

BIBLE CLASS 06.04. 2023 Numbers Chapter 7 Sacrificial Repetition

The Free-will offerings of the Princes

Dear brothers and Sisters,

The erection of the Tabernacle almost certainly took longer than a day to be fully erected and this is indicated by the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament, the word day in Hebrew is used figuratively. It was completed on that day, though its erection may have taken several days. It was completed on the 1st day of the 1st month of leaving Egypt. It is likely that the holy place of the tabernacle was where Moses wrote “ VAYIKRA” (He called) the Hebrew term for the Book of Leviticus, under Yahweh’s directions, then followed by the Book of Numbers “B’MIDBAR” (in the desert) its Hebrew name.

After Moses had consecrated the Tabernacle and all its furnishings, the Altar with all its utensils, the leaders of Israel who were heads of their father’s tribes made an offering. These were the tribal leaders who were in charge of the counting of the Census of the children of Israel and Yahweh directed Moses to accept the offerings from them, for the use of transporting the Tabernacle and all its furniture as they journeyed through the wilderness. This was a free-will offering consisting of six covered wagons and twelve oxen, a wagon for every two leaders and for each one an ox presented at the front of the Tabernacle. The wagons and oxen were given to the Levites , two waggons and four oxen to the descendants of Gershon, according to their duties. Four wagons and eight wagons were given to the descendants of Merari according to their duties. To the descendants Kohath Moses gave none because their duties required them to carry the Holy articles such as the Ark of the Covenant upon their shoulders.

An additional offering was made by the twelve Princes of Israel whose names were:-

Names	Meaning	Tribe	Meaning
Nahshon	The Oracle	Judah	Praise
Nathaniel	God given	Issachar	Reward
Eliab	God is Father	Zebulon	Dwelling
Elizur	God is a Rock	Reuben	See a son
Shelamiel	God is Peace	Simeon	Hearing

Eliasaph	God gathers	Gad	Company
Gamaliel	God hears	Manasseh	Forgetting
Abidan	Father of judgment	Benjamin	Son of the right hand
Ahiezer	Helping Brother	Dan	Judgement
Pagiel	God meets	Ashur	Blessed
Ahira	Brother of evil	Naphtali	Wrestling

The offerings of the Princes Chapter 7 from verse 18-83 for the dedication of the Altar was the same for each one, but they offered them each one on his day, over 12 days. one silver charger, the weight thereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them *were* full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering: One spoon of ten *shekels* of gold, full of incense One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt offering: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: And for a sacrifice of peace offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he goats, five lambs of the first year: This was the offering for each of the twelve Princes of Israel. (Num 7:13- 17) and the rest followed.

This collective offering of the Princes is described as a free will offering, but there must have been some cooperation between all twelve, for they all agreed to bring the same offering, which expresses unity of mind on what would be acceptable to God and no evidence of any desiring to appear more devout than the others. There was a great deal of co-operation here. So ecclesial members today should co-operate in the furtherance of divine worship, where God is given the glory and the contributors are faithful messengers and servants in the spirit of Christ Jesus and the apostles drawing the Masters household of faith together, The twelve days service of dedication drew the twelve tribes together and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ may well see the resurrected faithful in Christ, organized under the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev.21:14)

Brother Robert Roberts in his book, “The Law of Moses” writes:- There must have been a reason for this apparently superfluous repetition of apparently superfluous details. It must have been to give conspicuousness and emphasis to the principle involved. What this principle was we may see if we consider that the princes of the tribes would stand representatively for the tribes themselves, and that the altar at which they prostrated themselves was the symbol of sacrifice as the basis of sinful man’s approach to God. Here is a dramatic

proclamation of utter humiliation before God as the kernel principle of national existence. Its repetition twelve times on twelve different days would make the lesson more emphatic, and the identity of the offering in each case would show what Paul declares concerning all men, that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"

The offering in each case was an elaborate one, and covered every aspect of the Mosaic parable embodied in the tabernacle: a silver charger and a bowl piled full of fine flour mingled with oil (the Jew and Gentile, purified and wrought into divine shape by affliction, and filled with life and joy); one golden spoon, full of incense (perfected faith finding daily exercise in praise and prayer); one young bullock, one ram, and one lamb, for a burnt offering (strength, desire, and obedience absorbed in the incorruptible at the resurrection); a kid of the goats for a sin offering (the sacrificial condemnation of sin in the flesh); two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, and five lambs of the first year for peace offerings (all strength, administrative ability, waywardness, and innocence brought into reconciliation with God and employed in His service).

That a ceremony with such significances should be twelve times repeated before the altar on the commencement of Israel's national existence, and expressly for the dedication of the altar to the daily use of the nation, is more eloquent than tongue can tell, of the nature of the national life as it ought to be, and of the great departure from the true objects of national life, that is visible in the forms of national life now upon earth. Revenue, police, drainage, and public convenience are about all that is aimed at. State-churchism is a faint survival of the Mosaic ideal but lacking life or light or power. The true aim of life is unknown and not provided for. But the day is coming, of which the Mosaic ritual was a prophecy, as well as a law for Israel, when God will be as much taken into account as the sun or the fresh air, and when human life everywhere will converge upon Him as much as the arrangements of Israel's camp converged upon the tabernacle. "All shall know me", says He, "from the least even to the greatest."

Should the idea be correct, that the twelve princes will have their anti-type in the twelve apostles of the Lamb, whose names appeared in the gem-decorated foundations of the symbolical Holy City seen by John in Patmos, there may be an interesting counterpart in the inaugural ceremonies of the Kingdom, to this dedication of the altar. Christ is the true altar, and he will then be dedicated for altar use by the whole world, and it is possible that each apostle may, "each on his day", edify and delight the whole congregation of the redeemed by the conduct of special dedicatory services in which the glory of Christ will be

powerfully and thrillingly brought home to their immortal faculties. The submissive and obedient mortals in their thousands might share with acclamation in such a feast of fat things: for the feast is to be spread “to all people”. **RR**

It is important to remember that the making of the tabernacle, and the preparation for the many sacrifices required, *in the wilderness* are a type of the Ecclesias travelling through the wilderness of this ungodly world. As in the day of Moses, brothers and sisters and their families find difficulties in providing the necessary wherewithal to provide a home fit to raise our children in this troubled world. But Paul exhorted the Corinthians that on the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, (1Co 16:2) For some it may be harder than for others. But do not forget the observation of the Lord Jesus regarding a certain poor widow casting into the treasury her last two mites. (Luke 21:2) We need our meeting together, we need both bread and wine, we may need money to come to the meeting to remember the sacrifice the Lord Jesus has made for us, but let us strive to make our contribution toward those necessary things for which we all should be thankful.

As in the work relating to the Tabernacle, the offerings were minutely recorded in the word, but let us not forget that records are being made of those things which we do that are well pleasing to Him. (Mal.3:16 So the apostle Paul encouraged the Corinthians “I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before to you, and make up in advance your bounty, whereof you had notice before, that the same might be ready, as *a matter of* bounty, and not as *of* covetousness. But this *I say*, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver. And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remains forever. Now he that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness ; Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causes through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplies the need of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; (2Co 9:5-12) **DHH**