman he has married and ask whether the LORD has spoken only through Moses. Moses is a very humble man, more than anyone on earth. The LORD calls the three of them to the tent of meeting and comes down in the pillar of cloud: to prophets He makes Himself known in visions and dreams, but with His servant Moses, who is faithful in all His house, He speaks mouth to mouth. When the cloud lifts, Miriam has a skin disease, white as snow. Aaron pleads with Moses, Moses cries to God, “Please heal her,” and Miriam is shut outside the camp for seven days while the people wait for her.

1 Miriam and Aaron began to speak against Moses
on account of the Cushite wife he had taken; for
he had taken a Cushite as his wife.[1]

2 “Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?”
they said. “Has He not spoken through us as
well?” And the LORD heard it.

3 Now the man Moses was very humble, more
humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.[2]

4 At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and
Miriam, “Come out, the three of you, to the tent of
meeting.” So the three of them came out.

5 Then the LORD descended in a pillar of cloud,
stood at the doorway of the tent and summoned

Aaron and Miriam, and the two of them stepped forward.

6 He said, “Listen now to My words. When there is a prophet of the LORD among you, I reveal Myself to him in visions, and in dreams I speak to him.

7 Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house.[3]

8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”

9 The anger of the LORD burned against them, and He left.

10 When the cloud moved away from over the tent, there was Miriam, with a skin disease, white as snow.[4] Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she had the disease.

11 And Aaron said to Moses, “Please, my lord, do not hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed.

12 Do not let her be like a stillborn child, who comes from its mother’s womb with half its flesh eaten away.”

13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, “O God, please heal her, I pray!”

14 The LORD answered Moses, “If her father had only spat in her face, would she not be in disgrace for seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp for seven days, and after that she may be brought back.”

15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until she was brought back.

16 After that the people set out from Hazeroth and camped in the wilderness of Paran.

1 Cush is usually the land south of Egypt; some think the woman is Zipporah, from Midian (compare Habakkuk 3:7, where Cushan stands beside Midian).

2 Hebrew עָנָו (anav), ‘humble, meek’; compare Matthew 5:5.

3 Quoted in Hebrews 3:2, 5.

4 On ‘skin disease’ (tsara’at) see the note at Leviticus 13:2.

Chapter 13

Numbers 13 tells of the twelve men sent to explore Canaan. At the LORD’s word Moses sends one leader from each tribe from the wilderness of Paran, among them Caleb son of Jephunneh of Judah and Hoshea son of Nun of Ephraim, whom Moses names Joshua. They are to see what the land and its people are like, and to bring back some of its fruit. For forty days they go through the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, and at the valley of Eshcol they cut a cluster of grapes so large that two men carry it on a pole. Back at Kadesh they report that the land flows with milk and honey, but that its people are strong and its cities walled, and the descendants of Anak are there. Caleb says, “We should go up at once,” but the others spread a bad report: the land devours its people, and beside its giants “we seemed like grasshoppers”.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Send men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe you are to send one man, every one a leader among them.”

3 So at the LORD’s command Moses sent them out from the wilderness of Paran, all of them men who were heads of the Israelites.

4 Their names were these: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zaccur;

5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori;

6 from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;

7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph;

8 from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun;

9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu;

10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi;

11 from the tribe of Joseph, that is, the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi son of Susi;

12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli;

13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael;

14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi;

15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Machi.

16 These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. And Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.[1]

17 When Moses sent them to explore the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up this way through the Negev,[2] and on into the hill country.

18 See what sort of land it is, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, few or many;

19 whether the land they live in is good or bad, and whether the towns they live in are open camps or fortified.

20 Find out whether the soil is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be bold, and bring back some of the fruit of the land." It was the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and explored the land from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob, near Lebo-hamath.[3]

22 They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, descendants of Anak,[4] were living. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 When they reached the valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes, which two of them carried on a pole between them, together with some pomegranates and figs.

24 That place was called the valley of Eshcol[5] because of the cluster the Israelites cut there.

25 At the end of forty days they came back from exploring the land.

26 They came to Moses and Aaron and the whole community of the Israelites at Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran. They gave their report to them and to the whole community, and showed them the fruit of the land.

27 This is the account they gave Moses: "We went into the land where you sent us. It does indeed flow with milk and honey, and here is its fruit.

28 But the people living there are powerful, and the towns are fortified and very large; we even saw the descendants of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, the Jebusites and the Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession of it, for we are well able to conquer it."

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We cannot go up against those people; they are stronger than we are."

32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report of the land they had explored. "The land we passed through to explore it," they said, "is a land that devours those who live in it, and all the people we saw there are men of huge size.

33 We saw the Nephilim[6] there, the descendants of Anak, who come from the Nephilim. In our own eyes we were like grasshoppers, and so we were in theirs."

1 Hoshea means 'salvation'; Joshua (Yehoshua) means 'the LORD saves'. The Greek form of the name is Jesus (compare Hebrews 4:8).

2 The dry country in the south of Canaan.

3 Or 'at the entrance to Hamath', the far north of the land.

4 Or 'the Anakim', a people remembered for their great size (Deuteronomy 2:10–11).

5 Eshcol means 'cluster'.

6 Compare Genesis 6:4. The words 'the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim' explain who the Anakim were.

Chapter 14

Numbers 14 tells how Israel refuses to enter the land. The whole community weeps all night and talks of choosing a leader and going back to Egypt. Joshua and Caleb tear their clothes and plead that the land is very good and that the LORD is with them, but the people want to stone them. The glory of the LORD appears, and He says He will destroy the people and make a greater nation from Moses. Moses pleads for them, for the sake of the LORD's name among the nations and by His own words, "slow to anger and rich in loyal kindness", and the LORD forgives. Yet none of those who have seen His glory and tested Him will see the land, except Caleb and Joshua: their children will wander for forty years, a year for each day of the exploring, until the bodies of their parents fall in the wilderness. The ten men who brought the bad report die of a plague. The next morning the people go up to fight against the LORD's word, and the Amalekites and Canaanites beat them back as far as Hormah.

1 Then the whole community raised their voices and cried aloud, and the people wept that night.

2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole community said to them, "If

only we had died in the land of Egypt, or in this wilderness! If only we had died!

3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, only for us to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be taken as plunder. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?”

4 And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell face down before the whole assembly of the community of Israel.

6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, two of those who had explored the land, tore their clothes

7 and said to the whole community of Israel, “The land we passed through to explore is an exceedingly good land.

8 If the LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to us.

9 Only do not rebel against the LORD, and do not be afraid of the people of the land, for we will devour them like bread. Their protection has gone from them,[1] and the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.”

10 But the whole community talked of stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites.

11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise Me? How long will they refuse to trust in Me, in spite of all the signs I have done among them?

12 I will strike them with plague and disinherit them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they are.”

13 But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your power You brought this people up from among them,

14 and they will tell the people who live in this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among this people, that You, LORD, are seen face to face, that Your cloud stands over them, and that You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

15 If You kill this people all at once, like one man, the nations that have heard the report of You will say,

16 ‘The LORD was not able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them, so He slaughtered them in the wilderness.’

17 So now, I pray, let the Lord’s power be great, as You have declared:

18 ‘The LORD is slow to anger and rich in loyal kindness, forgiving wrongdoing and rebellion; yet He will not pretend that the guilty are innocent, but brings the wrongdoing of fathers on their children, to the third and fourth generation.’[2]

19 Forgive the wrongdoing of this people, I pray, in keeping with the greatness of Your loyal kindness, just as You have pardoned this people ever since Egypt until now.”

20 The LORD said, “I have forgiven them, as you asked.

21 But as surely as I live, and as surely as the glory of the LORD will fill the whole earth,[3]

22 not one of the men who have seen My glory and the signs I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tested Me these ten times[4] and not listened to My voice,

23 not one of them will see the land I swore to give their fathers. None of those who despised Me will see it.

24 But Caleb My servant has another spirit in him and has followed Me fully; him I will bring into the land he entered, and his offspring will take it as their own.

25 Since the Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the road to the Red Sea.”[5]

26 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,

27 “How long shall I put up with this wicked community that keeps grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints the Israelites keep making against Me.

28 Tell them, ‘As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you exactly what I heard you say:

29 In this wilderness your bodies will fall,[6] all of you who were counted in the census, from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me.

30 Not one of you will enter the land where I swore with uplifted hand to settle you, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

31 But your little ones, who you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring in, and they will come to know the land you have rejected.

32 As for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness.

33 Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years, and they will bear the penalty for your unfaithfulness until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness.

34 For forty years, one year for each of the forty days you spent exploring the land, you will bear your guilt and know what it is to have Me against you.'

35 I, the LORD, have spoken. I will surely do this to all this wicked community that has banded together against Me. In this wilderness they will come to an end, and here they will die."

36 So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about the land,

37 those men who brought out the bad report about the land, died of a plague before the LORD.

38 Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

39 When Moses told these words to all the Israelites, the people mourned bitterly.

40 Early next morning they set off towards the heights of the hill country. "Here we are," they said. "We will go up to the place the LORD promised, for we have sinned."

41 But Moses said, "Why are you going against the LORD's command? It will not succeed.

42 Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you; you will only be struck down before your enemies.

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will face you there, and you will fall by the sword. Because you have turned away from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

44 Yet they dared to go up to the heights of the hill country, though neither the ark of the LORD's covenant nor Moses left the camp.

45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down, struck them and beat them back as far as Hormah.[7]

1 Hebrew 'their shade has turned aside from them'.

2 Moses quotes the LORD's own words in Exodus 34:6–7.

3 Compare Habakkuk 2:14 and Isaiah 6:3.

4 That is, again and again.

5 Hebrew 'the Sea of Reeds'; here probably the Gulf of Aqaba. See the note at Exodus 13:18.

6 Compare Hebrews 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:5.

7 Hormah sounds like the Hebrew for 'destruction'; compare 21:3.

Chapter 15

Numbers 15 gives laws for the life Israel will live in the land. Every burnt offering or sacrifice is to be brought with a grain offering of flour and oil and a drink offering of wine, in amounts that grow with the size of the animal, a lamb, a ram or a bull; and the same law holds for the foreigner as for the Israelite. From their first dough they are to set aside a loaf for the LORD. If the community or one person sins by mistake, a sin offering brings forgiveness; but whoever sins defiantly insults the LORD and is to be cut off. A man found gathering wood on the Sabbath is stoned outside the camp at the LORD's command. Last, the Israelites are to wear tassels with a blue cord on the corners of their garments, to remember all the LORD's commands and be holy to their God.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land where you are to live, which I am giving you,

3 and you present a fire offering to the LORD from the herd or the flock, whether a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfil a vow, or as a freewill offering, or at your appointed festivals, to make a soothing aroma for the LORD,

4 the one who brings his offering is to present to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah[1] of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin[2] of oil.

5 With the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb, you are to prepare a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

6 For a ram, prepare a grain offering of two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil,

7 and as a drink offering present a third of a hin of wine, a soothing aroma for the LORD.

8 When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfil a vow or as peace offerings to the LORD,

9 along with the bull you are to bring a grain offering: three tenths of an ephah of fine flour, with half a hin of oil mixed in,

10 and you are to present half a hin of wine as a drink offering, a fire offering of soothing aroma for the LORD.

11 This is how it is to be done for each bull, each ram, and each lamb or young goat.

12 However many you prepare, do the same for each one, according to their number.

13 Everyone born an Israelite is to do these things in this way when he presents a fire offering of soothing aroma for the LORD.

14 And if a foreigner is staying with you, or anyone else who lives among you in generations to come, and he wishes to present a fire offering of soothing aroma for the LORD, he is to do just as you do.

15 For the assembly there is to be one statute, for you and for the foreigner who stays with you, a statute for ever throughout your generations: as you are, so the foreigner is to be before the LORD.

16 One law and one rule will apply both to you and to the foreigner who stays with you."

17 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

18 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you come into the land to which I am bringing you,

19 and you eat of the bread of the land, you are to set aside a contribution for the LORD.

20 From the first of your dough you are to set aside a loaf[3] as a contribution; set it aside as you do the contribution from the threshing floor.

