

Dear brothers and Sisters,

When we read about the Israelites moving from place to place in the wilderness, (Numbers 33 reveals that they stopped and set up camp forty-two times in the forty years they spent in the wilderness) We must not forget that we are learning about the movement of a multitude of people, comprising around 602 thousand men a similar number of women as well as children, a vast community of over 2 million people. It is true that these were divided into twelve camps but on average these would number 165,000 human beings. True each tribe had their elders, and specific responsibilities but there was only ONE Moses, and it is obvious that some form of communication would be necessary and this was resolved by Yahweh's instruction to Moses that two silver trumpets should be made. These trumpets were able to send out certain signals that the whole congregation could understand and respond to as required. This form of communication has been followed by hundreds of armies in hundreds of different lands over several thousand years, instructing soldiers of the actions they must follow in battle. Perhaps these were adopted from the instructions given to the Israelites.

For Israel in the wilderness these represent the witness of the Spirit-word in a two-fold application, that of prayer and instruction, as pleading for God's help and mercy and as proclaiming the Truth to mankind. The apostle Paul states in his letter to the Ephesians, "For through him we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; (Eph 2:18-20) access to the Father is allowed to those who believe and obey His word and approach Him in the light of its teaching through the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is represented in the use of the two silver trumpets. Paul refers to the use of these trumpets in 1 Corinthians 14:8 For if the **trumpet** give an uncertain sound, **who shall prepare himself** to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for you shall speak into the air. (1Co 14:8-9)

Israel were informed how these trumpets were to be used and how they should respond to the signals given, for example :-

- 1) for the calling of the assembly
- 2) for the journeying of the camps.
- 3) for assemble at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
- 4) for the gathering of the Princes blow one *trumpet*,
- 5) for blowing an alarm, then the camps on the east go forward.
- 6) for blowing a second an alarm, the camps on the south take their journey.

7) When blowing an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: (Num. 10:6)

8) Gathering the congregation together required a trumpet blast, but not an alarm. (Num. 10:7)

The sounding of the trumpets ensured that the whole congregation understood what was going on and what was expected of them. These trumpets were held and sounded by the sons of Aaron who represented the highest authority in Israel, so the instruction given to the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ must come from the Word itself.

Trumpets were not used for orderly conduct and summoning to war alone but they were to be used also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God. (Num 10:10)

The word for memorial actually means “a calling to remembrance”. The purpose of the trumpets was to bring Yahweh and his people together in unity. Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore. (Psa 133:1-3)

The provision of the Silver Trumpets marked the end of the Israelites sojourn at mount Horeb and very soon on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, the cloud was taken off the tabernacle, indicating that Yahweh wanted the Israelites to continue their journey to the Promised Land. Brother Robert Roberts in the book *The Law of Moses* describes the order of the march:- “Not long after the dedication of the tabernacle, Moses received orders to march for the promised land. It was no light matter to marshal such an immense body of people. The tribes, when at rest, were pitched in four camps, with the tabernacle in the centre of all. Arrangements for the march were characterized by the consummate wisdom manifest in every part of the Mosaic system. At a blast from the two silver trumpets by the sons of Aaron at the door of the tabernacle, the east camp broke up and set forward. Then the priests to whom the work had been allotted, took down the tabernacle and the pillars and the courts with their sockets, and went forward with the wagons, leaving the Kohathites behind, in charge of the holy vessels and furniture of the sanctuary. Then at a second alarm of the trumpets, the camp of Reuben, on the south, broke up and fell in behind the priests with the wagons. Then the Kohathites marched, bearing the holy vessels on their shoulders. Then the west camp, the

camp of Ephraim broke up, and marched behind the Kohathites, and after them, the north camp, the camp of Dan, which formed the rear of the lengthy procession (Num. 2, 3, 4 and 10).