21 Throughout your generations you are to give the LORD a contribution from the first of your dough.

22 If you go astray by mistake and fail to keep any of these commands that the LORD gave to Moses,

23 anything the LORD has commanded you through Moses, from the day the LORD gave the command and onwards throughout your generations,

24 then if it was done by mistake, without the community knowing, the whole community is to offer one young bull as a burnt offering, a soothing aroma for the LORD, with its grain offering and drink offering as laid down, and one male goat as a sin offering.

25 The priest is to make atonement for the whole community of the Israelites, and they will be forgiven, because it was a mistake and they have brought their offering, a fire offering to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their mistake.

26 The whole community of the Israelites will be forgiven, and the foreigner who stays among them, for all the people were involved in the mistake.

27 If one person sins by mistake, he is to bring a year-old female goat as a sin offering.

28 The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the person who went astray by sinning unintentionally, to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven.

29 You are to have one law for anyone who acts by mistake, whether he is native-born among the Israelites or a foreigner staying among them.

30 But anyone who acts with a high hand,[4] whether native-born or foreigner, is insulting the LORD, and that person is to be cut off from among his people.

31 Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken His command, that person is to be cut off completely; his guilt remains on him."

32 While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they came upon a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day.

33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole community,

34 and they kept him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him.

35 Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must be put to death. The whole community is to stone him outside the camp."

36 So the whole community took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

37 The LORD said to Moses,

38 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them that throughout their generations they are to make tassels[5] on the corners of their garments, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel at each corner.

39 You will have the tassel to look at, so that you remember all the LORD's commands and do them,

and do not follow the desires of your own hearts and eyes, which lead you to be unfaithful.

40 So you will remember to do all My commands and be holy to your God.

41 I, the LORD, am your God; I led you out of Egypt in order to be your God. I, the LORD, am your God."

1 About 1.5 kilograms (3 pounds) of flour.

2 About 1 litre (1 quart).

3 Hebrew חַלָּה (challah), a ring-shaped loaf; the meaning of the word for 'dough' is uncertain. Compare Romans 11:16.

4 That is, defiantly and on purpose, in contrast with 'by mistake' (verses 22–29). Compare Hebrews 10:26–28.

5 Hebrew צִיצִת (tsitsit). Compare Deuteronomy 22:12 and Matthew 9:20; 23:5.

Chapter 16

Numbers 16 tells of the rebellion of Korah. Korah the Levite, with Dathan, Abiram and On of Reuben and 250 leaders of the community, rise against Moses and Aaron: "The whole community is holy, so why do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?" Moses tells them to bring censers with fire and incense before the LORD the next day, and the LORD will show who is His. Dathan and Abiram refuse to come. When the glory of the LORD appears, Moses and Aaron plead that the whole community should not die for one man's sin; the people move away from the tents of the rebels, the ground splits open and swallows them alive into Sheol, and fire from the LORD consumes the 250 men offering incense. Their bronze censers are hammered into a covering for the altar, a warning that only Aaron's descendants may burn incense. The next day the whole community grumbles that Moses and Aaron have killed the LORD's people, and a plague breaks out; Aaron runs with his censer into the crowd and stands between the dead and the living, and the plague stops, after 14,700 have died.

1 Now Korah son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, took action,[1] together with Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, all of the tribe of Reuben.

2 They rose up against Moses, and with them 250 Israelite men, leaders of the community, chosen by the assembly, men of renown.

3 They came together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you set yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

4 When Moses heard this, he fell face down.

5 Then he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning the LORD will show who are His,[2] and who is holy, and He will let that one come near to Him; the one He chooses He will bring near to Himself.

6 Do this, Korah, you and all your company: take censers,

7 and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the holy one. You Levites have gone too far!"

8 Moses also said to Korah, "Listen now, you Levites!

9 Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and brought you near to Himself, to serve at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them?

10 He has brought you near, and all your brother Levites with you, and now you want the priesthood as well!

11 So it is against the LORD that you and all your company have banded together. And Aaron, who is he, that you should grumble against him?"

12 Then Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up!

13 Is it such a small thing to have led us away from a land flowing with milk and honey, only to let us die out here in the wilderness, that you must now lord it over us as well?

14 And you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, or given us fields and vineyards to inherit. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men?[3] We will not come up!"

15 Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, and I have not harmed any one of them."

16 Moses said to Korah, “You and all your company
are to appear before the LORD tomorrow, you and
they, and Aaron too.
17 Each of you is to take his censer and put incense
in it, and each of you is to bring his censer before
the LORD, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each
with his censer.”
18 So each man took his censer, put fire in it and
laid incense on it, and they stood at the entrance
of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron.
19 When Korah had gathered the whole community
against them at the entrance of the tent of
meeting, the glory of the LORD appeared to the
whole community.
20 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron,
21 “Separate yourselves from this community, so
that I may put an end to them in a moment.”
22 But they fell face down and said, “O God, the
God of the spirits of all flesh, when one man sins,
will You be angry with the whole community?”
23 Then the LORD said to Moses,
24 “Tell the community: Move away from around
the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.”
25 So Moses rose and made his way to Dathan and
Abiram, with the elders of Israel going after him.
26 He warned the community, “Get away, I beg you,
from the tents of these wicked men, and touch
nothing that belongs to them, or you will be swept
away for all their sins.”
27 So they moved away from all around the
dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan
and Abiram had come out and were standing at
the entrance of their tents with their wives, their
sons and their little ones.
28 Then Moses said, “This is how you will know
that the LORD has sent me to do all these things,
and that it was not my own idea:
29 if these men die the death that all people die,
and only what happens to everyone happens to
them, then the LORD has not sent me.
30 But if the LORD does something new, and the
ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all
that is theirs, and they go down alive into Sheol,[4]
then you will know that these men have despised
the LORD.”
31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground
beneath them split apart,
32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed
them and their households, and all Korah’s people
and all their goods.[5]
33 So they and everything they owned went down
alive into Sheol. The earth closed over them, and
they vanished from the assembly.
34 All Israel around them fled at their cries, for
they said, “The earth may swallow us too!”
35 And fire came out from the LORD and consumed
the 250 men who were offering the incense.
36 The LORD said to Moses,[6]
37 “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to take the
censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and to
scatter the fire some distance away.
38 As for the censers of these men who sinned at
the cost of their lives, have them hammered into
thin sheets to cover the altar, for they were
presented before the LORD and so became holy.
Let them be a sign to the Israelites.”
39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers
that those who were burnt had presented, and
they were hammered out as a covering for the
altar,
40 a reminder to the Israelites that no outsider, no
one who is not a descendant of Aaron, should
come near to burn incense before the LORD, or he
would become like Korah and his company, just as
the LORD had told Eleazar through Moses.
41 The next day the whole community of the
Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron,
saying, “You have killed the LORD’s people.”
42 But when the community had gathered against
Moses and Aaron and they turned towards the
tent of meeting, the cloud was covering it, and the
glory of the LORD appeared.
43 Then Moses and Aaron came and stood in front
of the tent of meeting.
44 Then the LORD said to Moses,
45 “Get away from this community, so that I may
put an end to them in a moment.” And they fell
face down.
46 Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer, put fire
in it from the altar and lay incense on it, and hurry
to the community to make atonement for them, for
wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague
has begun.”
47 Aaron did as Moses told him and ran out among
the assembly. The plague was already striking the
people, but he laid incense on the fire and made
atonement for them.

48 There he took his stand between the dead and
the living, and the plague was held back.
49 Those who died in the plague numbered 14,700,
besides those who died because of Korah.
50 Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance
of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been
stopped.

1 Hebrew ‘Korah… took’; the object is not given. Compare Jude 11.
2 Compare 2 Timothy 2:19, ‘The Lord knows those who are His’.
3 That is, will you blind them to what you are doing? ‘These men’ may mean Dathan and Abiram themselves.
4 Hebrew שְׁאוֹל (she’ol), the place of the dead.
5 Korah’s sons did not all die (26:11); Psalms 42 and 44–49 are headed ‘of the sons of Korah’.
6 In Hebrew, 16:36–50 are 17:1–15, and 17:1–13 are 17:16–28.

Chapter 17

Numbers 17 tells how the LORD settles the dispute over the priesthood. Each of the twelve tribal leaders gives Moses a staff with his name written on it, Aaron’s name on the staff of Levi, and Moses lays them before the LORD in the tent of the testimony. The next day Aaron’s staff has sprouted, budded, blossomed and produced ripe almonds. The LORD tells Moses to keep it before the testimony as a sign to the rebellious, to put an end to their grumbling. But the Israelites cry out in fear that anyone who comes near the tabernacle will die.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
2 “Speak to the Israelites and take from them a
staff for each ancestral house, one from each of
their leaders by their ancestral houses, twelve
staffs. Write each man’s name on his staff,
3 and write Aaron’s name on the staff of Levi, for
there is to be one staff for the head of each
ancestral house.
4 Lay them in the tent of meeting in front of the
testimony, where I meet with you.
5 The staff of the man I choose will sprout, and so I
will put a stop to the constant grumbling of the
Israelites against you.”
6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and all their
leaders gave him a staff, one for each leader by
ancestral house, twelve staffs, and Aaron’s staff
was among them.
7 Moses laid the staffs before the LORD in the tent
of the testimony.
8 The next day Moses went into the tent of the
testimony, and the staff of Aaron for the house of
Levi had sprouted; it had put out buds, burst into
blossom and borne ripe almonds.[1]
9 Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before
the LORD to all the Israelites. They looked, and
each man took his own staff.
10 The LORD said to Moses, “Put Aaron’s staff back
in front of the testimony, to be kept as a sign for
the rebels, so that you may put an end to their
grumbling against Me, or they will die.”
11 Moses did so; he did just as the LORD had
commanded him.
12 The Israelites said to Moses, “We are dying! We
are lost, all of us lost!
13 Anyone who comes near, anyone who comes
near the tabernacle of the LORD, will die. Are we
all to perish?”

1 Compare Hebrews 9:4. The almond, the first tree to blossom, is called in Hebrew ‘the watcher’ (Jeremiah 1:11–12).

Chapter 18

Numbers 18 sets out the work and the support of the priests and Levites. Aaron and his sons are to bear responsibility for the sanctuary and the priesthood, and the Levites are given to them as helpers, so that no outsider comes near and no wrath falls on Israel again. The LORD gives the priests, by a lasting covenant of salt, the most holy portions of the offerings, the contributions and wave offerings, the best of the oil, wine and grain, the firstfruits, everything devoted, and the firstborn, of which the firstborn of people and of unclean animals are to be redeemed. Aaron is to have no land, for the LORD Himself is his share. To the Levites He gives the tithes of Israel in return for their service, and they in turn are to give a tenth of that tithe, the best of it, to Aaron the priest.

1 The LORD said to Aaron, “You and your sons and your father’s house with you are to bear the guilt of any offence against the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you are to bear the guilt of any offence in your priesthood.

2 Bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, your father’s tribe, so that they may be joined to you and serve you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony.

3 They are to carry out their duties to you and their duties for the whole tent, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, or both they and you will die.

4 They are to be joined to you and keep charge of the tent of meeting, for all the work of the tent, and no outsider is to come near you.

5 You yourselves are to keep charge of the sanctuary and of the altar, so that wrath may never again fall on the Israelites.

6 I Myself have taken your brothers the Levites from among the Israelites; they are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the work of the tent of meeting.

7 But you and your sons with you are to guard your priesthood in everything to do with the altar and what is inside the curtain, and you are to serve there. I give you your priesthood as a gift of service, and any outsider who comes near is to be put to death.”

8 The LORD spoke to Aaron: “I Myself have put you in charge of the contributions made to Me, all the holy gifts of the Israelites. I have given them to you and your sons as your portion,[1] a lasting due.

9 This is to be yours from the most holy things, kept back from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering, every sin offering and every guilt offering that they render to Me, is most holy for you and your sons.

10 You are to eat it as a most holy thing; every male may eat it. It is holy for you.

11 This also is yours: the contribution from their gifts, all the wave offerings of the Israelites. I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a lasting due. Everyone in your household who is clean may eat it.

12 All the best of the olive oil and all the best of the new wine and grain, the first of what they give to the LORD, I give to you.

13 Whatever ripens first in their land and is brought to the LORD will belong to you; any clean person in your house may eat of it.

14 Everything in Israel that is devoted[2] will be yours.

15 Every firstborn of every living thing, human or animal, that is offered to the LORD will be yours. But you must redeem the firstborn of people, and you are to redeem the firstborn of unclean animals.

16 Their redemption price, from a month old, you are to set at five shekels of silver,[3] by the sanctuary shekel, which is twenty gerahs.

17 But you must not redeem the firstborn of a cow, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Splash their blood on the altar and burn their fat as a fire offering, a soothing aroma for the LORD.

18 Their meat will be yours, like the breast of the wave offering and like the right thigh.

19 All the holy contributions that the Israelites set aside for the LORD I give to you and to your sons and daughters with you, as a lasting due. It is a covenant of salt[4] for ever before the LORD, for you and your descendants with you.”

20 The LORD said to Aaron, “You will have no inheritance in their land, nor any share among them. I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites.

21 To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel as their inheritance, in return for the service they perform, the work of the tent of meeting.

22 From now on the Israelites must not come near
the tent of meeting, or they will bear sin and die.
23 The Levites are to do the work of the tent of
meeting, and they will bear the guilt of their
people's offences. It is a statute for ever
throughout your generations that they are to have
no inheritance among the Israelites.
24 For I have given the Levites as their inheritance
the tithe that the Israelites set aside as a
contribution to the LORD. That is why I have said
of them that they will have no inheritance among
the Israelites."
25 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
26 "Speak to the Levites and tell them: When you
receive from the Israelites the tithe I have given
you from them as your inheritance, you are to set
aside from it a contribution for the LORD, a tithe
of the tithe.
27 Your contribution will be counted to you as
though it were grain from the threshing floor or
the full yield of the winepress.
28 In this way you also are to set aside a
contribution for the LORD from all the tithes you
receive from the Israelites, and from them you are
to give the LORD's contribution to Aaron the
priest.
29 From all the gifts you receive you are to set
aside every contribution due to the LORD, the best
of it, the holiest part.
30 Say to them also: When you have set aside the
best of it, the rest will be counted to you Levites
as the produce of the threshing floor and of the
winepress.
31 You and your households may eat it anywhere,
for it is your wage for your work at the tent of
meeting.
32 Once you have set aside the best of it, you will
bear no sin because of it. You must not profane
the holy gifts of the Israelites, so that you do not
die."

1 Or 'because of your anointing'.

2 Hebrew חֵרֶם (cherem), something given over wholly to the LORD and never to be bought back; compare Leviticus 27:28.

3 About 57 grams (2 ounces).

4 That is, a covenant that lasts, as salt preserves; compare Leviticus 2:13 and 2 Chronicles 13:5.

Chapter 19

Numbers 19 gives the law of the red heifer and the water for impurity. The Israelites are to bring a red cow without defect that has never worn a yoke. It is slaughtered outside the camp before Eleazar the priest, who sprinkles some of its blood seven times towards the tent of meeting; then it is burnt whole, with cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet yarn, and its ashes are kept outside the camp in a clean place. Anyone who touches a dead body is unclean for seven days; he must be sprinkled with water mixed with the ashes on the third and seventh days, or he defiles the LORD's tabernacle and is to be cut off. The same applies to everyone in a tent where someone dies, and to anyone who touches a bone or a grave in the open field.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and said,
2 "This is the statute of the law that the LORD has
commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red
heifer[1] without defect, with no blemish, which has
never been under a yoke.
3 You are to give it to Eleazar the priest; it is to be
taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his
presence.
4 Eleazar the priest is to take some of its blood on
his finger and sprinkle it seven times towards the
front of the tent of meeting.
5 Then the heifer is to be burnt while he watches,
its hide, its flesh and its blood, together with its
dung.
6 The priest is to take cedar wood, hyssop and
scarlet yarn and throw them into the fire where
the heifer is burning.
7 Afterwards the priest must wash his clothes and
bathe his body in water, and then he may come
into the camp; but he will be unclean until
evening.
8 The one who burns the heifer must also wash his
clothes and bathe his body in water, and he too
will be unclean until evening.
9 Then a man who is clean is to gather up the
heifer's ashes and put them in a clean place
outside the camp. They are to be kept for the
community of Israel for the water for impurity;[2] it
is a purification for sin.

10 The one who gathers up the heifer's ashes must
wash his clothes, and he will be unclean until
evening. This is to be a lasting statute both for the
Israelites and for the foreigner who lives among
them.

11 Whoever touches the dead body of any human
being will be unclean for seven days.

12 He must purify himself with the water on the
third day and on the seventh day, and then he will
be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the
third and seventh days, he will not be clean.

13 Anyone who touches a dead person, the body of
someone who has died, and does not purify
himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD, and
that person is to be cut off from Israel. Because
the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on
him, he is unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

14 Here is the law for a death in a tent: anyone who
enters that tent, and anyone already inside it,
becomes unclean for seven days,

15 and every open vessel without a lid fastened on
it will be unclean.

16 Anyone out in the open who touches someone
killed by the sword, or someone who has died, or a
human bone, or a grave, will be unclean for seven
days.

17 For the unclean person, some of the ashes of the
burnt purification offering are to be put in a
vessel, and fresh water poured over them.

18 Then a man who is clean is to take hyssop, dip it
in the water and sprinkle the tent and all its
furnishings and the people who were there, and
the one who touched the bone, or the person
killed, or the dead body, or the grave.

19 The clean person is to sprinkle the unclean on
the third day and on the seventh day, and on the
seventh day he will have purified him. Then he is
to wash his clothes and bathe in water, and in the
evening he will be clean.

20 But anyone who becomes unclean and does not
purify himself is to be cut off from the assembly,
because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD.
The water for impurity has not been sprinkled on
him; he is unclean.

21 This is to be a lasting statute for them. The one
who sprinkles the water for impurity must wash
his clothes, and anyone who touches the water for
impurity will be unclean until evening.

22 Whatever the unclean person touches becomes
unclean, and anyone who touches it will be
unclean until evening."

1 Or 'a red cow'. Compare Hebrews 9:13–14.

2 Hebrew מֵי נִדָּה (mei niddah), water to take away impurity.

Chapter 20

Numbers 20 tells of deaths and failure at the borders of the land. In the first month the community comes to the wilderness of Zin, and Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh. With no water, the people quarrel with Moses, and the LORD tells him to take the staff and, with Aaron, speak to the rock before their eyes. But Moses says, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring water out of this rock for you?" and strikes the rock twice; water gushes out, but the LORD tells Moses and Aaron that because they did not trust Him and show Him holy before Israel, they will not bring the people into the land. The place is called Meribah. The king of Edom refuses Israel passage through his land, and Israel turns away. At Mount Hor, on Edom's border, Aaron's garments are put on his son Eleazar, and Aaron dies there on the top of the mountain; all Israel mourns for him thirty days.

1 In the first month the Israelites, the whole
community, came into the wilderness of Zin, and
the people stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died,
and there she was buried.

2 There was no water for the community, and they
gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

3 The people quarrelled with Moses and said, "If
only we had died when our brothers died before
the LORD!

4 Why have you brought the LORD's assembly into
this wilderness, for us and our livestock to die
here?

5 Why did you make us come up out of Egypt, to
bring us to this dreadful place? It has no grain or
figs, no vines or pomegranates, and there is not
even water to drink!"

6 Moses and Aaron left the assembly, went to the
entrance of the tent of meeting and fell face down,
and the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7 The LORD said to Moses,

8 “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the community together. Before their eyes speak to the rock, and it will give out its water. So you will bring water out of the rock for them and let the community and their livestock drink.”

9 So Moses took the staff from before the LORD, as He had commanded him.

10 Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly in front of the rock, and he said to them, “Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water out of this rock for you?”

11 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water came out in abundance, and the community and their livestock drank.[1]

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them.”

13 These were the waters of Meribah,[2] where the Israelites quarrelled with the LORD, and where He showed Himself holy among them.

14 From Kadesh Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom: “This is what your brother Israel says: You know all the hardship that has come upon us.

15 Our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt for a long time. The Egyptians ill-treated us and our fathers,

16 and when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. Now here we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory.

17 Please let us pass through your land. We will not go through any field or vineyard or drink water from any well. We will keep to the King’s Highway[3] and not turn aside to the right or the left until we have passed through your territory.”

18 But Edom answered him, “You shall not pass through my land, or I will come out against you with the sword.”

19 The Israelites said to him, “We will go up by the main road, and if we or our livestock drink any of your water, we will pay for it. Let us only pass through on foot; that is all.”

20 But he said, “You shall not pass through.” And Edom came out against them with a large army and a strong hand.

21 Since Edom refused to let Israel pass through his territory, Israel turned away from him.

22 The Israelites, the whole community, set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor.

23 At Mount Hor, near the border of the land of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron,

24 “Aaron is to be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I have given to the Israelites, because you both rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah.

25 Bring Aaron and Eleazar his son with you and lead them up onto Mount Hor.

26 Remove Aaron’s garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people and will die there.”

27 Moses did as the LORD commanded. They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community,

28 where Moses took off Aaron’s garments and clothed Eleazar his son in them. And there on the summit Aaron died; then Moses and Eleazar came back down.

29 When the whole community saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

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1 Compare Exodus 17:1–7, Psalm 106:32–33 and 1 Corinthians 10:4.

2 Meribah means ‘quarrelling’. ‘Showed Himself holy’ (וַיִּקָּדֵשׁ, vayyiqqadesh) echoes the name Kadesh.

3 The main road running north and south east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

Chapter 21

Numbers 21 tells of the first victories on the way to the land, and of the bronze snake. When the king of Arad attacks, Israel vows to devote his towns to the LORD, and the place is called Hormah. Going round Edom, the people grow impatient and speak against God and Moses, and the LORD sends venomous snakes among them; when they confess their sin, the LORD tells Moses to make a snake and set it on a pole, and anyone bitten who looks at the bronze snake lives. Israel journeys on through Moab's borders, singing at the well the LORD gives them. Sihon king of the Amorites refuses them passage and comes out to fight, and Israel defeats him and takes his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, including Heshbon, of which an old song is quoted. Then Og king of Bashan comes out against them, and the LORD gives him and his land into their hands.

1 When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in
the Negev, heard that Israel was coming by the
road to Atharim,[1] he attacked Israel and took
some of them captive.

2 Then Israel made a vow to the LORD: "If You will
indeed give this people into my hand, I will devote
their towns to destruction."[2]

3 The LORD listened to Israel's plea and handed
the Canaanites over, and they destroyed them and
their towns completely. So the place was named
Hormah.[3]

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the road to the
Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but along
the way the people grew impatient.

5 They spoke out against God and Moses: "What
did you lead us out of Egypt for? To die out here in
the desert? There is no food here and no water,
and we are sick of this worthless bread!"

6 Then the LORD sent venomous snakes[4] among
the people. They bit the people, and many
Israelites died.

7 The people came to Moses and said, "We have
sinned, for we spoke against the LORD and
against you. Pray to the LORD to take the snakes
away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and set
it on a pole. Whoever has been bitten will look at
it and live."

9 So Moses made a bronze snake[5] and put it on the
pole, and whenever a snake bit anyone, he would
look at the bronze snake and live.

10 The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth.

11 Then they set out from Oboth and camped at
Iye-abarim, in the wilderness facing Moab,
towards the sunrise.

12 From there they went on and camped in the
valley of Zered.

13 From there they went on and camped on the far
side of the Arnon, in the wilderness that reaches
out from the territory of the Amorites. The Arnon
is the border of Moab, between Moab and the
Amorites.

14 That is why it is said in the Book of the Wars of
the LORD:[6] "Waheb in Suphah, and the valleys of
the Arnon,

15 and the slope of the valleys that turns towards
the site of Ar and leans on the border of Moab."

16 From there they went on to Beer,[7] the well
where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the
people, and I will give them water."

17 It was then that Israel sang this song: "Well, rise
up! Sing out in answer to it!

18 The well that the princes dug, that the nobles of
the people opened with the sceptre and with their
staffs." And from the wilderness they went on to
Mattanah,

19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to
Bamoth,

20 and from Bamoth to the valley in the country of
Moab where the top of Pisgah looks down over the
wasteland.[8]

21 Next Israel sent envoys with this message to
Sihon, the Amorite king:

22 "Let us pass through your land. We will not turn
aside into field or vineyard, nor drink water from a
well. We will keep to the King's Highway until we
have passed through your territory."

23 But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through
his territory. He gathered all his forces and
marched out into the wilderness against Israel; he
came to Jahaz and fought against Israel.