On arriving at a new site, the camps pitched in the same order. The host of Judah, at the head of the procession, came to a halt first, and put up their tents. The wagons behind them stopped at the same time, and the priests in charge got out the pillars and court hangings, and the boards and bars of the tabernacle, and put up the empty structure in readiness to receive the altars and holy vessels on the arrival of the Kohathites in the rear. Then the host of the Reubenites turned aside to the right, and formed their camp at the due distance; then the Kohathites came up, and found the tabernacle ready to receive the ark and the holy vessels. Then the host of Ephraim formed camp on the ground where they stood, and the host of Dan behind them defiled to the left and went forward to their camping ground on the north of the tabernacle.

It was all done in beautiful order and without hitch. It was a most wise plan for avoiding confusion in the handling of such a mass of people. But it was also an illustration of the truth stated by Paul when he said, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace", and in this character it may be taken as a foreshadowing of the perfect order that will characterize the work of God in the age of glory.¹

At this time Moses was visited by a man named Hobab, the son of Raguel or Reuel (in the Revised Version) Moses' father in law" Reuel means "the Friend of God", and his name indicates that he was a worshipper of the one God, Yahweh. In Exod. 18:1, the father-in-law of Moses is named Jethro, meaning 'Excellence' which may have been a title. He was evidently a worthy man, and Moses preached the Gospel to him saying "We are journeying to the place of which Yahweh said "I will give it you". This "place" corresponds to the land promised to Abraham and is equivalent to the Kingdom of God today as the letter to the Galatians confirms In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. (Gal 3:8-9 KJV)

Israel had "come out of Egypt (Deut. 6:23), and constituted the Ecclesia in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). The purpose of Yahweh was to "bring them in to the Land of Promise (Deut. 6:23). The Apostolic Ecclesia today has separated from ALL religious communities, for a place in the Kingdom of God, on the basis of the Gospel message (Gal. 3:8). "Come with us, and we will do thee good" is also our appeal — The Gospel is described as Yahweh's "goodness" towards Israel (Exod. 18:9). It included the promise of rest for the people (Heb. 4:6-9) which is yet to be established (Rom. 11:22-23,25-26).

Moses explained to Hobab that by joining this 'Israelite' Ecclesia he would inherit the promised "good" as well. Though Hobab declined the invitation at this time, it appears that he joined with Israel later, for Jethro's descendants constituted a separate group in Israel throughout its history (Jud. 1:16; 4:11,17; 1 Sam. 15:6; Jer. 35:10-19). The Rechabites of Jeremiah 35 were descendants of Jethro, and they receive honourable mention with a promise of inheritance in the restored Kingdom of the Age to come. Their descendants are still to be found in Israel today and they are known as the Druze.

In verse 33 we learn how the Israelites departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD **went before them** in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. It has been suggested that the Ark was moved to the forefront of the marching tribes for the three days specified in the verse. Rotherham's translation states: "The Ark of the covenant was going before them, a journey of three days, to search out for them a resting place." It *was perhaps* an arrangement to remind Moses, that he did not need the eyes of Hobab to search out the land, for the nation not only had the cloud to guide them in a general way, but he could converse and receive council from the voice of Yahweh over the Ark of the Covenant, if more specific instructions were required. Yahweh had promised that He would "commune" with Moses from that holy place in the midst of Israel (Exod. 25:22). Moses appears to have understood the significance of the Ark of Yahweh leading from the front, as he records in the Book of numbers, "And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.⁶ And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.

(Num 10:35-36). This seems to be taken up by the 68th Psalm ¹⁸ You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive: you have received gifts for men; yes, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God **might dwell among them**.

Blessed be the Lord, *who* daily loads us *with benefits*, even the God of our salvation. Selah. (Psa 68:18-19) Paul specifically links the Lord Jesus to the Mercy Seat in his letter to the Romans (3:23-26 :- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* **a propitiation** through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Rom 3:23-26 KJV) the Hebrew for propitiation is Kapporeth meaning "mercy seat" It has been explained that At the first advent of Christ, he was openly manifested as the Ark, and will be again at his second coming. But in

between those two advents, his glory has been hidden within the Ecclesias, as was the Ark of the Covenant during the wilderness wanderings.

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