24 Israel put him to the sword and took possession
of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as
the Ammonites, for the border of the Ammonites
was strong.[9]

25 Israel captured all these towns and settled in all
the towns of the Amorites, in Heshbon and all its
villages.

26 Heshbon was the royal city of Sihon the Amorite king. He had gone to war with the previous king of Moab and seized from him the whole of his country up to the Arnon.

27 That is why the poets say, “Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt; let the city of Sihon be restored.

28 For fire went out from Heshbon, flame from the town of Sihon. It devoured Ar of Moab, the lords of the heights of the Arnon.

29 Alas for you, Moab! You are undone, people of Chemosh! He has let his sons become refugees and his daughters prisoners of Sihon, the Amorite king.

30 But we have shot them down; Heshbon is destroyed as far as Dibon. We laid waste as far as Nophah, which reaches to Medeba.”[10]

31 So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

32 After Moses had sent scouts to Jazer, the Israelites took its villages and dispossessed the Amorites living there.

33 Then they turned and went up by the road to Bashan, and Og king of Bashan came out against them with all his army to fight at Edrei.

34 But the LORD said to Moses, “Do not be afraid of him, for I have given him into your hand, with all his people and his land. Do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.”

35 So they struck him down, with his sons and all his people, until not one survivor was left, and they took possession of his land.

1 Or ‘the road of the scouts’.

2 Hebrew חֵרֶם (charam), to give something over wholly to the LORD, usually by destroying it; compare 18:14.

3 Hormah means ‘destruction’, from the same root as ‘devote’.

4 Hebrew ‘burning snakes’ (שְׂרָפִים, seraphim), perhaps from the burning of their bite. Compare 1 Corinthians 10:9.

5 In Hebrew ‘snake’ (נָחָשׁ, nachash) and ‘bronze’ (נְחֹשֶׁת, nechoshet) sound alike. Compare John 3:14–15 and 2 Kings 18:4.

6 An early collection of songs, now lost. The lines quoted are difficult and their meaning uncertain.

7 Beer means ‘well’.

8 Or ‘over Jeshimon’.

9 Or, with the Greek, ‘for Jazer was the border of the Ammonites’.

10 The Hebrew of this verse is uncertain; one letter carries a scribal dot.

Chapter 22

Numbers 22 begins the story of Balaam. Israel camps on the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho, and Balak king of Moab, in dread of them, sends elders with a fee for divination to Balaam son of Beor by the Euphrates, asking him to come and curse this people. God tells Balaam, “You shall not curse them, for they are blessed,” and he sends the envoys away. When Balak sends more honoured princes and promises great reward, God lets Balaam go, but only to say what He tells him. On the road the angel of the LORD stands in his way with a drawn sword; the donkey sees the angel and turns aside three times, and Balaam beats her, until the LORD opens the donkey’s mouth to speak. Then the LORD opens Balaam’s eyes, and the angel warns him to speak only what he is told. Balak meets Balaam at the border and the next morning takes him up to Bamoth-baal, from where he can see part of the people.

1 Then the Israelites set out and camped on the plains of Moab, across the Jordan from Jericho.

2 Balak son of Zippor had seen everything Israel did to the Amorites,

3 and Moab was terrified of the people, because there were so many of them; Moab was filled with dread at the Israelites.

4 So Moab said to the elders of Midian, “This horde will now lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field.” Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time,

5 and he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the River,[1] in the land of his people,[2] to summon him. He said, “A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and they have settled opposite me.

6 Now come, please, and curse this people for me, for they are too strong for me. Perhaps then I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed.”

7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian
set off, taking the fee for divination with them.
They came to Balaam and gave him Balak's
message.
8 "Stay here tonight," he said to them, "and I will
bring you back whatever answer the LORD gives
me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.
9 Then God came to Balaam and asked, "These
men who are with you, who are they?"
10 Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king
of Moab, has sent me this message:
11 'A people has come out of Egypt and covers the
face of the land. Now come and curse them for
me; perhaps I will be able to fight them and drive
them out.'"
12 But God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with
them. You are not to curse the people, for they are
blessed."
13 So Balaam got up in the morning and said to
Balak's princes, "Go back to your own country, for
the LORD has refused to let me go with you."
14 The princes of Moab got up, went back to Balak
and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."
15 Then Balak sent princes again, more of them
and more distinguished than the first.
16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "This is
what Balak son of Zippor says: Please let nothing
keep you from coming to me,
17 for I will reward you richly and do whatever you
tell me. Come, please, and curse this people for
me."
18 But Balaam answered the servants of Balak,
"Even if Balak were to give me his house full of
silver and gold, I could not go beyond the
command of the LORD my God to do anything,
small or great.
19 Now you too, please, stay here tonight, so that I
may learn what more the LORD will say to me."
20 That night God came to Balaam and said to him,
"If the men have come to summon you, get up and
go with them; but do only what I tell you."
21 In the morning Balaam rose, put the saddle on
his donkey and set off with the princes of Moab.
22 But God's anger was kindled because he went,[3]
and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the
road to oppose him.[4] Balaam was riding on his
donkey, and his two servants were with him.
23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD
standing in the road with a drawn sword in his
hand, she turned off the road into a field. Balaam
beat the donkey to turn her back onto the road.
24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow
path between the vineyards, with a wall on either
side.
25 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD,
she pressed herself against the wall and crushed
Balaam's foot against it, so he beat her again.
26 Once more the angel of the LORD moved on
ahead, and took his stand where the way was so
narrow that there was no room to swerve either
way.
27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD,
she lay down under Balaam. Balaam's anger
blazed, and he beat the donkey with his stick.
28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and
she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that
you have beaten me these three times?"
29 Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have
made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I
would kill you now."
30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your
donkey, which you have ridden all your life to this
day? Have I ever been in the habit of treating you
like this?" "No," he said.
31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he
saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road
with his sword drawn in his hand; and he bowed
down and fell on his face.
32 The angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have
you beaten your donkey these three times? I have
come out to oppose you, because your way is
reckless[5] before me.
33 The donkey saw me and turned aside from me
these three times. If she had not turned aside
from me, I would surely have killed you by now,
and let her live."
34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have
sinned, for I did not know that you were standing
in the road to meet me. Now, if it is wrong in your
eyes, I will go back."
35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go
with the men, but say only what I tell you." So
Balaam went with Balak's princes.
36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he
went out to meet him at Ir-moab, on the Arnon
border, at the farthest edge of his territory.
37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send to summon
you? Why did you not come to me? Am I really not

able to honour you?”

38 Balaam said to Balak, “Well, I have come to you
now. But do I have any power to say anything? I
must speak only the word God puts in my mouth.”

39 Then Balaam went with Balak, and they came to
Kiriath-huzoth.

40 There Balak offered sacrifices of oxen and
sheep, and sent portions to Balaam and to the
princes with him.

41 In the morning Balak took Balaam and brought
him up to Bamoth-baal,[6] and from there he saw
the edge of the people.

1 That is, the Euphrates.
2 Or ‘in the land of the sons of Amaw’.
3 Or ‘as he was going’. Compare 2 Peter 2:15–16 and Jude 11.
4 Hebrew לְשָׂטָן (lesatan), ‘as an adversary’.
5 The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain.
6 Or ‘the high places of Baal’.

Chapter 23

Numbers 23 gives Balaam’s first two oracles. On the heights of Baal, Balak builds seven altars and offers a bull and a ram on each, and Balaam goes off to meet the LORD, who puts a word in his mouth. Instead of a curse he says, “How can I curse whom God has not cursed?” Israel is a people that lives apart, too many to count, and he longs to die the death of the upright. Balak takes him to the field of Zophim on Pisgah, and again Balaam blesses: God does not lie as men do; He has blessed, and Balaam cannot reverse it; the LORD is with Israel, and they rise like a lion. Balak tells him neither to curse nor to bless, then takes him to the top of Peor to try once more.

1 Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars
here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for
me here.”

2 Balak did as Balaam had said, and Balak and
Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

3 Then Balaam said to Balak, “Stand beside your
burnt offering while I go off. Perhaps the LORD
will come to meet me, and whatever He shows me
I will tell you.” And he went off to a bare height.

4 God came to meet Balaam, and Balaam told Him,
“I have set out seven altars, and on every one I
have offered up a bull and a ram.”

5 Then the LORD put a word in Balaam’s mouth
and said, “Go back to Balak, and this is what you
are to say.”

6 So he went back to him, and there was Balak
standing beside his burnt offering, with all the
princes of Moab.

7 Then Balaam uttered his oracle:[1] “Balak has
brought me from Aram, the king of Moab from the
mountains of the east: ‘Come, curse Jacob for me;
come, denounce Israel.’

8 How can I curse those God has not cursed? How
can I denounce those the LORD has not
denounced?

9 From the top of the crags I see him, from the
hills I watch him: here is a people that dwells
alone and does not count itself among the nations.

10 Who can reckon up the dust of Jacob, or tally
even a quarter of Israel? May I die as the upright
die, and may my last end be as theirs!”

11 Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to
me? I brought you to curse my enemies, and look,
you have done nothing but bless them!”

12 He answered, “Must I not take care to say what
the LORD puts in my mouth?”

13 Then Balak said to him, “Come with me, please,
to another place from which you can see them.
You will see only the edge of them, not all of them;
and curse them for me from there.”

14 So he took him to the field of Zophim,[2] on the
top of Pisgah, built seven altars and offered a bull
and a ram on each altar.

15 Balaam said to Balak, “Stand here beside your
burnt offering while I meet the LORD over there.”

16 The LORD met Balaam and put a word in his
mouth and said, “Go back to Balak, and this is
what you are to say.”

17 So he came to him, and there he was, standing
beside his burnt offering with the princes of Moab.
Balak asked him, “What did the LORD say?”

18 Then Balaam uttered his oracle: “Rise, Balak,
and listen; hear me, son of Zippor.
19 God does not lie as men do, nor change His
mind as mortals do. Has He said a thing and not
done it, or promised and not made it good?[3]
20 See, I was given a command to bless; He has
blessed, and I cannot take it back.
21 He has spied no wrong in Jacob and seen no
mischief in Israel. The LORD his God is with him;
the acclaim of a king rings out among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt; they have the
strength of a wild ox.[4]
23 For there is no omen-reading against Jacob, no
divination against Israel. Now it will be said of
Jacob and of Israel, ‘See what God has done!’
24 Look, a people rising like a lioness, rousing itself
like a lion! It does not lie down until it has eaten
its prey and drunk the blood of the slain.”
25 Then Balak said to Balaam, “Do not curse them
at all, and do not bless them at all!”
26 Balaam answered Balak, “Did I not tell you,
‘Whatever the LORD says, that I must do’?”
27 “Come,” Balak said to Balaam, “let me take you
somewhere else. It may be right in God’s eyes for
you to curse them for me from there.”
28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which
looks down over the wasteland.
29 Balaam told Balak, “Set up seven altars for me
on this spot, and have seven bulls and seven rams
ready.”
30 Balak did what Balaam asked, and on every altar
he offered up a bull and a ram.

1 Hebrew מָשָׁל (mashal), a saying, proverb or poem; so in 23:18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23.

2 Or ‘the lookouts’ field’.

3 Compare 1 Samuel 15:29 and Titus 1:2.

4 Hebrew רְאֵם (re’em), perhaps the aurochs, a great wild ox now extinct; the old ‘unicorn’ came from the Greek.

Chapter 24

Numbers 24 gives Balaam’s last oracles. Seeing that it pleases the LORD to bless Israel, Balaam no longer looks for omens; the Spirit of God comes on him as he looks at Israel camped tribe by tribe, and he says, “How fair are your tents, O Jacob,” and “Blessed is everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone who curses you.” Balak, furious, claps his hands and sends him home without reward. But Balaam first tells what Israel will do to Moab in days to come: “A star will march out of Jacob, a sceptre rise from Israel,” crushing Moab and taking Edom. He speaks too of the end of Amalek, of the Kenites and of Asshur, and then he goes home.

1 When Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to
bless Israel, he did not go as at other times to look
for omens, but set his face towards the
wilderness.
2 Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe
by tribe, and the Spirit of God came upon him,
3 and he uttered his oracle: “The word of Balaam
son of Beor, the word of the man whose eye is
opened,[1]
4 the word of him who hears what God says and
beholds what the Almighty[2] shows him, who falls
down with his eyes open:
5 How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings,
O Israel!
6 Like valleys they stretch out, like gardens beside
a river, like aloes the LORD has planted, like
cedars beside the waters.
7 Water will flow from his buckets, and his seed
will have abundant water. His king will be higher
than Agag, and his kingdom will be exalted.
8 God brought him out of Egypt; he has the
strength of a wild ox. He will devour nations that
are his foes, gnaw their bones and pierce them
with his arrows.
9 He crouches and lies down like a lion, like a
lioness; who would dare to rouse him?[3] Blessed is
everyone who blesses you, and cursed is everyone
who curses you!”[4]
10 Balak flared up in anger at Balaam and clapped
his hands together. “I called you here to curse my
enemies,” he said, “and three times now you have
done nothing but bless them!
11 Now be off home with you! I said I would reward
you richly, but the LORD has kept you from your
reward.”

12 Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell the
messengers you sent to me,
13 ‘Even if Balak gave me his house full of silver
and gold, I could not go beyond the command of
the LORD to do good or bad of my own will; what
the LORD says, that is what I will say’?
14 And now I am going back to my people. Come, I
will tell you what this people will do to your
people in days to come.”
15 Then he uttered his oracle: “The word of Balaam
son of Beor, the word of the man whose eye is
opened,
16 the word of him who hears what God says, who
knows what the Most High knows and beholds
what the Almighty shows him, who falls down with
his eyes open:
17 I see him, though not now; I gaze on him,
though not close at hand. A star will march out of
Jacob, a sceptre rise from Israel.[5] He will crush
the brows of Moab and break down all the sons of
Sheth.[6]
18 Edom will be taken over; Seir, his enemy, will be
taken over, while Israel does valiantly.
19 One from Jacob will rule and destroy the
survivors of the city.”
20 Then he looked at Amalek and uttered his
oracle: “Amalek was first among the nations, but
his end will be destruction.”
21 Then he looked at the Kenites and uttered his
oracle: “Your dwelling place is secure, and your
nest is set in the rock;[7]
22 yet Kain will be burnt out. How long until
Asshur takes you captive?”
23 Then he uttered his oracle: “Alas, who can live
when God does this?
24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim;[8] they
will humble Asshur and humble Eber, but he too
will come to destruction.”
25 Then Balaam got up and went back to his place,
and Balak also went his way.

1 Or ‘whose eye is shut’; the Hebrew word is uncertain.
2 Hebrew שַׁדַּי (Shaddai); see the note at Genesis 17:1.
3 Compare Genesis 49:9.
4 Compare Genesis 12:3 and 27:29.
5 Compare Genesis 49:10, Matthew 2:2 and Revelation 22:16.
6 Or ‘the sons of tumult’; compare Jeremiah 48:45.
7 In Hebrew ‘nest’ (קֵן, qen) sounds like ‘Kenite’ (קֵינִי, qeni).
8 Kittim is Cyprus, and so the peoples of the west.

Chapter 25

Numbers 25 tells of Israel’s sin at Peor. While Israel stays at Shittim, the men begin to be unfaithful with the women of Moab, who invite them to the sacrifices of their gods; Israel joins in the worship of the Baal of Peor, and the LORD’s anger burns. The LORD orders the leaders to be executed, and Moses tells the judges to kill those who have joined themselves to Baal. Then, while the people are weeping at the tent of meeting, an Israelite brings a Midianite woman into his tent in full view; Phinehas son of Eleazar follows them in and drives a spear through both, and the plague stops, after 24,000 have died. The LORD gives Phinehas His covenant of peace, a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God. The two who died are named, Zimri of Simeon and Cozbi of Midian, and the LORD tells Moses to treat the Midianites as enemies because of their deceit.

1 While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people
began to be sexually unfaithful with the daughters
of Moab.
2 These women invited the people to the sacrifices
offered to their gods, and the people ate and
bowed down before those gods.
3 So Israel became bound to the Baal of Peor,[1] and
the LORD’s anger burned against Israel.
4 The LORD said to Moses, “Take all the chiefs of
the people and execute them before the LORD in
broad daylight,[2] so that the fierce anger of the
LORD may turn away from Israel.”
5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of
you must put to death those of his men who have
bound themselves to the Baal of Peor.”

6 Just then one of the Israelites came and brought
a Midianite woman to his relatives, in the sight of
Moses and the whole community of Israel, while
they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of
meeting.
7 Seeing this, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar and
grandson of Aaron the priest, stood up and left the
gathering, seized a spear
8 and went after the Israelite man into the inner
tent. He drove the spear through both of them,
through the Israelite and through the woman's
belly. Then the plague on the Israelites was
stopped.
9 Those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.[3]
10 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
11 "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the
priest, has turned My wrath away from the
Israelites, because he was zealous with My zeal
among them, so that I did not wipe out the
Israelites in My zeal.[4]
12 Therefore say: I am giving him My covenant of
peace.
13 It will be for him and his descendants after him
a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was
zealous for his God and made atonement for the
Israelites."
14 The name of the Israelite who was killed with
the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, the
leader of a family of the Simeonites.
15 The name of the Midianite woman who was
killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur, who was the
head of a clan, a family in Midian.
16 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
17 "Treat the Midianites as enemies and strike
them down,
18 for they have treated you as enemies by the
tricks they played on you in the affair of Peor and
in the affair of Cozbi, the daughter of a Midianite
leader, their sister, who was killed on the day of
the plague that came because of Peor."

1 The god worshipped at Peor (23:28). Compare Psalm 106:28–31, Hosea 9:10 and Revelation 2:14.
2 The exact form of execution in the Hebrew verb is uncertain; perhaps impaling or hanging their bodies in public view.
3 1 Corinthians 10:8 speaks of 23,000 who 'fell in one day'.
4 Or 'jealous with My jealousy'; Hebrew קִנְאָה (qin'ah) is both.

Chapter 26

Numbers 26 records the second census of Israel, taken on the plains of Moab after the plague. At the LORD's command Moses and Eleazar count every man of twenty and over who can serve in the army, tribe by tribe and clan by clan, with notes on Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Korah, Judah's sons Er and Onan, and the daughters of Zelophehad. The total is 601,730. The land is to be divided among them by lot, a larger inheritance for a larger tribe and a smaller for a smaller. The Levites, counted from a month old, number 23,000, and they receive no inheritance. Not one of those counted at Sinai is left, except Caleb and Joshua, as the LORD had said.

1 After the plague[1] the LORD said to Moses and to
Eleazar son of Aaron the priest,
2 "Take a census of the whole community of the
Israelites by their families, all those twenty years
old and over who are able to serve in Israel's
army."
3 So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them
on the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from
Jericho, and said,
4 "Count those twenty years old and over, as the
LORD commanded Moses." These were the
Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt:
5 Reuben, Israel's firstborn. The descendants of
Reuben: of Hanoch, the Hanochite clan; of Pallu,
the Palluite clan;
6 of Hezron, the Hezronite clan; of Carmi, the
Carmite clan.
7 These were the clans of Reuben; those counted
numbered 43,730.
8 The son of Pallu was Eliab,
9 and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan and
Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen
by the community, who rebelled against Moses
and Aaron with Korah's company when they
rebelled against the LORD.
10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them
together with Korah when his company died, when

the fire consumed the 250 men, and they became a warning.

11 But the sons of Korah did not die.

12 The descendants of Simeon by their clans: of Nemuel, the Nemuelite clan; of Jamin, the Jaminite clan; of Jachin, the Jachinite clan;

13 of Zerah, the Zerahite clan; of Shaul, the Shaulite clan.

14 These were the clans of Simeon: 22,200.

15 The descendants of Gad by their clans: of Zephon, the Zephonite clan; of Haggi, the Haggite clan; of Shuni, the Shunite clan;

16 of Ozni, the Oznite clan; of Eri, the Erite clan;

17 of Arod, the Arodite clan; of Areli, the Arelite clan.

18 These were the clans of Gad; those counted numbered 40,500.

19 Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.[2]

20 The descendants of Judah by their clans: of Shelah, the Shelanite clan; of Perez, the Perezite clan; of Zerah, the Zerahite clan.

21 The descendants of Perez: of Hezron, the Hezronite clan; of Hamul, the Hamulite clan.

22 These were the clans of Judah; those counted numbered 76,500.

23 The descendants of Issachar by their clans: of Tola, the Tolaite clan; of Puvah, the Punite clan;

24 of Jashub, the Jashubite clan; of Shimron, the Shimronite clan.

25 These were the clans of Issachar; those counted numbered 64,300.

26 The descendants of Zebulun by their clans: of Sered, the Seredite clan; of Elon, the Elonite clan; of Jahleel, the Jahleelite clan.

27 These were the clans of Zebulun; those counted numbered 60,500.

28 The descendants of Joseph by their clans: Manasseh and Ephraim.

29 The descendants of Manasseh: of Machir, the Machirite clan. Machir was the father of Gilead; of Gilead, the Gileadite clan.

30 These were the descendants of Gilead: of Iezer, the Iezerite clan; of Helek, the Helekite clan;

31 of Asriel, the Asrielite clan; of Shechem, the Shechemite clan;

32 of Shemida, the Shemidaite clan; of Hepher, the Hepherite clan.

33 Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons, only daughters; the names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

34 These were the clans of Manasseh; those counted numbered 52,700.

35 These were the descendants of Ephraim by their clans: of Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite clan; of Becher, the Becherite clan; of Tahan, the Tahanite clan.

36 These were the descendants of Shuthelah: of Eran, the Eranite clan.

37 These were the clans of Ephraim; those counted numbered 32,500. These were the descendants of Joseph by their clans.

38 The descendants of Benjamin by their clans: of Bela, the Belaite clan; of Ashbel, the Ashbelite clan; of Ahiram, the Ahiramite clan;

39 of Shephupham, the Shuphamite clan; of Hupham, the Huphamite clan.

40 The sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the Ardite clan; of Naaman, the Naamite clan.

41 These were the descendants of Benjamin by their clans; those counted numbered 45,600.

42 These were the descendants of Dan by their clans: of Shuham, the Shuhamite clan. These were the clans of Dan by their clans.

43 All the Shuhamite clans, as counted, numbered 64,400.

44 The descendants of Asher by their clans: of Imnah, the Imnite clan; of Ishvi, the Ishvite clan; of Beriah, the Beriite clan.

45 Of the descendants of Beriah: of Heber, the Heberite clan; of Malchiel, the Malchielite clan.

46 The name of Asher's daughter was Serah.

47 These were the clans of Asher; those counted numbered 53,400.

48 The descendants of Naphtali by their clans: of Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite clan; of Guni, the Gunite clan;

49 of Jezer, the Jezerite clan; of Shillem, the Shillemite clan.

50 These were the clans of Naphtali by their clans; those counted numbered 45,400.

51 These were the Israelites as counted: 601,730.

52 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

53 "The land is to be divided among these as their inheritance, according to the number of names.

54 To a large group you are to give a larger inheritance, and to a small group a smaller one; each is to receive its inheritance in proportion to the number counted.

55 But the land is to be divided by lot; they are to inherit according to the names of their ancestral tribes.

56 Each inheritance is to be divided by lot between the larger and the smaller."

57 These were the Levites counted by their clans: of Gershon, the Gershonite clan; of Kohath, the Kohathite clan; of Merari, the Merarite clan.

58 These were the Levite clans: the Libnite clan, the Hebronite clan, the Mahlite clan, the Mushite clan, the Korahite clan. Kohath was the father of Amram,

59 whose wife was named Jochebed, a daughter of Levi born to him in Egypt. She bore Amram's children Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam.

60 Aaron became the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

61 Nadab and Abihu, however, had died for bringing strange fire before the LORD.[3]

62 Those counted of the Levites were 23,000, every male a month old and over. They were not counted among the other Israelites, because no inheritance was given to them among the Israelites.

63 These were those counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.

64 Among them there was not one of those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai.

65 For the LORD had said of them, "They will surely die in the wilderness." Not one of them was left, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

1 In Hebrew, 'After the plague' is 25:19.

2 See Genesis 38:6–10.

3 See Leviticus 10:1–2.

Chapter 27

Numbers 27 tells of the daughters of Zelophehad and of Joshua's appointment. Zelophehad of Manasseh died in the wilderness with no sons, and his five daughters ask Moses and the leaders why their father's name should vanish from his clan: "Give us property among our father's brothers." Moses brings their case before the LORD, who says they are right, and makes it a law that if a man dies without a son his inheritance is to go to his daughter, then to his brothers, then to his nearest relative. The LORD tells Moses to climb the Abarim mountains and see the land before he dies, as Aaron did, because of their rebellion at Meribah. Moses asks the LORD to appoint a man over the community so that it will not be like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD chooses Joshua, a man in whom is the Spirit. Moses lays his hands on him before Eleazar and the whole community and commissions him.

1 Then the daughters of Zelophehad came forward. Zelophehad was the son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, of the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph, and his daughters' names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah.

2 They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole community at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and said,

3 "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the company that banded together against the LORD in Korah's company; he died for his own sin, and he had no sons.

4 Why should our father's name be lost to his clan because he had no son? Give us a holding among our father's relatives."

5 So Moses brought their case before the LORD,

6 and the LORD said to Moses,

7 "What Zelophehad's daughters say is right. You must certainly give them a holding as an inheritance among their father's relatives, and pass their father's inheritance on to them.

8 And tell the Israelites: If a man dies and has no son, you are to pass his inheritance on to his daughter.

9 Failing a daughter, his brothers are to receive what he leaves.

10 Failing brothers, it is to go to his uncles on his
father's side.
11 And if his father had no brothers, you are to give
his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan,
and he is to take possession of it. This is to be a
statute and rule for the Israelites, as the LORD
commanded Moses."
12 The LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain
in the Abarim range and see the land I have given
to the Israelites.
13 When you have seen it, you too will be gathered
to your people, as your brother Aaron was,
14 because in the wilderness of Zin, when the
community quarrelled, you both rebelled against
My command to show Me holy before their eyes at
the water." (These were the waters of Meribah at
Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.)
15 Moses spoke to the LORD and said,
16 "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all
flesh, appoint a man over the community
17 who will go out before them and come in before
them, who will lead them out and bring them in,
so that the LORD's community may not be like
sheep without a shepherd."[1]
18 The LORD answered Moses, "Joshua son of Nun
is a man with the Spirit in him.[2] Take him and
place your hand on him.
19 Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and
the whole community, and commission him in their
sight.
20 Give him some of your authority, so that the
whole community of the Israelites will obey him.
21 He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will
seek decisions for him by the judgement of the
Urim[3] before the LORD. At his command they will
go out, and at his command they will come in, he
and all the Israelites with him, the whole
community."
22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He
took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the
priest and the whole community.
23 He laid his hands on him and commissioned him,
as the LORD had directed through Moses.

1 Compare Matthew 9:36 and Mark 6:34.
2 Or 'with spirit in him'.
3 The sacred lots kept in the high priest's breastpiece; see Exodus 28:30.

Chapter 28

Numbers 28 begins the calendar of offerings for Israel's appointed times. Each day two year-old lambs are to be offered as a regular burnt offering, one in the morning and one at twilight, with flour, oil and wine; on the Sabbath two more lambs are added. At the beginning of each month the offering is two young bulls, a ram and seven lambs, with their grain and drink offerings and a male goat as a sin offering. The Passover falls on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Festival of Unleavened Bread follows for seven days, with the same offerings each day and a sacred assembly on the first and seventh days. On the day of firstfruits, at the Festival of Weeks, the same offerings are brought, besides the regular burnt offering.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,
2 "Command the Israelites and tell them: Be
careful to present to Me at its appointed time My
offering, My food for My fire offerings, a soothing
aroma for Me.
3 Say to them: This is the fire offering you are to
present to the LORD: two male lambs a year old
without defect every day, as a regular burnt
offering.
4 Offer one lamb in the morning and the other
lamb at twilight,
5 with a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a grain
offering, mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil from
pressed olives.
6 It is the regular burnt offering, instituted at
Mount Sinai, a soothing aroma, a fire offering to
the LORD.
7 Its drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin for
each lamb. Pour out the drink offering of strong
drink to the LORD in the holy place.
8 Offer the second lamb at twilight, with the same
grain offering and drink offering as in the
morning, a fire offering of soothing aroma to the
LORD.
9 On the Sabbath day offer two male lambs a year
old without defect, with two tenths of an ephah of
fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its
drink offering.

10 This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

11 At the beginning of your months you are to present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect,

12 with three tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each bull, two tenths of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for the ram,

13 and a tenth of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each lamb, a burnt offering of soothing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

14 Their drink offerings are to be half a hin of wine for a bull, a third of a hin for the ram and a quarter of a hin for each lamb. This is the burnt offering for each month, through all the months of the year.

15 Besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering, one male goat is to be offered to the LORD as a sin offering.

16 On the fourteenth day of the first month is the LORD's Passover.

17 On the fifteenth day of that month there is to be a festival; for seven days bread without yeast is to be eaten.

18 On the first day there is to be a sacred assembly; you are not to do any ordinary work.

19 Present to the LORD a fire offering, a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old; see that they are without defect.

20 With them offer their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three tenths for a bull and two tenths for the ram,

21 and a tenth for each of the seven lambs,

22 together with a single male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement on your behalf.

23 You are to offer these in addition to the morning burnt offering, which is the regular burnt offering.

24 In the same way you are to offer each day for seven days the food of the fire offering, a soothing aroma to the LORD; it is to be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

25 On the seventh day you are to hold a sacred assembly; you are not to do any ordinary work.

26 On the day of firstfruits, when you present to the LORD an offering of new grain at your Festival of Weeks, you are to hold a sacred assembly; you are not to do any ordinary work.

27 Offer a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old,

28 Their grain offering is to be fine flour with oil mixed in: three tenths for every bull, two tenths for the ram,

29 and a tenth for each of the seven lambs,

30 with one male goat to make atonement for you.

31 Offer these, together with their drink offerings, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering. See that they are without defect.

Chapter 29

> *Numbers 29 completes the calendar of offerings with the festivals of the seventh month. On the first day of the month, a day for sounding the trumpets, and on the tenth, the Day of Atonement, when the people deny themselves, a bull, a ram and seven lambs are offered, with a male goat for a sin offering. From the fifteenth day the Festival of Booths is kept for seven days, beginning with thirteen bulls, two rams and fourteen lambs, and each day one bull fewer, until seven bulls are offered on the seventh day; on the eighth day there is a closing assembly with one bull, one ram and seven lambs. All these are besides the regular offerings and whatever the people vow or give freely, and Moses tells Israel all that the LORD has commanded.*

1 On the first day of the seventh month you are to hold a sacred assembly and do no ordinary work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets.[1]

2 Prepare a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, without defect,

3 and with them a grain offering of fine flour kneaded with oil: three tenths of an ephah go with the bull and two tenths with the ram,

4 and one tenth for each of the seven lambs,

5 Offer also a male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement on your behalf.

6 These are besides the burnt offering of the new
moon with its grain offering, and the regular burnt
offering with its grain offering, and their drink
offerings as laid down, a soothing aroma, a fire
offering to the LORD.
7 On the tenth day of this seventh month you are to
hold a sacred assembly. You are to deny
yourselves[2] and do no work at all.
8 Bring to the LORD a burnt offering, a soothing
aroma: one young bull, one ram and seven
yearling male lambs; see that they are without
defect.
9 Their grain offering is to be fine flour mixed with
oil: three tenths for the bull, two tenths for the
single ram,
10 and a tenth apiece for the seven lambs.
11 Add one male goat as a sin offering, besides the
sin offering of atonement and the regular burnt
offering with its grain offering and their drink
offerings.
12 On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you
are to hold a sacred assembly and do no ordinary
work, and for seven days you are to keep a festival
to the LORD.[3]
13 Present a burnt offering, a fire offering of
soothing aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls,
two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all
of them without defect,
14 with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with
oil, three tenths for each of the thirteen bulls, two
tenths for each of the two rams,
15 and a tenth for each of the fourteen lambs,[4]
16 and one male goat as a sin offering, besides the
regular burnt offering with its grain and drink
offerings.
17 On the second day: twelve young bulls, two rams
and fourteen yearling male lambs without defect,
18 with the grain and drink offerings for the bulls,
the rams and the lambs, according to their
number, as laid down,
19 together with a male goat for a sin offering, over
and above the regular burnt offering and its grain
and drink offerings.
20 On the third day: eleven bulls, two rams and
fourteen yearling male lambs without defect,
21 with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls,
rams and lambs in keeping with their number, as
the rule requires,
22 and one goat for a sin offering, besides the
regular burnt offering with its grain and drink
offering.
23 The fourth day is to have ten bulls, two rams
and fourteen unblemished yearling lambs,
24 with the grain and drink offerings due for the
bulls, rams and lambs by their number, as is the
rule,
25 with a male goat for a sin offering; the regular
burnt offering and what goes with it are to be
offered as well.
26 On the fifth day: nine bulls, two rams and
fourteen year-old lambs without defect,
27 with grain and drink offerings for bulls, rams
and lambs to match their number, as prescribed,
28 and a single goat for a sin offering, besides the
regular burnt offering with its grain and drink
offering.
29 For the sixth day the offering is eight bulls, two
rams and fourteen flawless yearling lambs,
30 with the right grain and drink offerings for the
bulls, the rams and the lambs, as many as they
are,
31 and one goat for a sin offering, besides the
regular burnt offering, its grain offering and its
drink offerings.
32 On the seventh day: seven bulls, two rams and
fourteen yearling lambs without defect,
33 with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls,
rams and lambs, each by its number, according to
their rule,
34 and one goat for a sin offering, besides the
regular burnt offering with its grain and drink
offering.
35 On the eighth day you are to hold a closing
assembly[5] and do no ordinary work.
36 Present a burnt offering, a fire offering of
soothing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram
and seven male lambs a year old without defect,
37 with the grain and drink offerings for the bull,
the ram and the lambs, in keeping with their
number, as laid down,
38 and a goat for a sin offering, all in addition to
the regular burnt offering and the grain and drink
offerings that go with it.
39 These you are to offer to the LORD at your
appointed festivals, besides your vows and freewill

offerings, whether burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings or peace offerings.”

40 So Moses told the Israelites everything that the LORD had commanded him.[6]

1 Hebrew יוֹם תְּרוּעָה (yom teru’ah), ‘a day of blasts’ or ‘of shouting’; compare Leviticus 23:24 and the note at 10:7.

2 See the note at Leviticus 16:29.

3 The Festival of Booths; compare Leviticus 23:34–43 and John 7:2, 37.

4 In the Hebrew a dot is written over one letter of ‘a tenth’, a scribal mark.

5 Hebrew עֲצֶרֶת (atseret), a solemn gathering at the end of a festival.

6 In Hebrew, 29:40 is 30:1, and 30:1–16 are 30:2–17.

Chapter 30

Numbers 30 gives the law of vows. A man who makes a vow to the LORD or binds himself by an oath must not break his word but do all he has said. If a young woman living in her father’s house makes a vow, it stands unless her father forbids it on the day he hears of it, and then the LORD will forgive her; the same holds for a married woman and her husband. But a widow or a divorced woman is bound by every vow she makes. If a husband says nothing at first and cancels his wife’s vow later, he bears her guilt.

1 Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the Israelites: “This is what the LORD has commanded.

2 When a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself to a pledge, he must not break his word; he must do everything he has said.

3 When a young woman still in her father’s house makes a vow to the LORD or binds herself to a pledge,

4 and her father hears of her vow and her pledge and says nothing to her, then all her vows will stand, and every pledge by which she has bound herself will stand.

5 But if her father forbids her on the day he hears of it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she has bound herself will stand; and the LORD will forgive her, because her father has forbidden her.

6 If she marries while bound by her vows, or by a rash promise from her lips,

7 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her on the day he hears, then her vows will stand, and the pledges by which she has bound herself will stand.

8 But if on the day her husband hears of it he forbids her, he cancels the vow that binds her and the rash promise of her lips, and the LORD will forgive her.

9 The vow of a widow or of a divorced woman, every pledge by which she has bound herself, will stand against her.

10 If a woman living in her husband’s house makes a vow or binds herself by an oath,

11 and her husband hears of it and says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows will stand, and every pledge by which she bound herself will stand.

12 But if her husband cancels them on the day he hears of them, nothing that has come from her lips, whether vows or pledges, will stand. Her husband has cancelled them, and the LORD will forgive her.

13 Any vow, and any sworn pledge to deny herself, her husband may confirm or her husband may cancel.

14 But if her husband says nothing to her from day to day, he confirms all her vows or all the pledges she is under; he confirms them, because he said nothing to her on the day he heard of them.

15 If he cancels them some time after he has heard of them, he will bear her guilt.”

16 These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses concerning a man and his wife, and a father and his young daughter still living in his house.

Chapter 31

Numbers 31 tells of Israel's war against Midian. Before Moses dies, the LORD sends him to take vengeance on the Midianites for Peor. A thousand men from each tribe go out with Phinehas, the holy objects and the trumpets; they kill the men of Midian, its five kings and Balaam son of Beor, and bring back the women, children, animals and goods. Moses is angry that the women have been spared, since at Balaam's advice they led Israel into unfaithfulness at Peor, and he orders that only the young girls be kept alive. The soldiers and the captives are to stay outside the camp seven days and be purified, and metal is to be passed through fire and everything else through water. The plunder is divided equally between the fighters and the community, with a share for the LORD from each half, to Eleazar and to the Levites. The officers, finding that not one of their men is missing, bring the gold they have taken as an offering to the LORD, 16,750 shekels, to make atonement for themselves.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 "Take vengeance for the Israelites on the Midianites. After that you will be gathered to your people."

3 So Moses said to the people, "Arm some of your men for war, to go against Midian and carry out the LORD's vengeance on Midian.

4 Send to the war a thousand men from each of the tribes of Israel."

5 So a thousand were provided from each tribe out of the thousands of Israel, twelve thousand armed for war.

6 Moses sent them to the war, a thousand from each tribe, together with Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest, who took with him the holy objects and the trumpets for sounding the signal.

7 They made war on Midian, as the LORD had commanded Moses, and killed every male.

8 Among the dead were Midian's five kings, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba, who fell with the rest; and Balaam son of Beor too they put to the sword.[1]

9 The Israelites took the women of Midian and their little ones captive, and carried off all their cattle, their flocks and all their goods as plunder.

10 All the towns where they had settled, and all their encampments, they burnt with fire.

11 They took all the spoil and all the plunder, both people and animals,

12 and brought the captives, the plunder and the spoil to Moses, Eleazar the priest and the community of the Israelites at the camp on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho.

13 Moses and Eleazar the priest, with every leader of the community, came out beyond the camp to meet them.

14 But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, who were returning from the battle.

15 "Have you let all the women live?" Moses asked them.

16 "These are the very ones who, on Balaam's advice, led the Israelites to be unfaithful to the LORD in the affair of Peor,[2] so that the plague struck the LORD's community.

17 So put to death every boy among the children, and every woman who has known a man by lying with him.

18 But keep alive for yourselves all the girls who have not slept with a man.

19 You are to camp outside the camp for seven days. Whoever has killed anyone, and whoever has touched one of the slain, must purify himself on the third and seventh days, both you and your captives.

20 You must also purify every garment, everything made of leather or goats' hair, and everything made of wood."

21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone to battle, "This is the statute of the law that the LORD commanded Moses:

22 gold and silver, bronze and iron, tin and lead,

23 everything that can stand fire, you are to pass through the fire, and it will be clean; but it must also be purified with the water for impurity. Whatever cannot stand fire you are to pass through the water.

24 On the seventh day wash your clothes and you will be clean; after that you may come into the camp."

25 The LORD said to Moses,

26 “You and Eleazar the priest and the heads of the families of the community are to count the plunder that was taken, both people and animals.

27 Divide the plunder into two halves, between the warriors who went out to battle and the whole community.

28 From the soldiers who went to battle set aside a levy for the LORD, one in every five hundred, of the people, the cattle, the donkeys and the flocks.

29 Take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest as a contribution to the LORD.

30 From the Israelites’ half take one in every fifty, of the people, the cattle, the donkeys and the flocks, of all the animals, and give them to the Levites who keep charge of the LORD’s tabernacle.”

31 Moses and Eleazar the priest carried out the LORD’s command to Moses.

32 The plunder remaining from the spoil the soldiers had taken was 675,000 sheep,

33 72,000 cattle,

34 61,000 donkeys,

35 and 32,000 people in all, women who had not slept with a man.

36 The half that was the share of those who had gone to war came to 337,500 sheep,

37 of which the LORD’s levy was 675;

38 36,000 cattle, of which the LORD’s levy was 72;

39 30,500 donkeys, of which the LORD’s levy was 61;

40 and 16,000 people, of whom the LORD’s levy was 32.

41 Moses gave the levy, the LORD’s contribution, to Eleazar the priest, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

42 From the Israelites’ half, which Moses had set apart from that of the fighting men,

43 the community’s half was 337,500 sheep,

44 36,000 cattle,

45 30,500 donkeys,

46 and 16,000 people.

47 From the Israelites’ half Moses took one in every fifty, of both people and animals, and gave them to the Levites who kept charge of the LORD’s tabernacle, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

48 Then the officers over the thousands of the army, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, came to Moses

49 and said to him, “Your servants have counted the soldiers under our command, and not one of us is missing.

50 So we have brought as an offering to the LORD what each man found, articles of gold, armlets and bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces, to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD.”

51 Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gold from them, all of it worked into ornaments.

52 All the gold of the contribution they presented to the LORD, from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, came to 16,750 shekels.[3]

53 The soldiers had each taken plunder for themselves.

54 Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a reminder of the Israelites before the LORD.

1 Compare Joshua 13:21–22.

2 Compare Revelation 2:14.

3 About 190 kilograms (420 pounds).

Chapter 32

Numbers 32 tells how Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh settle east of the Jordan. The Reubenites and Gadites, who have very large herds, see that the land of Jazer and Gilead is good for livestock and ask to be given it rather than cross the Jordan. Moses fears they will discourage Israel as their fathers did at Kadesh, bringing the LORD’s anger on the whole people again. They promise to build pens for their flocks and towns for their families, then go armed ahead of the Israelites until every tribe has its inheritance. Moses agrees: if they do this, the land will be theirs; if not, “your sin will catch up with you.” He gives them, with half the tribe of Manasseh, the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, and they rebuild and rename the towns, while the clans of Manasseh take Gilead.

1 The Reubenites and the Gadites had a great
number of livestock, a very large number. When
they saw that the land of Jazer and the land of
Gilead was good country for livestock,
2 the Gadites and the Reubenites came to Moses,
to Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the
community and said,
3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon,
Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon,
4 the land the LORD struck down before the
community of Israel, is a land for livestock, and
your servants have livestock."
5 They said, "If we have found favour in your eyes,
let this land be given to your servants as our
possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."
6 Moses said to the Gadites and the Reubenites,
"Are your brothers to go to war while you sit here?
7 Why would you discourage the Israelites from
crossing into the land the LORD has given them?
8 Your fathers did exactly this when I sent them out
from Kadesh-barnea to look over the land.
9 They went up as far as the valley of Eshcol and
saw the land, and then they discouraged the
Israelites from going into the land the LORD had
given them.
10 The LORD's anger burned that day, and He
swore:
11 'Because they have not followed Me with all
their heart, none of the men aged twenty or more
who came up from Egypt will ever set eyes on the
land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob,
12 except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and
Joshua son of Nun, for they have followed the
LORD wholeheartedly.'
13 The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and He
made them wander in the wilderness forty years,
until the whole generation that had done evil in
the LORD's sight was gone.
14 And now here you are, a brood of sinners, risen
up in your fathers' place to add still more to the
LORD's fierce anger against Israel!
15 If you turn away from following Him, He will
again leave them in the wilderness, and you will
bring ruin on all this people."
16 Then they approached him again. "Let us put up
stone pens here for our flocks," they said, "and
towns for our children,
17 but we ourselves will arm and be ready to go
ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them
to their place. Meanwhile our little ones will live
in the fortified towns, safe from the people of the
land.
18 We will not return to our homes until every
Israelite has received his inheritance.
19 We will not take an inheritance with them on the
other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our
inheritance has come to us on this side of the
Jordan, to the east."
20 Moses said to them, "If you will do this, if you
will arm yourselves before the LORD for battle,
21 and every armed man among you crosses the
Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out
His enemies before Him,
22 and the land is subdued before the LORD, then
afterwards you may return, free of obligation to
the LORD and to Israel, and this land will be your
possession before the LORD.
23 But if you do not do so, you will have sinned
against the LORD, and know for certain that your
sin will catch up with you.
24 Build towns for your little ones and pens for
your flocks, and do what you have promised."
25 The Gadites and the Reubenites said to Moses,
"Your servants will do as my lord commands.
26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks and all our
cattle will remain here in the towns of Gilead,
27 but your servants, every man armed for war, will
cross over before the LORD to battle, as my lord
says."
28 So Moses gave orders concerning them to
Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun and to the
heads of the families of the tribes of Israel.
29 Moses said to them, "If the Gadites and the
Reubenites, every man armed for battle before the
LORD, cross the Jordan with you, and the land is
subdued before you, then you are to give them the
land of Gilead as their possession.
30 But if they do not cross over with you armed,
they are to receive their possession among you in
the land of Canaan."
31 The Gadites and the Reubenites answered,
"Your servants will do what the LORD has said.
32 We will cross over armed before the LORD into
the land of Canaan, but the possession of our
inheritance will be on this side of the Jordan."

33 Moses then assigned to Gad, to Reuben and to
half the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the realm
of Sihon the Amorite king and the realm of Og the
king of Bashan: the whole country, its towns and
the lands surrounding them.
34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth and Aroer,
35 Atroth-shophan, Jazer and Jogbehah,
36 Beth-nimrah and Beth-haran, as fortified towns,
and built pens for their flocks.
37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh and
Kiriathaim,
38 Nebo and Baal-meon (their names were
changed) and Sibmah, and they gave other names
to the towns they rebuilt.
39 The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh
went to Gilead, captured it and drove out the
Amorites who lived there.
40 So Moses gave Gilead to Machir son of
Manasseh, and he settled there.
41 Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, went and
captured their villages and called them Havvoth-
jair.[1]
42 Nobah, too, went and took Kenath with its
villages, and named it Nobah after himself.

1 Havvoth-jair means ‘the villages of Jair’.

Chapter 33

Numbers 33 lists the stages of Israel’s journey from Egypt to the plains of Moab, which Moses wrote down at the LORD’s command. They set out from Rameses on the day after the Passover, in full view of the Egyptians, who were burying their firstborn, and the record follows them by Succoth and Etham, through the sea to Marah and Elim, to Sinai, through many camps in the wilderness to Kadesh and Mount Hor, where Aaron died at the age of 123, and on round Moab to the plains by the Jordan across from Jericho. There the LORD tells Israel to drive out all the people of Canaan when they cross the Jordan, destroy their carved images and high places, and divide the land by lot among their clans. If they let any of its people stay, those who remain will be thorns in their eyes and in their sides, and the LORD will do to Israel what He meant to do to them.

1 These are the stages of the journey of the
Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt
company by company, under the leadership of
Moses and Aaron.
2 At the LORD’s command Moses recorded the
starting points of their journey, stage by stage,
and these are their stages by their starting points:
3 It was on the fifteenth of the first month, the day
after the Passover, that they left Rameses. The
Israelites marched out boldly[1] in the sight of all
the Egyptians,
4 while the Egyptians were burying all their
firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down
among them. On their gods also the LORD had
executed judgements.
5 So the Israelites set out from Rameses and
camped at Succoth.
6 Leaving Succoth, they camped at Etham, on the
edge of the wilderness.
7 From Etham they turned back to Pi-hahiroth,
which faces Baal-zephon, and camped before
Migdol.
8 They moved on from before Hahiroth, passed
through the middle of the sea into the wilderness,
travelled three days in the wilderness of Etham
and camped at Marah.
9 From Marah they went on to Elim, where there
were twelve springs of water and seventy palm
trees, and they camped there.
10 Next they left Elim and camped by the Red Sea.
11 From the Red Sea they moved to the wilderness
of Sin and camped there.
12 Out of the wilderness of Sin they went on to
pitch camp at Dophkah.
13 Then from Dophkah they travelled to Alush and
camped.
14 From Alush they went to Rephidim, where the
people had no water to drink.
15 Leaving Rephidim, they camped in the
wilderness of Sinai.
16 From the wilderness of Sinai they journeyed to
Kibroth-hattaavah and encamped.
17 On from Kibroth-hattaavah, they made camp at
Hazeroth.
18 They broke camp at Hazeroth and halted at
Rithmah.

19 From Rithmah their next camp was Rimmon-perez.

20 From Rimmon-perez they moved to Libnah.

21 After Libnah came their camp at Rissah.

22 Leaving Rissah, they went to Kehelathah.

23 From Kehelathah they came to Mount Shepher.

24 Mount Shepher was followed by Haradah.

25 From Haradah they journeyed to Makheloth.

26 Then Makheloth, and after it Tahath.

27 From Tahath they went to Terah.

28 From Terah the next stage was Mithkah.

29 Leaving Mithkah, they stopped at Hashmonah.

30 On from Hashmonah, they camped at Moseroth.

31 After Moseroth they halted at Bene-jaakan.

32 From Bene-jaakan they came to Hor-haggidgad.

33 From Hor-haggidgad they moved on to Jotbathah.

34 Jotbathah they left for Abronah.

35 Out of Abronah they went to Ezion-geber.

36 From Ezion-geber they travelled to the wilderness of Zin, that is, Kadesh.

37 They left Kadesh and pitched camp at Mount Hor, at the border of the land of Edom.

38 At the LORD's command Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor, and there he died, in the fortieth year after the Israelites had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month.

39 He was 123 years of age at his death there on Mount Hor.

40 The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, heard that the Israelites were coming.

41 They went on from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

42 Zalmonah they left for Punon.

43 From Punon they came to Oboth.

44 From Oboth they went to Iye-abarim, on the border of Moab.

45 Leaving Iyim, they encamped at Dibon-gad.

46 From Dibon-gad their next camp was Almon-diblathaim.

47 From Almon-diblathaim they moved to the Abarim mountains, near Nebo.

48 Last, they set out from the Abarim mountains and camped on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.

49 There on the plains of Moab their camp stretched along the Jordan from Beth-jeshimoth to Abel-shittim.

50 On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the LORD spoke to Moses and said,

51 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

52 you are to drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved figures, destroy all their cast idols and demolish all their high places.

53 Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess.

54 You are to divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your clans. To the larger give a larger inheritance and to the smaller a smaller one; wherever the lot falls for anyone, that will be his. Divide it according to your ancestral tribes.

55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you, those you allow to remain will be like barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides,[2] and they will trouble you in the land where you live.

56 And then I will do to you what I planned to do to them."

1 Hebrew 'with a high hand'; compare Exodus 14:8.

2 Compare Joshua 23:13 and Judges 2:3.

Chapter 34

Numbers 34 sets the borders of the land of Canaan that Israel is to inherit. The southern border runs from the wilderness of Zin beside Edom, south of the Scorpion Pass and Kadesh-barnea, to the Brook of Egypt and the sea; the western border is the Great Sea; the northern runs from the sea to Mount Hor and Lebo-hamath and on to Hazar-enan; and the eastern runs down by the Sea of Kinnereth and the Jordan to the Salt Sea. This land is for the nine and a half tribes, since Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh have their inheritance east of the Jordan. The LORD names Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun, with one leader from each tribe, to divide the land among them.

1 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Command the Israelites and tell them: When you enter Canaan, this is the land that will fall to you as your inheritance, the land of Canaan with these borders.

3 Your southern side will run from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom. On the east your southern border will begin at the end of the Salt Sea.[1]

4 Then your border will turn south of the ascent of Akrabbim,[2] pass on to Zin and come out south of Kadesh-barnea; it will go on to Hazar-addar and pass on to Azmon.

5 From Azmon the border will turn towards the Brook of Egypt[3] and end at the sea.

6 For your western border you will have the Great Sea[4] and its coast; that will be your border on the west.

7 This will be your northern border: from the Great Sea mark out a line to Mount Hor,[5]

8 and from Mount Hor mark it out to Lebo-hamath. The border will come out at Zedad,

9 go on to Ziphron and end at Hazar-enan. That will be your northern border.

10 For your eastern border mark out a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham.

11 The border will go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain, and on down until it reaches the slope east of the Sea of Kinnereth.[6]

12 Then the border will go down along the Jordan and end at the Salt Sea. This will be your land, with its borders all round.”

13 Moses commanded the Israelites, “This is the land you are to divide by lot as your inheritance, which the LORD has commanded to be given to the nine and a half tribes.

14 For the tribe of the Reubenites by their families and the tribe of the Gadites by their families have received their inheritance, and so has the half-tribe of Manasseh.

15 These two and a half tribes have received their inheritance across the Jordan from Jericho, eastward, towards the sunrise.”

16 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

17 “These are the names of the men who are to divide the land for you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun.

18 And you are to take one leader from each tribe to divide the land.

19 Here are their names. For Judah’s tribe: Caleb son of Jephunneh;

20 from the tribe of the Simeonites, Shemuel son of Ammihud;

21 from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad son of Chislon;

22 from the tribe of the Danites, a leader, Bukki son of Jogli;

23 from the sons of Joseph: from the tribe of the Manassites, a leader, Hanniel son of Ephod,

24 and from the tribe of the Ephraimites, a leader, Kemuel son of Shiphtan;

25 from the tribe of the Zebulunites, a leader, Elizaphan son of Parnach;

26 from the tribe of the Issacharites, a leader, Paltiel son of Azzan;

27 from the tribe of the Asherites, a leader, Ahihud son of Shelomi;

28 from the tribe of the Naphtalites, a leader, Pedahel son of Ammihud.”

29 These are the men whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance among the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

1 That is, the Dead Sea.
2 Or ‘the Scorpion Pass’.
3 The Wadi el-Arish, in the north of Sinai.
4 The Mediterranean.
5 Not the Mount Hor where Aaron died (20:22–28), but a mountain in the far north.
6 The Sea of Galilee.

Chapter 35

Numbers 35 provides towns for the Levites and cities of refuge. From their own inheritance the tribes are to give the Levites forty-eight towns, each with pastureland around it, more from the larger tribes and fewer from the smaller. Six of these, three on each side of the Jordan, are to be cities of refuge, where anyone who kills a person by accident may flee from the avenger of blood until the community has judged the case. Whoever kills with an iron tool, a stone or a wooden weapon, or out of hatred or enmity, is a murderer and must be put to death; but one who kills without intent or malice is to stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest, and if he leaves it the avenger may kill him. No one is to be put to death on the evidence of one witness, and no ransom is to be taken for a murderer’s life, for blood pollutes the land, and the LORD dwells among the Israelites.

1 On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from
Jericho, the LORD spoke to Moses and said,

2 “Command the Israelites to give the Levites,
from the inheritance they will possess, towns to
live in, and give the Levites pastureland around
the towns.

3 The towns will be theirs to live in, and the
pastureland will be for their cattle, their flocks
and all their other animals.

4 The pastureland of the towns you give the Levites
is to reach out from the town wall a thousand
cubits[1] all round.

5 Outside the town measure two thousand cubits
on the east side, two thousand on the south side,
two thousand on the west side and two thousand
on the north side, with the town in the middle.
This will be the pastureland for their towns.

6 Among the towns you give the Levites, six are to
be cities of refuge,[2] to which anyone who has
killed someone may flee; and in addition to these
you are to give forty-two towns.

7 In all you are to give the Levites forty-eight
towns, together with their pastureland.

8 The towns you give from the possession of the
Israelites are to be taken in proportion: more from
a larger tribe and fewer from a smaller. Each is to
give some of its towns to the Levites in keeping
with the inheritance it receives.”

9 The LORD spoke to Moses and said,

10 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you
cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

11 choose towns to be your cities of refuge, so that
anyone who kills a person by mistake may flee
there.

12 They will be places of refuge from the avenger,[3]
so that the one who has killed does not die before
he has stood trial before the community.

13 The towns you give are to be your six cities of
refuge.

14 Give three towns across the Jordan and three in
the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge.

15 These six towns will be a refuge for the
Israelites and for the foreigner and the settler
living among them, so that anyone who kills a
person by mistake may flee there.

16 But if someone strikes another with an iron
object so that he dies, he is a murderer; the
murderer must be put to death.

17 If he strikes him with a stone in his hand that
could kill, and he dies, he is a murderer; the
murderer must be put to death.

18 Or if he strikes him with a wooden weapon in his
hand that could kill, and he dies, he is a murderer;
the murderer must be put to death.

19 The avenger of blood himself is to put the
murderer to death; when he meets him, he is to
kill him.

20 If anyone pushes another out of hatred, or
throws something at him while lying in wait, so
that he dies,

21 or in enmity strikes him with his fist so that he
dies, the one who struck him must be put to

death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood is to put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22 But if anyone pushes another suddenly, without enmity, or throws any object at him without lying in wait,

23 or without seeing him drops on him a stone that could kill, and he dies, though he was not his enemy and did not intend to harm him,

24 then the community is to judge between the one who struck the blow and the avenger of blood according to these rules.

25 The community is to rescue the one who has killed from the hand of the avenger of blood and return him to the city of refuge to which he fled, and he is to live there until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the one who has killed ever goes outside the boundary of the city of refuge to which he fled,

27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the boundary of his city of refuge and kills him, the avenger will not be guilty of blood.

28 For the killer must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to the land he owns.

29 These are to be statutes and rules for you throughout your generations, wherever you live.

30 Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the evidence of witnesses; no one is to be put to death on the testimony of a single witness.[4]

31 You are not to accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who deserves to die; he must certainly be put to death.

32 Nor are you to accept a ransom for one who has fled to his city of refuge, to let him go back and live on his own land before the death of the priest.

33 You must not pollute the land where you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood shed on it except by the blood of the one who shed it.[5]

34 Do not defile the land where you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites."

1 About 450 metres (1,500 feet).

2 Hebrew עָרֵי מִקְלָט (arei miqlat). They are named in Joshua 20:7–8; compare Deuteronomy 19:1–13.

3 Hebrew גֹּאֵל (go'el), the nearest relative, whose duty it was to defend the family and to avenge a killing; the same word is 'redeemer' in Ruth and Isaiah.

4 Compare Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15, Matthew 18:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:1.

5 Compare Genesis 9:6.

Chapter 36

> *Numbers 36, the last chapter, returns to the daughters of Zelophehad. The family heads of the clan of Gilead of Manasseh come to Moses and the leaders: if these daughters marry men of another tribe, their inheritance will pass to that tribe and be lost from Manasseh, even at the Jubilee. At the LORD's word Moses rules that they are right. The daughters may marry whom they please, but only within their father's tribal clan, and every daughter who inherits land is to do the same, so that no inheritance passes from tribe to tribe. Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah marry their cousins, and their inheritance stays in their father's clan. The book closes: these are the commands and rules the LORD gave Israel through Moses on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.*

1 The heads of the families of the clan of Gilead son of Machir, son of Manasseh, of the clans of the descendants of Joseph, came forward and spoke before Moses and the leaders, the heads of the families of the Israelites.

2 They said, "The LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance to the Israelites by lot, and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters.

3 But if they marry men from any of the other Israelite tribes, their inheritance will be taken from our fathers' inheritance and added to that of the tribe they marry into; and so it will be taken from the share allotted to us.

4 And when the Jubilee[1] comes for the Israelites, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe

they marry into, and taken from the inheritance of our fathers' tribe."

5 Then at the LORD's word Moses gave this command to the Israelites: "The tribe of the descendants of Joseph is right.

6 This is what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad: They may marry anyone they think fit, provided they marry within a clan of their father's tribe.

7 No inheritance among the Israelites is to pass from one tribe to another, for each Israelite is to hold on to the inheritance of his ancestral tribe.

8 Every daughter who inherits land in any tribe of Israel is to marry someone from a clan of her father's tribe, so that every Israelite may keep the inheritance of his fathers.

9 No inheritance is to pass from one tribe to another, for each tribe of the Israelites is to hold on to its own inheritance."

10 The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

11 Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married their cousins on their father's side.

12 They married into the clans of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's clan.

13 These are the commands and rules that the LORD gave the Israelites through Moses on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.

1 See Leviticus 25:8–17, where land that has been sold returns to its owner in the fiftieth year. Land inherited by marriage would not return.